Handbook of Theological Education
in World Christianity

Theological Perspectives – Regional Surveys – Ecumenical Trends
REGNUM STUDIES IN GLOBAL CHRISTIANITY
(Previously GLOBAL THEOLOGICAL VOICES series)

Series Preface

The latter part of the twentieth century witnessed a global level of change in Christian dynamics. One significant development was the rise of the churches in the global south, not only in their number but also in their engagement with their socio-cultural contexts. Regnum Studies in Global Christianity explores the issues that the global church struggles with, focusing particularly on churches in Africa, Asia, Latin America and Eastern Europe.

The series publishes studies that will help the global church learn not only from past and present, but also from provocative and prophetic voices for the future. The editors and the publisher particularly pray that the series as a public space will encourage the southern churches to make an important contribution to the shaping of a healthy future for global Christianity. The editors invite theological seminaries and universities from around the world to submit relevant scholarly dissertations for possible publication in the series. It is hoped that the series will provide a forum for South-to-South as well as South-to-North dialogues.

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Handbook of Theological Education in World Christianity
Theological Perspectives – Regional Surveys – Ecumenical Trends

Dietrich Werner, David Esterline, Namsoon Kang, Joshva Raja (Eds)

Forewords by Ofelia Ortega, Desmond Tutu, Robert Schreiter
Dedicated to theological educators around the world
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The Editors: Dietrich Werner, Namsoon Kang, David Esterline and Joshva Raja
This Handbook on Theological Education in World Christianity is a historic achievement and a unique and impressive collection of major themes of the international debate on theological education, regional surveys on contextual developments and denominational perspectives on theological education and its interdenominational cooperation.

The Latin American Council of Churches (CLAI) a few years ago brought together Latin American church representatives and theological educators in a Theological Forum. The document which was presented by the Andean Region in this meeting\(^1\) states that it is the \textit{Kingdom of God} which is the necessary theological framework for training in the Christian ministry.

It is from this perspective of the Kingdom of God that the \textit{Handbook on Theological Education in World Christianity} has been written. There is a long history of interdenominational cooperation and learning on theological education in the world missionary and ecumenical movement (as reviewed in the first article of this Handbook). The processes we have lived and gone through in the search for the viability of theological education have always been accompanied by three main emphases, the concern for:

1. Quality of the biblical-theological education,
2. Authenticity (contextualization) of theological education, and
3. Creativity of theological education (alternative methodology and alternative models).

This book includes these emphases on the development of the topics presented, but it also offers other and new areas linked to the life of peoples and to the mission of the Church, where theological education has entered with extraordinary abilities, including:

- Interfaith dialogue
- People with disabilities
- HIV and AIDS
- Women
- Race, power and migration
- Post-colonial theological education.

At the same time, this handbook is an invitation not to stop in our attempts to renew and reform theological education, but to continue in our search for relating theological education to the wider perspectives of the Kingdom of God, to peace and justice, and to include in our future also perspectives our ecological concerns that have now emerged so vividly in our churches after the Copenhagen Conference on World Climate Change in 2009.

I would like to quote theologian Letty Russell’s words to describe this theological ecumenical journey as an exodus. She says,

It is a journey towards freedom: a journey with others, for others, towards the future of God.²

Thus, theological education as exodus can be described as a process of transformation which includes criticism and commitment to achieve an understanding of ourselves and of the world in the light of the purpose of God for the new creation.

The Exodus has to be understood not only as a heroic liberating action, nor only as criticism over against the prevailing ideology, but also as a moment of processing on the way through the desert in pain. Walking through the desert together makes us aware of our social imagination and hope. It is the invitation to a possible different world. In walking through the desert towards freedom we have to think a lot of the paths we take, where we are heading to on this way to freedom, which is never just individual but a freedom shared with others and for others. This Handbook will lead us to the search of new paths in theological education and will encourage us to see partners from other contexts, regions, continents, denominations as partners on a common learning journey.

Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza in her book Los caminos de la sabiduría encourages us greatly. She says, “Reading the Bible on the path towards Wisdom has the objective to generate processes of popular democratization, to make us have a full awareness of the powers of domination and to discover the possibilities to get justice and ‘a good life.’ This requires an option of metanoia, to change direction, to turn around the ways of injustice to the ways of justice and welfare suggested by Wisdom.”³

This book guides our reflections towards these paths of Wisdom because it leads us to a holistic practice of theological education understood as education for transformation. Holistic education aims at the transformation of whole persons and communities. As Paul writes: “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God – what is good and acceptable and perfect (Rom 12:2)”. Thus theological education understood as education for transformation takes special care of the interrelatedness of all existence and deals with moral, spiritual, social and cultural values.

To bring these reflections to a close, we want to point out that perhaps this is not the worst epoch of humanity, but without a doubt, it is also not it’s most brilliant. It is a time with its own difficulties, which are so particular they can’t be resolved with simple answers or recipes drawn from the past. It is also, however, “our epoch”, that in which we have been called upon to live because God willed it to be so, and it is in the midst of this epoch – not on its edges, but in its midst – where we are summoned to share the good news and to do the works of the Gospel.

We would like to express our gratitude on behalf of the World Council of Churches to all the contributors of this wonderful publication and especially to Dietrich Werner and his team which has made this theological dream possible for our theological institutions and churches – hoping that this book will have a wide circulation and its impulses will be made know to the worldwide community of theological educators.

Ofelia Ortega (WCC President)
Former Rector of the Evangelical Theological Seminary (SET) in Matanzas, Cuba and Executive Secretary for Latin America and the Caribbean in the Programme on Theological Education in WCC

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Foreword – Desmond Tutu

It is a privilege for me to write a foreword to this unique new Handbook on Theological Education in World Christianity which was prepared by an international group of scholars under the leadership of the Programme on Ecumenical Theological Education (ETE) of the World Council of Churches. I do share in the conviction that the promotion of ecumenical cooperation in theological education is at the heart of the mission of the church and vital for the future of the ecumenical movement as a whole. I personally had the privilege being involved with theological education and with the early phase of ecumenical commitment to programmes of theological education in the missionary movement.

I went to England in 1962 to study at King’s College, London. I was helped to do this with a T.E.F. grant and subsequently returned to South Africa to join the staff of St Peter’s College, one of four denominational colleges that constituted the Federal Theological Seminary in Alice in the Eastern Cape situated close to the University of Fort Hare where people like Oliver Tambo and Nelson Mandela had been students, as were others from further afield in Africa. After a while I went to teach at the University of Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland based at Roma in Lesotho.

I learned that there was a vacancy in the T.E.F. team based in Bromley, Kent, U.K and applied to be considered for that vacancy. One of the T.E.F’s Associate Directors, Dr James Bergquist, came to Roma to interview me. Instead of doing this he said he had come to offer me the position of Associate Director with area responsibility for sub-Saharan Africa in 1972. So began one of the most exhilarating and formative years of my life.

With my family we trekked across to settle for a while in Grove Park, South London for just about three years. I had the privilege of being part of an extraordinary team of remarkable colleagues who jointly were charged with the responsibility of fulfilling the Third Mandate of the T.E.F. Our boss, the Director of the T.E.F. was a self-effacing but dynamic and inspiring leader, Shoki Coe, an exiled Formosan/Taiwanese. Then there were the irrepressible and gifted Aharon Sapsezian, a Brazilian of Armenian extraction who was a walking Tower of Babel judging from the different languages he spoke, James Bergquist from the US and the diffident, gentle and charming Ivy Chou born on mainland China but now a Malaysian. Much later we were joined by another American, Herb Zorn. We each had area responsibility for a specific part of the world so that we covered the entire globe.

I still marvel when I think of our various staff meetings when we had to approve the projects that each director presented from his/her area either for faculty development, institutional strengthening, as with equipping libraries, or encouraging the foundation of associations of theological institutions, etc; all to be tested against the rubric of contextualisation which was the benchmark of this Third Mandate. Our meetings were hilarious, noisy affairs as each of us tried to convince their colleagues about the validity of their particular projects. We were quite boisterous, hardly what you might have thought appropriate for a meeting of former professors, most of whom were ordained to boot. Only Ivy would remain demure and impressively gentle and quiet. Aharon especially was almost contemptuous of anything that was not in his view radical.
I give thanks to God for this wonderful opportunity accorded me. I know I grew in my theological understanding. I was exposed for the first time to the exhilaration and challenge of liberation theology from Latin America and black theology from the U.S. Yes, contextualization seemed a jargon term but it basically was calling us to take seriously the specificity, the scandal, of the Incarnation. God became a particular human being in a specific context dealing with the perplexities, the challenges and demands of that context. An authentic theology had to be equally specific. There could be no universal, no final theology, but that which gloried in its inherent, in-built obsolescence for it was true only if it sought to answer the questions and perplexities of a particular, a specific, community in a particular and specific context.

I can say without fear of contradiction that my stint with the T.E.F. gave me the best possible preparation for my work in South Africa as we struggled against the viciousness of apartheid. I give thanks to God to my T.E.F. colleagues, the T.E.F. committee and my W.C.C. colleagues for all they contributed to form me and prepare me for that ministry. I pray that the theological education enterprise will go from strength to strength as it prepares ministerial candidates to deal with urgent contemporary challenges such as HIV/AIDS, poverty, corruption in high places, injustice, oppression and perennial conflict.

With this prestigious research and publication project which has brought together more than 90 expert’s contributions on recent developments, challenges and trends in theological education in all regions of World Christianity a new stage has been reached in the important history of ecumenical cooperation and learning in the area of theological education. This Handbook of Theological Education in World Christianity provides a very important resource and world survey which should enable regional associations of theological schools, mission boards and church leaders in Christianity to become aware again of the crucial importance of theological education for the renewal of the church’s mission and service. We do hope that this book can play a significant role in bringing churches closer to each other in this common task and in preparing for the forthcoming 10th Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Busan, Korea.

God bless you all now and in the future - theological educators all around the world in their daily demanding and inspiring work!

†Desmond Tutu
Archbishop Emeritus of Cape Town
Foreword – Robert Schreiter

The 1910 Edinburgh Missionary Conference is one of the great landmarks in the history of Christian mission. So many things converged there. It was celebrated at that time as a high tide moment for Protestant mission. Its slogan “the evangelization of the world in this generation” is emblematic of this. In the call for unity among the churches in their mission work, it laid the groundwork for what was to become the International Missionary Council and, later, the World Council of Churches. We have much to be thankful for as we look back upon that time.

But we also see its deficits as well. There were very few Christians from what we now call the Global South present. The single largest church body, the Roman Catholic Church, was not represented at Edinburgh at all. And little did the participants know that a scant four years later, the confidence and enthusiasm that so marked the Conference would be dashed by the beginning of the Great War in Europe. What historian Eric Hobsbawm has called “the long nineteenth century” would grind to an abrupt halt.

A century later the situation of the worldwide Church looks quite different. The geographic center of world Christianity has migrated, so to speak, from Europe to a point in West Africa. The colonial character of the world, that providing the pathways along which much of missionary work had entered into the wider world, has been set aside, even as its effects linger. No one would have surmised in 1910 that the fastest growing branch of Christianity would be Pentecostalism, now numbering more adherents than are found in the member churches of the World Council of Churches. Nor would they have guessed that what was then the greatest mission field—China—would be closed to missionaries thirty years later only to re-emerge thirty years after that with more Christians than were present there in the missionary period. It would have astounded the participants in the 1910 Conference to see African Instituted Churches having a host of congregations in the United Kingdom or the United States. Or would they have imagined that the country sending out per capita the most missionaries would be Korea.

A key factor in the continuing development of the Christian churches is theological education, the preparation of church leaders for the current and coming generation. Like the churches themselves, theological education has undergone considerable change over the course of the past century. A host of different missionary methods have emerged—from the direct proclamation that participants would have recognized, to ones that they had not dreamed of, such as interreligious dialogue. Collaboration among seminaries and theological schools not just regionally, but in worldwide organizations such as WOCATI, is now a feature of world Christianity in an increasingly connected world. Theological Education by Extension (TEE), begun among Evangelical Protestants in the 1970s, has been further enhanced by the strides made in information technologies and brought theological education to many who were out of reach in a previous time.

To the extent that theological education has focused predominantly upon imparting knowledge of the Bible and subsequent development in the traditions of various churches, it has often been more backward looking than trying to discern God’s ways in the present world. Today few would contest the idea that a theological education must also equip future church leaders to understand the signs of the times and engage the world more directly.
This remarkable and unprecedented overview of where theological education finds itself in the worldwide Church today that you are about to read charts much of the breathtaking developments that have taken place in a vital sector of the Church today. It represents a cross-hatch treatment of theological education from various angles: from the most pressing issues facing theological education at this time, to regional and denominational views and focus on special themes that face theological education wherever it is being conducted. As the editors aver, one could generate still other perspectives or lenses to view what is happening. But no collection of essays has ever been produced that so brings into focus where we are in theological education today. For it is in these institutions that the immediate future of the churches is being shaped. Just as the young people of the World Christian Student Conference were instrumental in providing the energy and drive for Edinburgh 1910, so too the future leaders of the churches now being formed in theological institutions will play a key role for the coming generation. To understand what issues are being brought to bear upon their education helps us see something of what the future of Christianity may look like.

Certain things stay more or less the same in theological education over time, such as study of the Bible and theology. The world around the seminary and theological school continues to change. Helping us chart these changes are books like this one that give us multiple perspectives on how theological education is seen today.

We know our future no more than those at Edinburgh did a century ago. What we now call World War I brought to an abrupt halt a round of globalization of the world that had been made possible by advances in communication technology (the telegraph and the telephone) and means of travel (the steamship and the nascent airplane). The third round of globalization, with its information technologies and relatively inexpensive air travel, has put us in a third round of globalization. (Scholars say the voyages of discovery at the turn of the fifteenth century—made possible by technological advances in sea travel—marked the first round of globalization.) Despite the boosterism of globalization in some quarters, we cannot draw a straight line into the future any more than could previous generations. The worldwide economic recession in 2008-2009 reminds us how fragile our own networks are. The growing awareness of consequences of climate change only makes that awareness of our fragility more acute. And in the midst of all this connectedness, a growing gap between rich and poor threatens the bonds of solidarity that will be necessary for the world population to survive and live through into the next century. A well prepared cadre of church leaders plays an important role in navigating us through the uncertain waters ahead. This book gives an important view of how they are being prepared. In doing so, it provides us with a vital resource to meet that future.

Robert Schreiter
Vatican II Professor of Theology Catholic Theological Union, Chicago,
Past President, American Society of Missiology and Catholic Theological Society of America
Introduction

Theological education is vital for the future of World Christianity—this conviction lies at the heart of this publication. Theological education has the potential to be the seedbed for the renewal of churches, their ministries, mission, and commitment to Christian unity. If theological education is neglected by church leaders or in funding, the consequences are far reaching; they might not be visible immediately, but they will certainly become manifest over time in the theological competence of church leadership, the holistic nature of mission, and the capacities for ecumenical and interfaith dialogue and the interaction between church and society. Investment in theological education is investment of hope in the future and mission of World Christianity. The transmission of Christian memory, the education for God’s peace and justice, and the formation for church and community leadership therefore should be priorities in all churches; however, in many places theological education is far from secure or even in crisis at the present time.

The first world mission conference in Edinburgh in 1910 emphasized the “training of those who are to be spiritual leaders and teachers of their own”¹ and so set into motion a process of strengthening capacities for theological education in the Southern hemisphere. How far have we come in this endeavor?

Some one hundred years after Edinburgh 1910, this Handbook on Theological Education in World Christianity is the first attempt to map and analyze developments in theological education on a global scale. This volume, with contributions from 98 leaders in theological education from around the world, provides a comprehensive introduction to the major themes and contexts in the international discourse on theological education, surveys of the issues and challenges faced in different regions, and introductory essays on the developments in theological education in major denominational families in World Christianity.

The idea for this Handbook was developed during a meeting of an international study group on theological education brought together under the leadership of the program on Ecumenical Theological Education (ETE) of the World Council of Churches in November 2008 at the Ecumenical Institute of Bossey in Switzerland. While preparing a world study report on the situation of theological education,² the group recognized that the contexts in which theological education takes place and the challenges facing theological institutions vary so greatly in different regions and different faith traditions that it would not be possible to provide a comprehensive review in a single study report. The members of the study group recognized that something more substantial and broader in perspective was needed and proposed that a

major reference work, a “Global Handbook on Theological Education,” should be developed. The goal was a work that would be easily accessible across denominational, cultural, educational, and geographic boundaries and that would be useful for international dialogue and networking among theological educators, institutions, and agencies. Four specific objectives were set at the beginning:

- to provide introductory surveys on selected issues and themes in global theological education;
- to provide regional surveys on key developments, achievements, and challenges in theological education;
- to provide an overview of theological education for each of the major denominational / confessional traditions; and
- to provide a reference section with an up-to-date list of the regional associations of theological institutions and other resources.

In a working period of just over a year, the project was undertaken and completed in January 2010. Four members of the original study group were asked to direct the project, to serve as editors, and to make it available for the Edinburgh centenary conference in June 2010:

- Prof. Dr. David Esterline, Director of the Institute for Cross-Cultural Theological Education at McCormick Theological Seminary, Chicago;
- Prof. Dr. Namsoon Kang, Prof. of World Christianity and Religions, Brite Divinity School, Texas Christian University, and President of WOCATI (World Conference of Associations of Theological Institutions);
- Rev. Dr. Dietrich Werner, Global Program Coordinator of the Program on Ecumenical Theological Education (ETE) in the World Council of Churches, Geneva;
- Rev. Dr. John Joshva Raja, Tutor, Selly Oak Centre for Mission Studies – The Queen’s Foundation for Ecumenical Theological Education, Birmingham.

Although begun as a project within the Edinburgh 2010 study process on theological education, this publication now stands on its own and reaches beyond the Edinburgh 2010 centenary conference. The Handbook is intended to serve as a resource for theological educators in all parts the world, for governing boards dealing with theological education programs and theological colleges, and for associations of theological schools in the different regions. It is also hoped that this work will be a special gift for the forthcoming 10th Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Busan, South Korea in 2013.

More specifically, the target audience for the Handbook includes:

- theological educators, especially those interested in global partnerships and networking;
- associations and individual theological institutions needing current information on global trends and issues as well as reliable contact data;
- church leaders and denominational boards planning for theological and higher Christian education; and
- missiologists, theologians, biblical scholars, church historians, and other scholars interested in global developments in theological education.

We, the editorial team, determined at the outset of the project to ensure a wide variety of denominational, cultural, contextual, and gender perspectives by inviting contributions from as wide a range of scholars and church leaders as possible. We have attempted to include perspectives from all Christian families represented in the Edinburgh 2010 process and from all regions of the world; we celebrate the multiplicity of voices and appreciate the diversity of opinions and perspectives they represent. We attempted to find a balance of voices in terms of gender, geographical and cultural context, and faith tradition. In spite of our efforts, we were not always successful due to the very short time-line on which we were working. We particularly regret that the Handbook does not contain articles on the environment and theological education, or the whole range of issues related to the debate on human sexuality and different
sexual orientations in Christianity and their impact on theological education. We also regret not being able to include an account of Pentecostal theological education in North America. Although on-line theological education and other aspects of information technology are touched on in a number of articles, we were not able to provide a comprehensive report on these topics. Even with these omissions, along with many others, we trust that the Handbook will generate new dialogue in all areas of theological education.

Part I, Theological Education in World Perspective, contains essays on some of the major issues that have marked the international discourse in theological education in the past decades. Accounts of a few of the disciplines taught in theological schools (such as media studies and preparation for public ministry) have been included; however, we have not attempted to cover developments in the majority of fields, though we certainly recognize the remarkable change that most have undergone over the past decades and the significance of these changes for theological education as a whole.

In Part II, Regional Surveys of Developments in Theological Education since 1910, articles are offered on the growth, change, and present situation of theological education in many of the regions of the world. We are certainly aware that additional survey articles, for parts of Africa and Asia, for instance, would complement the picture presented. There is still much more to discover in the world of theological education.

Part III, Theological Education from Denominational and Confessional Perspectives, provides articles on each of the major traditions. As with the other parts of the book, we are aware that additional articles, covering aspects of denominations and traditions in specific regions would make the whole richer, and the Handbook is not truly complete without them.

We have been overwhelmed by the very positive response and generous spirit of the many theological educators and church leaders who have contributed to this volume; we are also grateful for those contributions which for various reasons could not be accepted or finalized in time for this Handbook. The Edinburgh 2010 study process provided a unique opportunity to gather information from all parts of the world. Contributions have come from many different streams and traditions of theological education, with representative perspectives, experiences, and case studies along with regional overviews to provide a comprehensive picture of theological education today.

The Handbook project has been a fruitful collaboration of four partners. The Ecumenical Theological Education program of WCC—with its mandate to remind the churches of their responsibility for strengthening theological education and encourage mutual cooperation—has served as the lead agency for the project. The three other partners are 1) WOCATI, World Conference of Associations of Theological Institutions, 2) McCormick Theological Seminary in Chicago and its Institute for Cross-Cultural Theological Education, and 3) Queen’s Foundation for Ecumenical Theological Education in Birmingham.

Notes for readers:

a. Contributors have completed their work on assigned topics in a variety of ways. In the majority of cases, individual authors have written articles which stand on their own; at times these are grouped with others on related topics and at times they stand as the only contribution in a chapter. In some cases, two or more authors have collaborated to provide a single contribution or have produced contributions which correspond to each other directly. In a few cases several authors have worked together and have produced a single contribution but with distinct sections by distinct authors. In every case we have attempted to make visible exactly which author has been responsible for which part.

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3 For an International Directory of Theological Schools and Associations of Theological Schools see: http://oikumene.org/theological-schools-directory
b. The spelling and punctuation conventions of the individual authors have been preserved; that is, the editors have not attempted to convert each contribution into a consistent style throughout the volume. Similarly, you will see that footnote and bibliography styles vary from author to author.

c. Several of the contributions deal with topics that fall in more than one section. For instance the contributions on Pentecostal theological education, which have been placed in a distinct chapter in Part III, might have been placed in the respective regional survey chapters. Similarly, perspectives on African theological education are not only found in Part II, but also in the chapter on Gender in Theological Education in Part I. Please consult the table of contents in order to locate articles on subjects that might be placed in different chapters.

d. Although we have attempted to be comprehensive, we are aware that we have not succeeded. If you have additional survey essays or other materials that are relevant to the objectives of the Handbook, you may wish to send them to the ETE office so that they might be made available on the WCC website.

We wish to express our deep gratitude to our publisher, Regnum Books International, and to Wonsuk Ma, Executive Director of the Oxford Centre for Mission Studies and Tony Gray, project manager and editor, for their support, expertise, and commitment to this project. We also appreciate the support of our co-publishers: Wipf and Stock in the United States, Asian Trading Corporation (ATC) in India, and Cluster Publications in South Africa.

Our gratitude also goes to several donor partners whose generous grants have made the research and publication of this project possible. In particular we wish to thank Dr. Verena Grueter, Executive Secretary of Mission Studies and Theological Education Desks of the Association of Protestant Churches and Mission in Germany (EMW Hamburg); Dr. Des van der Water, General Secretary of the Council of World Mission, London; Dr. David Hewlett, Principal of Queen’s Foundation for Ecumenical Theological Education, Birmingham; Dr. Dieter Becker, General Secretary of the German Society for Mission Studies (DGMW), Neuendettelsau; Dr. Namsoon Kang, President of the World Conference of Associations of Theological Institutions (WOCATI), and Dr. H.S. Wilson, Executive Director of the Foundation for Theological Education in South East Asia. Major support was also made available from the Programme on Ecumenical Theological Education (ETE) at the World Council of Churches (Dr. Dietrich Werner) and the Institute for Cross-Cultural Theological Education at McCormick Theological Seminary. Many thanks are also due to Rev. Wolfgang Vogelmann, Executive Secretary for the Department of Ecumenical Relations and Diaconia of the Northelbian Evangelical Lutheran Church in Germany for generous support to ETE/WCC which has helped this project. We also express our gratitude to Dr. Christoph Stueckelberger and Natalie Emch from Globethics.net for providing web space for our many documents, and to Princeton Theological Seminary, Selly Oak Centre for Mission Studies, and the Ecumenical Institute of Bossey for hosting meetings of the editorial group.

As there has not been a world resource or reference work on theological education of the scope we have attempted with this Handbook, we look forward to receiving feedback on this attempt to make visible the substantial wealth and great challenges facing theological education in World Christianity today. Please post your comments on the forum related to the Handbook of Theological Education at globethics.net or send them to: ETE, World Council of Churches, 150, route de Ferney, CH 1211 Geneva 2. We do hope that theological education will find the support and attention that is needed for the future.

May this book contribute to ecumenical networking, mutual solidarity, and cross-cultural learning between theological educators around the world as they seek to work for the Kingdom of God and the unity of God’s church on earth. As it is stated in the biblical tradition:
speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the
whole body, joined and knitted together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working
properly, promotes the body’s growth in building itself up in love. (Eph 4,15-16)

Dietrich Werner, David Esterline, Namsoon Kang, Joshva Raja
January 16, 2010
Ecumenical Institute, Bossey, Switzerland
PART I

THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION IN GLOBAL CONTEXT:
ISSUES AND THEMES
THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION IN WORLD CHRISTIANITY SINCE 1910

FROM ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH TO WORLD CHURCH: 
ROMAN CATHOLIC THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

Stephen Bevans

Introduction

To speak of Roman Catholic theological education from 1910 to 2010 is to speak of two relatively equal periods of time – from 1910 until about 1962, and then from 1962 until the present. These periods differ greatly in terms of both content and spirit. The watershed event of these years was, of course, the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965). What Vatican II succeeded in doing, in effect, was to move the Roman Catholic Church out from under the influence of another Council that had happened four centuries before, the Council of Trent (1545-1563). It was in the spirit of that earlier Council and its aftermath that shaped Roman Catholic theological education from the 1910 Edinburgh World Missionary Conference until the present.

These two periods suggest the basic structure for this broad overview of Roman Catholic theological education in the past century. Part I will sketch the shape of theological education from 1910 up until the beginning of the Second Vatican Council in 1962. This will include developments in Roman Catholic theological education in the four centuries after Trent. Part II will consider how the Second Vatican Council laid the groundwork for a major shift in the understanding of theology and theological education, and how that understanding has shaped Roman Catholic theological education in the four decades since.

Roman Catholic Theological Education before the Second Vatican Council

The Context of Roman Catholic Theological Education in 1910

Seminary Education

Roman Catholic theological education at the time of the 1910 Edinburgh Conference was overwhelmingly clerical and overwhelmingly male. Although there was significant graduate or advanced theological education going on in universities in several parts of the world – e.g. in Germany, at the various Pontifical Universities in Rome, at The Catholic University in the United States – the great majority of theological education at this time took place in seminaries where young men prepared for the priesthood.

Seminaries are relatively recent phenomena. In the extensive reformation of the Roman Catholic Church called for by the Council of Trent, one of its most significant decisions was that “all cathedral, metropolitan, and other churches greater than these, shall be bound… to educate religiously, and to train in ecclesiastical discipline, a certain number of youths of their city and diocese” for the priesthood in what the Council called “seminaries.”

It did not take long before this decree was implemented, especially in Italy and in Germany. It was in France, however, that men like St. John Eudes, St. Vincent de Paul, and especially Jean-Jacques Olier developed the seminary as it came to be recognized throughout the world. Olier gathered a number of young men in the parish of St. Sulpice in Paris, and formed them not only theologically (education that they received at the Sorbonne), but also pastorally and spiritually. The St. Sulpice style of seminary education – developed by a congregation which Olier founded called the Sulpicians – quickly spread over France and eventually spread to other countries of the world.

The seminary system was thus what scholars call today a “total institution.”2 As an article on seminaries in the first edition of The Catholic Encyclopaedia, written in 1911, expresses it: “After six years of this mental and moral training in retirement from the world, and in the society of fellow students animated by the same purpose and striving after the same ideals, he is deemed worthy of receiving the honour and capable of bearing the burden of the priesthood: he is an educated Christian gentleman, he possesses professional knowledge, he is ready to live and to work among men as the ambassador of Christ.”3

By 1910 there were many seminaries throughout the world. The article in the 1912 Catholic Encyclopaedia lists over ninety seminaries in the English-speaking world alone, including seminaries in England, Ireland, Canada, the United States, Ceylon (now Sri Lanka), India, Malacca (now in Malaysia), Portugal, Spain and Rome. Seminaries has also been established in the Philippines in the nineteenth century, and seminaries flourished in Germany and France. Various religious orders also maintained their own houses of formation and seminaries. An example of these latter would be St. Gabriel’s Mission House in Vienna, Austria, where members of the Society of the Divine Word were formed in theology, but also in other sciences that would be appropriate for their future missionary work. Members of the Congregation of the Holy Ghost (Spiritans) were said to have had an excellent theological education and were considered very faithful to orthodox Roman Catholic doctrine.4 In 1907 the Dominican studium Le Saulchoir was established in Tournai, Belgium.

Specialization, Fragmentation, and the Manualist Tradition

In the years following Trent, theology began to develop into the various specializations with which we are still familiar today: dogmatic, moral, pastoral theology, homiletics, church history. This was particularly true in the wake of the publication of the Salamancan theologian Melchior Cano’s De Locis Theologicis (On the Sources of Theology), which was particularly influential in developing what came to be called the “manualist tradition” of theology. After Cano the importance of church teaching and dogmatic certainty took on the most importance in theology, and theological education, rather than an effort to help students understand their faith, was preoccupied to ensure uniformity and orthodoxy. As one seventeenth century writer put it, the aim was to get students to understand the teaching as “defined or handed out as dogmas in the Council of Trent ....”5 Such theology, says Brendan Cahill, could be called a “positive scholasticism” or even a “theology of the Magisterium.”6

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This specialization of theology led, as it did in Protestantism, to a kind of fragmentation in theology and the way it was taught. As Aidan Nichols describes it, such specialists “thought of themselves as experts in one or another of these fields, and got on with digging their own gardens without worrying too much about what others were doing with theirs.” Thus, as Anthony Viéban put it in 1911, theological study in seminaries at that time generally included classes in “Holy Scripture, with Greek and Hebrew, apologetics, dogmatic, moral and pastoral theology, church history, and, in some institutions, liturgy and canon law.”

The Tübingen School and the Neo-Thomist Revival

One attempt to break with the manualist tradition, so influenced by Enlightenment rationalism and classification, was the emergence of the Tübingen School at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Highly influenced by the Romantic philosopher Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling (1775-1854), the theologians at Tübingen, especially Johann Adam Möhler (1796-1838) attempted to do and teach theology in a way that re-appropriated the Patristic and High Scholastic tradition, attentive at the same time to the modern questions posed by Kant, Hegel and Schelling. For Möhler, theology was an attempt to probe the mystery of God which surrounds humanity and in which humanity is called to participate.

Möhler’s and the Tübingen School’s theology is not far from much of the theology worked out at Vatican II, and Roman Catholic Theological Education would have been quite different if it had gained ascendancy within seminaries and universities. Several theologians, however, who taught in the Jesuit Roman College (notably Giovanni Perrone [1794-1876] and Joseph Kleutgen [1811-1883]) were deeply suspicious of the Tübingen theologians’ acceptance of contemporary philosophy and insisted rather on the importance of the earlier scholastic world view, especially that of Thomas Aquinas. This movement culminated in Pope Leo XII’s 1879 encyclical *Aeterni Patris*, which mandated all Catholic seminaries to base their theological education on the philosophy and theology of Aquinas.

Had Leo’s mandate actually been followed, Roman Catholic theological education would not have been in that bad a shape. However, in place of a real contact with Aquinas and his own inquiring mind, seminarians were usually subjected to Aquinas second hand, again through manuals which were more interested in proving Catholic teaching from scriptural and patristic proof texts and quotations from the Magisterium. There were exceptions, particularly in Dominican *studia* and Franciscan seminaries (in which Thomas’s great contemporary Bonaventure was studied), but by and large theological studies into the middle of the twentieth century – all over the world – was about memorizing syllogisms in manuals written by theologians like Ludwig Ott and Adolphe Tanquerey.

Around the turn of the twentieth century there was a groundswell of creative theology within Catholicism, as theologians such as Alfred Loisy (1857-1940) and George Tyrell (1861-1909) began to draw on the important historical-critical method of German Protestant theologians. In 1907, however, Rome condemned these efforts as “Modernism” in the document *Lamentabili* and in Pope Pius X’s encyclical *Pascendi*. Seminary professors were forbidden to teach anything that smacked of this “sum of

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all heresies” as it was characterized; they had to sign an oath against Modernism before assuming their teaching duties, and vigilante committees were to be set up in every diocese to ensure that no one was teaching theology influenced by the Modernist theologians. It was in this atmosphere of suspicion and repression that Roman Catholic theological education was pursued as the 1910 Edinburgh Conference was being planned and attended.

Renewal and Resistance

Renewal
Nevertheless, renewal was taking place – often quietly, very cautiously, usually in terms of ressourcement, – going back to scriptural and particularly patristic sources. At the end of the nineteenth century the Dominican Marie-Joseph Lagrange (1855-1938) was a leader of a renewal in biblical studies, and Benedictines Prosper Gueranger (1805-1875) and Odo Casel (1886-1948) were spearheading a renewal in liturgical studies. Both of these movements were to bear fruit in theological education. In 1907 the Dominicans established Le Saulchoir, and under the leadership of Marie-Dominique Chenu (1895-1990) and later Yves Congar (1904-1995) the school became a center of the renewal in patristic and medieval studies, and in the emerging ecumenical movement. In 1937 Chenu published A School of Theology: Le Saulchoir “in which he laid out a plan for the reform of theology, claiming the primacy of the revealed Word, acceptance of biblical and historical criticism, an open-minded Thomism, and an openness to the problems of the present.”

At the Jesuit faculty in Lyons, France, Henri Bouillard (1808-1981) and Henri de Lubac (1896-1991) were also returning to the patristic sources to discover new and exciting things about traditional Christian doctrines. After World War II, Karl Rahner (1904-1984) began attracting students to the University of Innsbruck in Austria with his stunning lectures based on transcendental Thomism and existentialist philosophy.

It was in this period – beginning in 1919 – that a number of “mission encyclicals” by Popes Benedict XV, Pius XI and XII and John XXIII called for the training of young men from Asia, Africa, Latin America and Oceania for the priesthood. Some of these would be sent to Europe, especially to Rome, but seminaries were also established in their home countries. Even though there had been priests from these countries in the past, the popes were calling for something new. Hesitation was strong at both the diocesan level and among religious orders. Gradually, however, indigenous clergy was being formed in almost every country in the world.

Resistance
While Rome called for the training of African, Asian, Latin American and Oceanian clergy, theological education in these areas was almost identical to that in other parts of the world – using the standard manuals. It resisted the newer theology represented by Chenu, Congar, and their like. In 1942, Chenu’s Le Saulchoir was placed on the Index of Forbidden Books, and in 1950 Pius XII’s encyclical Humani Generis attacked what had begun to be called the “Nouvelle Theologie.” Chenu, Rahner and Congar were all at one point forbidden to write and (in the case of Congar) to teach. Any promise of a new theology and new theological education seemed very dim.

From Vatican II to 2010

Perspectives from the Council

Important principles
In the light of the shape and tenor of Catholic theology after Trent, Vatican II’s theology was revolutionary. At the center of the Council’s concern was the development of a new theology of the church. If the perspective of Trent had been the church as institution, a bulwark against what it perceived were the Reformers’ heresies and the godlessness of the modern world, Vatican II’s was of the church as the People of God, a community of equals by virtue of Baptism. The implication of this was that theology and theological education was open not only to clerics but to everyone in the church. As the Council said in its decree on the lay apostolate: “In addition to spiritual formation, a solid doctrinal instruction in theology, ethics, and philosophy adjusted to differences of age, status, and natural talents, is required.” The Council’s decree on missionary activity spoke of the church as “missionary by its very nature,” and its document Gaudium et Spes spoke of the church’s identity as engaged in the “joys, the hopes, the griefs and anxieties” of its times.

Gaudium et Spes also spoke of how the church could learn from the world it serves. In this decree and in the decree on missionary activity, the Council recognized the importance and goodness of culture, and of how missionaries needed to discover “what treasures a generous God has distributed among the nations of the earth.” What this would implied for theology and theological education in the future was a strong sense of the importance and goodness of ordinary human experience.

Two other emphases at the Council loom large in the development of post-conciliar theology and theological education. In the first place, the Constitution on Revelation moved away from a more “propositional” understanding of God’s Revelation toward a more relational and personalist one. Revelation is not found principally in doctrines, but in God’s call friendship, as God moves among women and men in history. Second, the Council recognizes that while Christ’s church “subsists in the Catholic Church,” both other Christian bodies and peoples of other faiths participate in various degrees in Christ’s truth, through his grace. In this way, theology and theological education is open to an honest dialogue with other Christian bodies and with non-Christians as well, even including those with no explicit belief in God.

Perspectives on theological education
Two documents in particular offer fresh perspectives on theological education. The decree Optatam Totius deals with seminary formation, and although it still insists on the centrality of the thought of Thomas Aquinas in theological education it is much more informed by the insights of Möhler in the nineteenth century and Chenu in the twentieth. Paragraph 14 of the document speaks of an introductory course for

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13 See the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, Lumen Gentium (LG), Chapters 2 and 4. Henceforth, documents will be referred to by their initials, followed by paragraph number(s) or reference to chapters.
14 Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity, Apostolicam Actuositatem (AA), 29.
15 Decree on the Missionary Nature of the Church, Ad Gentes (AG), 2.
16 Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, Gaudium et Spes (GS), 1.
17 Ibid., 44.
18 AG 11, see GS Chapter 2.
19 Constitution on Divine Revelation, Dei Verbum (DV), 2.
20 LG 8.
21 Ibid., 14-16. See also the Decree on Ecumenism, Unitatis Redintegratio (UR), and the Declaration on Non-Christian Religions, Nostra Aetate (NA), 2.
students which introduce them to the “mystery of Christ” and the “mystery of salvation.” How this is to be done is not specified.

What it does suggest, however, is that theological education needs to move beyond mere intellectual and propositional categories and introduce students to a deeper personal appropriation of their Christian faith. Similarly, Paragraph 15 emphasizes how in philosophical studies “… the very manner of teaching” should stir up “in the students a love of rigorously searching for the truth and of maintaining and demonstrating it, together with an honest recognition of the limits of human knowledge.” Theology should also be taught in a way that keeps students faithful to church teaching, but leads them to a personal appropriation of it. Bible should be taught in such a way that it is recognized as the “soul of theology,” and dogmatic or doctrinal theology should be taught in a way that these biblical themes are proposed first of all. Next there should be opened up to the students what the fathers of the Eastern and Western Church have contributed to the faithful transmission and development of the individual truths of revelation. The further history of dogma should also be presented, account being taken of its relation to the general history of the church. Next, in order that they may illumine the mysteries of salvation as completely as possible, the students should learn to penetrate them more deeply with the help of speculation, under the guidance of St. Thomas, and to perceive their interconnections. They should be taught to recognize these same mysteries as present and working in liturgical actions and in the entire life of the church. They should learn to seek the solutions to human problems under the light of revelation, to apply the eternal truths of revelation to the changeable conditions of human affairs and to communicate them in a way suited to men of our day.22

The other theological disciplines should be taught in a way that expose the students to the full mystery of Christ. There should be, in other words, no more fragmentation of theological studies, but a sense of the whole, all centering on the personal, relational invitation of God’s revealing presence in people’s lives.

Paragraph 16 of the decree on missionary activity speaks of the need for seminarians in Asia, Africa, Latin America and Oceania to be trained in a way that they appreciate the values of their indigenous cultures. In their theological studies they should be taught to correlate their own culture with the Christian tradition, they should be educated in the concrete pastoral needs of their countries, and they should be trained in an ecumenical spirit. The document goes on in paragraph 17 to call for the theological education of catechists – one presumes both men and women. They should be trained in doctrine, Scripture and liturgy. Paragraph 22 calls the churches of the “Majority World” to engage in a theology that is truly inculturated. As the text concludes: “Thus it will be more clearly seen in what ways faith may seek for understanding, with due regard for the philosophy and wisdom of these peoples; it will be seen in what ways their customs, views on life, and social order, can be reconciled with the manner of living taught by divine revelation.”

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**Roman Catholic Theological Education Since Vatican II**

**Some important documents**

Vatican II ended almost a half century ago, and so there have been many developments in the understanding of theological education in its wake. In 1975, Paul VI spoke of the need to “evangelize human culture and cultures (not in a purely decorative way, as it were, by applying a thin veneer, but in a vital way,”23 In this way the pope sanctioned burgeoning movements in the church that would be variously named “contextual theology” or “inculturation.” The same document also sanctioned, albeit cautiously, movements of liberation theology that had begun to emerge in the early 1970s in Latin America, and were

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22 Decree on Priestly Formation, *Optatam Totius* (OT), 16.
beginning to have a major influence throughout the world.\footnote{Ibid., 29.} In paragraph 73 the pope calls for all members of the church engaged in evangelization to undergo “serious preparation.” Such a phrase mirrors the fact that theological education a decade after Vatican II had been no longer limited to clerical students, but had been opened to lay participation and that of male and female religious. This was beginning to thrive in Latin America, North America, Europe and Australasia. There were beginnings in Asia and Africa, for example at the East Asian Pastoral Institute in the Philippines and the Lumko Institute in Johannesburg, South Africa.

The renewal in clerical theological education, however, was ongoing. In 1970 the Vatican published the Ratio Fundamentalis (basic guidelines) for priestly formation (revised in 1985) and each area of the world was mandated to offer their own “Program of Priestly Formation,” geared toward their own context.\footnote{Congregation for Catholic Education, Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis Sacerdotalis, www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/catheduc/documents/rc_con_catheduc_doc_19850319_ratiofundamentalis-it.html (accessed 8/10/09).} In 1976 the Vatican published an important set of reflections specifically on theological education.\footnote{The Theological Formation of Future Priests (Vatican City: Vatican Polyglot Press, 1976).} In both documents the move to a more exploratory and integral way of doing theology was affirmed.

Perhaps the most important document on priestly formation, however, was John Paul II’s 1992 Pastores Dabo Vobis. In this long and rich document the pope calls for a highly integrated approach to priestly formation, integrating human formation with spiritual, pastoral and intellectual formation. In a key passage about theological education the pope writes that it

is both complex and demanding. It should lead the candidate for the priesthood to a complete and unified vision of the truths which God has revealed in Jesus Christ and of the church’s experience of faith. ... This means the candidate needs to be helped to build a synthesis which will be the result of the contributions of the different theological disciplines, the specific nature of which acquires genuine value only in their profound coordination.

This passage points to a theological formation that is both integrated and interdisciplinary, and one that encourages students to do theology\textit{ themselves}, and not just to memorize theological answers.

\textit{Christifideles Laici}, Pope John Paul II’s 1988 encyclical on the role of the laity in the church, is a bit disappointing in terms of a call to theological education for and by lay persons. The pope calls for doctrinal formation for the laity, especially for the sake of their role as catechists, but he does not speak of theological education proper, nor does he acknowledge the fact that in many parts of the world at the time (especially in Europe, North America and Australasia, but also in places like the Philippines) there were many lay women and men studying or already teaching theology at the graduate level, even in seminaries. Nevertheless, lay women and men continue to study theology, and some of Catholicism’s best theologians today are lay people: e.g. José M. De Mesa and Gemma Cruz of the Philippines, U. S. Latino theologian Roberto Goizueta, African American Shawn Copeland, Asian-American Jonathan Tan, and Malaysian Edmund Chia.

To understand the development of Roman Catholic theological education properly in the post-Conciliar decades, one would need also to study the significant documents from the Latin American Bishops Conferences (CELAM), and the huge range of publications issued by the Federation of Asian Bishops’ Conferences (FABC). Equally important are the papal apostolic exhortations issued at the end of every territorial synod of bishops that took place in preparation for the celebration of the millennium (e.g. Ecclesia in Africa, Asia, America). For example, in \textit{Ecclesia in Oceania}, John Paul II quotes the Synod to the effect that “serious consideration be given to more flexible and creative models of formation and learning” for priesthood candidates, that emphasize integration of human, intellectual, spiritual and pastoral
formation (aspects emphasized in Pastores Dabo Vobis). This needs to be taken within the context of an entire section in the document in which the pope emphasizes the importance of inculturation in evangelization. Ecclesia in Asia calls specifically for women to be admitted to courses of theology.

**Important movements**

**Liberation theology**

Although liberation theology has been highly controversial and under critique by the Vatican, its influence on the way theology is taught and the content of theological education is undeniable. The emergence of feminist theology, of Asian and African theologies of liberation, of some aspects of African American theology owe a great deal to liberation theology’s focus on a theological method that begins with and leads to praxis (reflected-upon action) and recognizes the poor and marginalized as a privileged source of theology. In addition, the emergence of certain aspects of practical theology is based on a praxis-oriented understanding of theologizing and theological education. Seminary formation in particular, in parts of Latin America and the Philippines especially, is built upon a program of “insertion,” by which seminarians live among the poor and attend classes that help them reflect upon their experiences in the light of the church’s theological tradition.

**Contextual theology**

We have already seen the emphasis given to the development of an inculturated or contextual theology in Roman Catholic official teaching. There is in addition a vast Catholic literature calling for a more contextual approach to theology, and implicitly, to theological education. Sadly, this is not always being done at the level of seminary education, but there are institutes around the world where contextual theology is a real priority and informs the way theology is taught. Among these we might mention the Lumko Institute in Johannesburg, South Africa; the Melanesian Institute in Goroka, Papua New Guinea; Ishvani Kendra in Pune, India; and Catholic Theological Union in Chicago, USA.

**Inter-religious studies**

More and more, Catholic theological education is done with the consciousness that the world lives in a religiously pluralistic age. Again, this consciousness is not as universal as one would wish, but it is becoming clearer today that one cannot adequately engage in theological study without real dialogue with and knowledge of other religious traditions. Courses in the great world religions, and courses in which

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28 Ibid., 16-17.
29 John Paul II, *Ecclesia in Asia* (EiA), 45.

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these traditions interact with the scriptural and doctrinal tradition of Christianity, are becoming more and more common in Catholic seminaries, universities and theological institutes.

A missionary perspective

The present author has more than one place called for a missionary perspective that should inform all of Catholic theologizing. Such a perspective emphasizes the practical nature of theology, understanding it as a service of the church’s practice and commitment to witnessing and preaching the Reign of God. It also is a theology that takes particular contexts seriously, tries to listen to all the voices of the universal church, and one that respects and engages in dialogue with people of faith of other religions. One hopes that this missiological perspective in Roman Catholic theological education will become more viable in the future.

Conclusion

Roman Catholic theological education has come a long way since 1910. It still has, however, a long way to go. Ministerial education needs to move beyond the “seminary” paradigm that was developed after the Council of Trent, and education for lay ministers in the church needs constantly to be deepened and enriched. The challenges of the official church and the various movements outlined above need to be incorporated into theological education in a creative way. Suspicion about lay theologians and lay theological education needs to be lightened on the part of many church leaders. There has been, nevertheless, a movement from a Roman Church to a World Church.

Bibliography


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Theological education in general and preparation for Protestant ministry in particular have undergone remarkable changes in the last 100 years. Methods used and content studied are very different in many contexts: where all prepared together in residential halls, many now work on their own on-line; where authority was held in the hands of a few, it is now often shared by many; where emphasis was on preparation for rural ministry, concentration is now on urban settings. Yet some of the commitments and expectations we hold in the early 21st century were seen clearly in the early 20th century and can be traced through the 1910-2010 period. Seeds of two of these, contextualization and cooperation, can even be found in the report of Edinburgh 1910, though they are usually understood as products of a later time. In the historical survey of the period that follows, particular attention will be given to these two themes.

Theological Education at Edinburgh 1910

The participants at the World Missionary Conference in 1910 recognized the lack of theological training and provision for ministerial formation as an urgent problem found in nearly every part of the world. In the report of the Conference, the section addressing the issue of theological training is titled simply “Inadequacy of Present Arrangements” and contains the following description: “In no department of mission work are the efforts at present made more inadequate to the necessities of the case than in that of theological training. It is startling to read of missions long established in extensive mission fields, which have not made any substantial arrangements for the training of preachers and clergy.”

A few examples of thriving theological colleges or other structures for ministerial formation were identified, but in most cases reports indicated the lack of personnel and contained complaints that the work load was simply too great. In the majority of locations there were not enough students interested in pursuing theological study – often (in the opinion of the report writers) due to the low salaries available for work in ministry.

Where strong provision was made for theological education, it was often due to the cooperation of different denominations by forming united institutions. “It is gratifying to notice the drawing together of the missions of different communions, and to note that efficiency in theological education is… being secured by the various missions in one centre combining to form one strong theological college.”

Indications of the strength that would later come through cooperation in united colleges and institutional clusters was already visible in the reports brought to the Conference.

Seeds of the concern for what was later called contextualization were also in evidence. The dangers of exporting western theology as though it would fit needs in all parts of the world were named in the Conference Report in a section on curriculum in theological education. “There is one danger both for the teacher and taught… that the teacher may seek at each stage to introduce from without, in an external and

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2 The Church in the Mission Field, 183.
mechanical way, systems of truth, knowledge, and practice, which are the results of western experience, but do not vitally appeal to the mind or even to the Christian consciousness of the local church." However, there was no evidence in the data brought to the Conference that learning and formation were taking place in any other way. In response to a question regarding “original and formative native thought in theology” the responses were “with notable unanimity, in the negative.” The writers of the Report were deeply concerned with this response and wrote at some length about the likely reasons; namely, the western “characteristics” of teaching and the fact that textbooks were frequently translations of western books, “whose whole sphere and spirit are necessarily widely remote alike from the mind and from the needs of the peoples we are seeking to train.” The danger for students was that they likely viewed their western teachers as “official custodians of a religion in which truth has already been fully gathered and systematized” and considered theology itself as exhausted, with no possibility for a new life or for being rewriting in and by the local context. The report writers say plainly that “little emphasis should be laid upon Western types of thought” if “living form” of Christianity and originality in Christian thought were to be nurtured. “Christian theology must be written afresh… and not misrepresented as if it were no more than a precipitation from the antiquated text-books of the West.”

Concern for the problems of ministerial training is expressed throughout the sections of the Conference Report that deal with theological education. The delegates were charged not to be content with “makeshift” courses; theology should be “adequately taught” and done so in “higher grade” institutions. However, the reader is left with questions about the definition of these terms – how to determine what is adequate, what is higher, and what is theological when only Europeans were present to make the definitions.

Another perspective, that of those who were not present at Edinburgh 1910, is provided by my late colleague, Ogbu Kalu. He describes the study and analysis of the delegates as done through a “distorting lens” – because those who should have been at the center of the discussion of education in Africa, the Africans, were not even present. He uses two images to define Edinburgh 1910. The title of his article, “To Hang a Ladder in the Air,” refers to the impossibility of defining, understanding, or analyzing a situation in which the voice of those at the center (in this case relating to education, the learners themselves) is not heard. Ogbu Kalu refers to Africa as the “voiceless continent” and repeatedly describes Edinburgh 1910 as the event at which whites gathered to talk about Africa – the event at which no black Africans were present. His concern was not that the data were not treated carefully and with clarity; “it was the lens (the selective and incomplete nature of the data) that distorted the image!”

He uses a second image, a proverb from the Igbo of Southeastern Nigeria, to begin and end the article. “A man who does not know where the rain met him cannot possibly know where he is going.” Africa met the rain of the gospel and responded, but those attending the World Missionary Conference in 1910 did not understand the response. “Because of the inadequate lenses used in reading the people, and understanding their responses to the kingdom of God in their midst, the Edinburgh Conference did not see the real face of Christianity in Africa…. It ignored the key players in the indigenizing movement, misrepresented Ethiopianism and paid scant attention to the rising tide of charismatic revivals. Finally, Western education became the biggest factor in the underdevelopment of Africa because of its power of eradication…. It is always useful to know where the rain met us.”

3 The Church in the Mission Field, 189-90. See 190 and 191 for the following quotations and data.
4 The Church in the Mission Field, 198.
5 Ogbu U. Kalu was the Henry Winters Luce Professor of World Christianity and Mission at McCormick Theological Seminary until his untimely death in January 2009. These notes come from conversations with him and, especially, his article “To Hang a Ladder in the Air: An African Assessment” in David A. Kerr and Kenneth R. Ross, eds., Edinburgh 2010: Mission Then and Now, Oxford: Regnum, 2009, 91-104.
6 Kalu, “To Hang a Ladder in the Air,” 95.
7 Kalu, “To Hang a Ladder in the Air,” 91, 103.
Theological Education in World Christianity Since 1910

Part I: Theological Education in Global Context: Issues and Themes

After Edinburgh

The concern for theological education at Edinburgh 1910 was significant, but the delegates did not develop a plan to respond or achieve related goals. At Jerusalem in 1928, at the second World Missionary Conference of the International Missionary Council, the issues and concerns regarding the training of local pastors were again raised and the inadequacies of the present efforts were again identified. In spite of the attention given to the need for training local pastors and discussion of shifting responsibility to local contexts, comparatively greater emphasis continued to be given to training missionaries for service outside of their own countries. At the third meeting of the IMC, at Tambaram (near Madras) in 1938, the issue was again raised and again dissatisfaction from every region was voiced. “The present condition of theological education is one of the greatest weaknesses of the whole Christian enterprise.” The report added that no great improvement could be expected until particular attention was given “to the need for cooperative and united effort.” However, the delegates decided this time on a concrete course of action and appointed a commission to prepare “detailed studies of the situation...to visit the main centres of theological education and to work out a policy and programme for the training of the ministry in the younger churches.”

Even before the Tambaram meeting and the call for surveys and analysis of possible solutions, two formal studies were conducted in China; the reports provide significant notes on the importance given to cooperation across denominational lines, as well as a general snapshot of theological education at the time. The Burton Commission conducted a formal investigation in 1921-22; the report contains the following note on institutional cooperation: “A surprising amount of interdenominational and international cooperation has been secured in the field of theological education. Of the thirteen theological schools, all except three are the result of interdenominational cooperation. This is the last field in which churches at home would have dreamed of union or regarded it as at all possible.” This statement is quoted in the report of the second survey, conducted in 1935, with the note that by that time, all of the union theological institutions were continuing except one. In fact, the 1935 Commission was able to report “the principle of union in theological education may be regarded as established in China.”

The earlier Burton Commission called for increased attention to preparation for rural ministry, as 80% of the population was rural. The 1935 Commission agreed, but also stressed the importance of urban ministry, noting that the 20% represented a population the size of Great Britain. Increased attention should also be given to religious education, to social tasks (so that the minister would become “the leader in all things that will make for the transformation and Christianization of his community”), and to the study of the Bible. The 1935 Commission called for a “functional” curriculum, which it defined as “student centered rather than subject-centered,” focused on the ministry the student would enter upon graduation, and including supervised field study. The curriculum of a seminary should be understood to include every part of the student’s experience as a member of the seminary community; it is not just the course of studies taught in the classroom but includes all experiences “fostered or left open to the student.”

Theological education in China in 1935 was found in institutions designed for the specific purpose of preparation for ministry and organized in general along lines similar to theological colleges and seminaries.

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in Great Britain and the United States. “Theological seminary” was the term used to designate these institutions by the 1935 Commission. They were not connected to the government system of education and so were free to design curricula as they wished. “Seminaries” included institutions at three levels: theological colleges offering four-year programs of study and requiring graduation from senior middle school for admission; theological training schools offering three-year programs and requiring junior middle school graduation for entrance, and graduate schools, with programs of one to three years in duration and college graduation required for entrance. Schools which did not require at least junior middle school graduation for entrance were not included under the term “theological seminary” by the Commission (though some of the schools themselves used the term); these schools of adult religious education and preparation for lay service were labeled “Bible schools.”

The Commission recommended that seminaries should not be organized in traditional departments – in which faculty are organized along discipline lines – but that students should be gathered into vocation groups according to the ministry for which they are preparing: rural, urban, educational service in schools, and so on. The curriculum would provide related courses of study and supervised field experience. Commenting on the report some twenty years later, R. Pierce Beaver wrote: “A strong warning was directed against adopting the department system, which is unsuitable for a small school and which breeds caste and hierarchical distinctions, competition and disunity.”

Following Tambaram, studies and surveys of theological education were conducted in Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Pacific. Nearly all called for increased cooperation between denominations and highlighted any cooperative work already underway. In India a comprehensive survey was undertaken in the mid-1940s and the “case for co-operation” was made in the strongest terms possible. Theological education along denominational lines had proven inefficient and wasteful and had not provided the resources or numbers of students needed to sustain strong educational communities. Pierce Beaver summarized the situation: “Only cooperation and concentration can bring the needed educational efficiency and at the same time promote the essential unity of spirit.” In spite the many hindrances, including denominational and faith tradition differences, it was seen that only a united approach would provide for the preparation for ministry with both efficiency and integrity.

The majority of the schools in this period followed the structural patterns of institutions in Europe and the United States and used the criteria of the West for assessing student learning and success rather than focusing on the needs of local churches. In every region, however, there was a growing desire to be independent of the West, for indigenous theologians to serve as faculty in theological seminaries, and for courses of study to focus on local needs and realities. The IMC’s Theological Education Fund was established in response to this need.

**The Theological Education Fund and Contextualization**

Two significant decisions were made at the 1958 meeting of the International Missionary Council in Ghana: 1) to integrate the IMC with the World Council of Churches, and 2) to establish the Theological Education Fund (TEF). Charles Ranson, who had accepted the position of General Secretary of the IMC in 1947 on the understanding that the organization would give greater attention to the theological education, had secured a grant from John D. Rockefeller for $2 million for the establishment of an ecumenical fund for ministerial training in Third World countries on the condition that an equal sum would be raised within

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14 Ranson, *The Christian Minister in India*, 166-191.
two years by church mission agencies. In the process of the negotiations, Yorke Allen, an executive of the Rockefeller Foundation, undertook a comprehensive study of theological education in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. The draft of Allen’s report on Protestant institutions was passed on to eight mission boards in the United States in 1957, and these boards subsequently agreed to contribute $2 million to the proposed TEF over the years 1958-1962. With this commitment, the Sealantic Fund (established by Rockefeller) pledged $2 million – allowing Ranson to present the proposal for the TEF to the Ghana assembly along with the funds needed to make it operational.

The work of the TEF is best understood in terms of its three mandate periods and their respective commitments. The first spanned the years 1958-1965 and consisted primarily of 1) a major grants program supporting institutions in Africa, Asia, Latin and Central America, the Middle East, and the Pacific and 2) a library and textbook program. This was the immediate post-colonial era, and most locations had either just achieved independence or were in the midst of working toward it. The objective of the grants program was to assist schools in meeting the challenges of that time, but there was also an overriding concern for “academic excellence,” which was still understood primarily in Western terms.

The second mandate, 1965-1970, continued support of theological education through grants to faculty for further study, support for curriculum development, and support for associations of theological schools. The primary questions in this period had to do with the relevance of theological education and formation for ministry in the face of poverty and the political powerlessness of many people. Support for graduate study was particularly important, the objective being the replacement of European and American faculty with local faculty with earned higher degrees. In 1965 only 25% of the faculty in theological education institutions in Africa was indigenous. By the end of the second mandate in 1970, this figure had risen to 40%. Figures for 1965 were similar in other parts of the world: 16% in the English speaking Caribbean, 30% in the Pacific, 48% in Latin America. A related problem had to do with the very high turnover of faculty and the resultant lack of stability; in 1964, only 25% of the faculty in African institutions had been in place since 1960. Increased stability and the replacement of European and American faculty through the training of local faculty were primary objectives of the second mandate.

Two other areas received significant support from the TEF in this period – curriculum reform and associations of schools. The course of studies in most schools was essentially a copy of that used in Europe, Britain, or the United States. “It was with difficulty that indigenous teachers were able to find a form of ministerial training suitable to the needs of their own church and society.” Among the many innovative reforms supported by the TEF in the period, a program in the Philippines provides a particularly interesting example. Departing from the models inherited from American missionaries, four theological institutions joined three agencies and established the Inter-Seminary Programme of Field Education (ISPFE) on the understanding that students need not only a firm intellectual education in theology but also “a living encounter with the church and the ministry in the world.” Programs were provided in industrial and farm settings and in urban, hospital, and mental health locations. Additional schools (mainline Protestant, evangelical, and Roman Catholic) joined, as did additional agencies soon after the program was

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17 The study was designed originally to assist in the decision making of the grant, but was later expanded to include Roman Catholic and Orthodox institutions. Yorke Allen, Jr., A Seminary Survey. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1960.
18 The TEF story is very well told by Christine Lienemann-Perrin, Training for a Relevant Ministry. The first mandate is covered in 33-122. See also Ministry in Context: The Third Mandate Programme of the Theological Education Fund (1970-1977), Bromley: TEF, 1972, 12.
19 Lienemann-Perrin, Training for a Relevant Ministry, 126-128.
20 Lienemann-Perrin, Training for a Relevant Ministry, 131-132.
21 Ciriaco M. Lagunzad, “Historical Report on Field Experience in Philippine Theological Education” in C.M. Lagunzad, Shape of Theological Education and Role of Field Experience in the 70s, Manila: Inter-Seminary Programme, 1971, quoted in Lienemann-Perrin, Training for a Relevant Ministry, 156.
established. Student response varied; some said it was “the greatest thing in my life” and others, “I wish to hell that I had never gotten into this mess.”22 Some extended their involvement while others left early. But for everyone, the ecumenical, cross-institutional learning was significant, and one institution, St Andrews Theological Seminary, undertook a complete curriculum revision based on experience of ISPFE. The revised format included field education each afternoon (following lectures in the morning) and one day each week during the semester for Salubong, an encounter with local congregations and the local population. Students not only had the opportunity to engage in local political and social life (and so to test their academic, theological learning), the local neighborhood came to know the Seminary, which in turn found itself no longer isolated from those it wished to serve. ISPFE and the curriculum reform at St Andrews provide examples of ways that some institutions were able to change, in both method and content, and so move beyond the inherited style of training for pastoral ministry and develop programs much more appropriate to local contexts.

The TEF provided significant support for associations of theological schools in the 1960s and consequently helped to improve communication between institutions, provide for peer learning and support, and decrease isolation. Some 20 associations were in existence by 1970 in all regions of the Third World (5 in Africa, 8 in Asia, 4 in Latin America, 2 in the Pacific, 1 in the Middle East). Many of the associations were distinctly ecumenical in makeup, including schools from evangelical and independent traditions as well as Roman Catholic and mainline Protestant.23 The associations were able to undertake publishing programs and host consultations – endeavors usually not possible for single institutions to undertake on their own. They also provided for exchange of professors and offered programs directed at institutional improvement and so supported institutional accreditation efforts. The associations were not without their difficulties, primarily having to do with on-going financial support.

The third TEF mandate (1970-1977) began with two years of extensive study; the staff traveled widely, visiting institutions and interviewing theological educators in the regions served. The outcome of this study process, which identified the key issues faced by theological education, is contained in the 1972 publication, Ministry in Context. The authors, the director and associate directors of this period, are names now very well known in theological education and the life of the church as a whole, not least for the work they did with TEF during the third mandate: Shoki Coe, director (Taiwan – then Formosa), and associate directors Aharon Sapsezian (Brazil), James Berquist (USA), Ivy Chou (Malaysia), and Desmond Tutu (South Africa). It is significant that the senior staff were, for the first time, primarily from the Third World – though sadly at this stage there were no women among them.

While the focus of TEF in each of its mandates was the Third World, the preface to Ministry in Context contained the following note: “it must be recognized that the problems facing theological education – as well as the possibilities for renewal – have a remarkably similar profile in both the “First” and “Third” worlds. In part this may be because Third World institutions have inherited the disabilities of the traditional Western residential patterns…. Today may be a moment in history when the Third World will have a decisive word to speak to the West, not least in matters of ministry and theological education.”24

The TEF leaders developed a “fundamental stance” which they explained as a series of tensions: 1) between the radical change needed in aims and structures and holding on to the good and valid in existing patterns, 2) between an overall policy and the needs of local realities, 3) to be critical and “yet not simply critical,” and 4) to continue to study but to be more than a study team.25 The need for fundamental change

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22 Lienemann-Perrin, Training for a Relevant Ministry, 157. A full account of the projects in Manila can be found on 145-170.
23 Lienemann-Perrin, Training for a Relevant Ministry, 137 and Ministry in Context, 13.
25 Ministry in Context, 18-19.
in the goals and structures of theological education, structures that had often been inherited from Western founders and institutions, was felt keenly by the TEF staff at the beginning of this period, but it was also recognized that continuity with the work that had gone before, including that of the earlier two mandates, was also very important. The tension was explained in theological terms: “the basic stance of TEF must be that of the Servant of Christ, striving to be both priestly and prophetic, both grateful for expressions of responsive faithfulness in the past and hopeful for what is yet to come.” The tension was not balanced, however, as the need for change outweighed the value of holding to existing patterns. The need for change was understood as theological as well as historical: “both the approach and content of theological reflection tend to move within the framework of Western questions and cultural presuppositions, failing to vigorously address the gospel of Jesus Christ to the particular situation. Western formulations are sometimes wrongly understood as identical with the universal Christian theology.”

The focus of the third mandate, and the most significant legacy of the period, can be summed up in the term “contextualization.” Again the theological framework was clearly understood: “contextualization is… a theological necessity demanded by the incarnational nature of the Word.” The definition published in 1972 was referred to frequently in the following years. “(Contextualization) means all that is implied by the term “indigenization” and yet seeks to press beyond…. Indigenization tends to be used in the sense of responding to the gospel in terms of a traditional culture. Contextualization, while not ignoring this, takes into account the process of secularity, technology, and the struggle for human justice, which characterize the historical movement of nations in the Third World.” In the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan’s stand against the government in the late 1960s and early 70s, the distinction between “indigenization” and “contextualization” was made clear by Shoki Coe and C.S. Song, successive principals of Tainan Theological College; by indigenization was meant “a simple acceptance of the status quo; contextualization, on the other hand, was understood to imply changing the status quo when it is found to be unsatisfactory…. The gospel could only be fully ‘contextualized’ or incarnated in Taiwan when the Taiwanese people could determine their own political destiny.”

A careful distinction was made between “authentic” and “false” contextualization, the first defined as “always prophetic, arising always out of a genuine encounter between God’s Word and (God’s) world” and always working toward the change needed in a particular historical context. False contextualization, on the other hand, “yields to uncritical accommodation, a form of culture faith.” Contextual theological education has to do with people becoming subjects of their own ministry and with regaining their own identity. Connection, even inter-dependence with other contexts is also needed. Again the theological framework: “Contextualization, while it stresses our local and situational concerns, draws its basic power from the gospel which is for all people. Thus contextualization contributes ultimately to the solidarity of all people in obedience to a common Lord.”

The programs of the 1972-1977 period were build on this “fundamental stance” of contextualization. The implications can be seen throughout the period, even in the details of the activities undertaken. As an example, it was agreed that a new directory of schools should be produced; however, it would be expanded to include more than just those schools which meet the “‘academic’ standard as measured by western criteria.” True academic excellence would require theological reflection on local realities; more, not less, theological discipline; and “a sharp break with a type of scholarship dependent upon ‘quotation theology.’”

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26 Ministry in Context, 18, 19.
27 Ministry in Context, 19, 20.
28 Lienemann-Perrin, Training for a Relevant Ministry, 63.
29 Ministry in Context, 20.
30 Ministry in Context, 21, 29.
New Understandings of Ministry and New Approaches to Formation

In the 1960s the concept of ministry underwent radical reforming, with emphasis in many places shifting toward the ministry of the whole people of God. Emphasis on theological education for the laity followed, as was heard in consultations around the world throughout the decade.\(^{31}\) Consideration of theological education should not begin with the needs of clergy and professional ministry, but with the church, with God, and with all of God’s people. C.S. Song contended that “the primary determinants (of theological education) are God and the world. Theological education is a process through which a person learns to be human through what God has been and done in Christ.” Song argued that lay-training should be a constituent part of theological education, not that the laity should replace the clergy, but that all Christians should take part in “the mission of God in the world on an equal basis but in different ways.”\(^{32}\)

With the questioning of the inherited forms of ministry, new patterns of theological education and formation for ministry were needed. Theological educators raised questions about every aspect of the traditional preparation for ministry, its form, its content, and its location – and developed alternative programs of training and formation. One of the most significant of these was theological education by extension (TEE), developed first in Guatemala in 1963. TEE employs self-study materials, regular meetings with a leader and other learners, and continued participation in the local congregation and community. The common commitment of TEE, which by the 1980s could be found on six continents with as many as 100,000 students, is that the context of present and future ministry is the best location for preparation for ministry. For a full, up-to-date account of TEE, see the article in this Handbook by Kangwa Mabukuki.

A number of other alternative forms of theological education were developed in this period, differing from the traditional residential model in structure, location, academic and church status, and/or educational ideology. Study centers, “de-centralized” training programs, and community development programs are some of the approaches named in Ministry in Context in addition to TEE. Many of these alternatives did not require students to leave their home communities and congregations to study in residential seminaries, and many were not tied into the government regulated systems of higher education. They share a common conviction that “a greater degree of exposure and involvement in the living issues of our time has become imperative for the integrity and credibility of theological formation.”\(^{33}\)

Programme on Theological Education / Ecumenical Theological Education

Across the three mandate periods, the TEF provided remarkable support for theological education not only by providing financial grants to individuals, institutions, and associations, but also by making ecumenical dialogue possible for theological educators across geographical and denominational lines. The cooperation nurtured in associations of schools and in the common work undertaken by representatives of very different institutions and traditions may be one of the most important legacies of the period. In 1977 the WCC Central Committee decided to create a successor organization to TEF to provide a mechanism for the continuation of the commitments of TEF and make them a constituent part of the work of WCC. The Programme on Theological Education (PTE) was formed as a subunit of the Faith and Witness unit, with a mandate to develop “an ecumenical vision of theological education in every continent, building on the experience of the TEF.”\(^{34}\)

\(^{32}\) C. S. Song, “Theological Education: A Search for a New Break-through,” North East Asia Journal of Theology, 1.1 (March 1968), quoted in Mackie, Patterns of Ministry, 70.
\(^{33}\) Ministry in Context, 44.
\(^{34}\) Lienemann-Perrin, Training for a Relevant Ministry, 235.

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The central concern of PTE was ministerial formation, understood in the broadest sense. Ministry involves all of God’s people, women and men, ordained and un-ordained, and is “a whole life-style of self-giving and service to others in the name of Christ.”\textsuperscript{35} PTE’s support for theological education was in line with this comprehensive concept of ministry, extending ecumenically and geographically to nurture work in a wide area as well as traditional preparation for congregational and community leadership. Particular support was given to women in theological education, recognizing not only the important role women were playing in all aspects of ministry but that support for women had long been neglected in many churches.\textsuperscript{36}

With the program on Ecumenical Theological Education (PTE’s successor program formed in 1992) a significant change away from the exclusive third world orientation of TEF could be seen. John Pobee, leader in TEF, PTE, and ETE, explains that the unprecedented growth of the church in the global South, along with the opening of Eastern and Central Europe, required a more global profile – “for the sake of the wholeness of theology everywhere.” At the Oslo meeting of ETE in 1995, delegates from the North argued that their interest was not primarily related to the transfer of resources from North to South, but to engage and be challenged by colleagues in the South, recognizing that their own health would be greatly improved by the encounter.\textsuperscript{37} In the 1990s, ETE continued funding in the TEF/PTE tradition – supporting associations of theological institutions, faculty development and scholarships, and literature and library development – but focused on supporting ecumenical orientation in theological education, innovative curriculum development (particularly with regard to HIV/AIDS), and international networking. ETE has provided significant support and strategic partnership for the World Conference of Associations of Theological Schools (WOCATI). The most recent work of ETE and the program’s present commitments can be found in the 2008 document “Magna Charta on Ecumenical Formation in Theological Education in the 21st Century – 10 Key Convictions”\textsuperscript{38} and in the many resources on the WCC/ETE website.

Concluding Notes

The response of theological educators to the issues named by the TEF/PTE/ETE staff and to the many other challenges and opportunities of the late 20\textsuperscript{th} and early 21\textsuperscript{st} centuries can be found in the articles in this Handbook. The foregoing is a mere sketch of theological education in the ecumenical tradition in the past 100 years. A much richer, more complete telling of the story can be found in these articles, where many of the contributors provide historical outlines covering specific traditions, geographical areas, and particular concerns.\textsuperscript{39}

The changes in theological education over the last 100 years are well illustrated by James Amanze’s description of the paradigm shift that that has taken place in post-independence Southern and Central Africa.\textsuperscript{40} The shift has been from European centered to African centered, from curricula and structures modeled on European and American institutions to theologies and theological schools designed for and addressing African realities. Theological education in the region during the colonial period and

\textsuperscript{38} \textit{Ministerial Formation} 110 (April 2008), 82-88 and \textit{International Review of Mission} 388 (April 2009), 161-170.
\textsuperscript{39} For a snapshot of theological education in 2009, see the report of the Edinburgh 2010 study group, “Challenges and Opportunities in Theological Education in the 21st Century”, \textit{Joint Information Service of ETE/WCC and WOCATI}, November 2009 and available on the WCC/ETE website.
immediately after was “patriarchal in belief, theology and practice” (“a legacy that it has failed to shake off even today”), it stood against African culture, and it employed a European scholastic curriculum that did not address the cultural, political, and economic issues of Africa. The paradigm shift began in the 1970s with new methodology and a curriculum dealing with the issues facing Africans: African culture, women in church and society, HIV and AIDS, the environment, socio-economic development, globalization and democratization – so that “there are tremendous differences in the way in which theological discourse is conducted today,” changes that have contributed greatly to the growth of the church in Africa.

Similar stories are being told in all parts of the world. Thanks be to God.

Bibliography


KEY ISSUES FOR THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Martin Conway

From 1910 to 2010 and On

This Handbook arises, in part, from the awareness that the World Missionary Conference which took place in Edinburgh 1910 produced results that were both surprisingly profound and optimistic about the future of Christian mission. This section, well aware of major problems ahead, nonetheless hopes to suggest perspectives that can point to no less profound and hopeful obedience of the total Christian community in the very different world of the 21st century.

The twentieth century was a horribly violent and wasteful period in many respects – just think of the Soviet gulags, the Nazi concentration camps, the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, let alone all the other horrors of two world wars and the subsequent conflicts that have damaged so much of humanity and of nature in nations such as Algeria, Vietnam, Congo, Nicaragua, Bosnia, Iraq. In recent years Nelson Mandela and Barack Obama have perhaps stood out as persons with a wideness of heart and concern for their fellow human beings around the entire world, but the new century was hardly able to begin in 2000 with a sense of high optimism about the future of the planet.

At the same time, and in significant part because of the results of the Edinburgh 1910 conference, the 20th century has seen an unpredictable yet most welcome advance in regard to the effectiveness of Christian mission, as a movement toward the unity to which all Christians are called in the one body of their one Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Edinburgh 1910 was a key factor in inspiring Archbishop Nathan Söderblom to plan what became the Universal Christian Conference for Life and Work, at Stockholm in August 1925, dealing above all with the need to banish war as an acceptable means of settling disputes. Two years later – thanks to Bishop Charles Brent’s vision at Edinburgh of a united church – the first World Conference on Faith and Order, looking into the many theological question over which the churches had become divided over the centuries, met in Lausanne in August 1927. These two movements were brought together in 1937, at their respective second major conferences, to agree to form a World Council of Churches. A Provisional Committee met in 1938 and 1939 but had to wait until after the Second World War before the founding Assembly of the WCC could be held in Amsterdam in August 1948. The International Missionary Council, established in the 1920s in direct follow-through of the Edinburgh Conference’s main aims, was slower to take up the opportunity of joining in the new Council, but voted to do so in 1958 and was joyfully accepted into a partnership of the three great movements at the 3rd Assembly of the WCC in New Delhi in 1961.

Over the rest of the 20th century the WCC expanded greatly in its membership, especially with the acceptance of the Russian Orthodox Church and its sisters of Rumania and Bulgaria at the New Delhi Assembly in 1961, and from then on with many new churches in the countries of the South. It also grew noticeably in its unique role in world affairs, for instance in being able to make a major impact on South Africa, with its support for the overthrow of apartheid. Meanwhile the Roman Catholic Church had held its Second Vatican Council, revealing itself as a much more open and collaborative church than it had earlier seemed to be, even if later papal decisions have sometimes seemed to hark back to earlier models.

In the first years of the new century a quiet but remarkably effective series of meetings under the title of ‘Global Christian Forum’ have succeeded in bringing together representatives of both the major historical ‘families’ of churches (Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant) and of the thousands of newly springing up churches including the Pentecostals and the African Initiated Churches. In terms of church membership
there has been astonishing growth in China since 1980, both of people pressing into the churches, Protestant and Catholic, and of university students and academics taking a keen and profound interest in the teachings and practices of Christianity. \(^1\) Even if many churches in Europe seem to be dwindling in numbers and more than a little stuck in their ways, this is far from the case in other continents.

**Precisely What Do We Mean by ‘Ecumenical’?**

Over what has now become a relatively long career in the organisations known as ‘ecumenical’, i.e. those that aim to serve the coming unity of the one Church of Christianity, I have grown increasingly aware of two easily overlooked, yet each in its own way absolutely crucial factors in this whole scene.

First, that what we are centrally concerned about is an ‘ecumenical movement’, where what matters is that the people forming it and acting within it are contributing to a movement, not an organisation, nor a community, nor even a church. Rather, the ecumenical movement is a phenomenon of friends seeking to worship, obey and above all move on together, and to encourage others to move on with them, into a new and more hopeful future. Since this is the future which belongs primarily to God, the God we have come to know in Jesus of Nazareth, no one living today can ever be sure precisely where this will lead, nor even precisely what are the right things to be done at any particular moment. Yet those involved in this movement can feel reasonably confident that their actions together will prove to be of real significance for the overall witness and service of the Body of Christ to the world of today and tomorrow. For, secondly, this is a movement in which the all-important leadership is that which comes not from earthly leaders but from God the Holy Spirit. This stands in direct relationship to what abounded among the first apostles, to their own amazement on the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit took over their cautious lives and got them out on the streets sharing their experience with whoever was passing by.

And so I have found myself defining the ecumenical movement in this way:

> the movement, under the leading of God the Holy Spirit, to explore and live out the wholeness and integrity of the Church of Jesus Christ, in her service of the wholeness and integrity of our one world, as created by God the Father.

This will remain a life-long challenge for anyone preparing for service within the church, only possible under the guidance of the Spirit and in partnership with countless others.

**The World Ahead in the 21st Century**

To mark the beginning of the new century, the late Professor Adrian Hastings published an article titled *Beware Apocalypse*. ‘Almost everything that has mattered hitherto will get worse and worse, though millions of people may remain mesmerised by the glossy image of a controlled virtual reality all around. Babies born at the start of the new millennium will be faced in their sixties, if not before, with a crisis in human history so unprecedented that it is hard even now to imagine it.’ \(^2\)

He picked out as ‘the most uncontrollable factor’ that of ‘global warming’, with rises in sea level which may wipe out ‘most of Bangladesh, the Netherlands, Florida, the Mississippi Delta, the English Fens and much else. Nowhere will be unaffected, but Africa, already the most fragile of continents in human terms will be the worst hit. …Economic misery and political anarchy will go hand in hand, each fuelling the other.’

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\(^2\) *The Tablet*, 8 January 2000.

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Almost all the major problems of the twenty-first century will be basically global and only able to be handled effectively by strong global government, yet the world is entering this century with a United Nations organisation which has been steadily weakened for decades… The challenge to American hegemony from China will fuel a new race for power and add to the difficulty of shaping instruments of world government or plotting global policies which can be generally seen as fair. Europe, which, possibly alone, could perform the role of global mediator and provide an imaginative leadership that is not just self-seeking, is likely to remain hamstrung by its own internal divisions and its relationship with a highly unstable Russia.’

Only in his short last paragraph does he suggest possible responses to this frightening prospect: ‘First, to do all in our power to bring the world’s leadership to its senses while something can still be done to limit the scale of the disaster. Secondly, to recognise that global catastrophe is in the judgment of hard realism very likely to come upon us and, therefore, to prepare ourselves and small communities of sanity and faith to live un-despairingly within it. Even inside a concentration camp or on the deck of the Titanic there is a gospel to preach and a pattern of behaviour reflective of that gospel. There is little time to lose in preparing ourselves mentally for Christian life in the very hardest of times.’

Already less than 10 years later I am amazed how much of his vision has already become true. Let no one suggest that he was exaggerating, even if he would have been the first to welcome any signs that he had over-emphasised the dangers.

Alongside that, already in its first decade the 21st century has begun to face almost all Christians with two further specific challenges. These may at first sight look rather different, yet they also interact deeply with climate change and with one another.

The first, though there is no significance in this order, is that arising from the presence in virtually every major city in our world of believers belonging to several of the major ‘world faiths’. Our Muslim, Jewish, Hindu, Buddhist, Sikh, Bahai and other fellow-believers in a divine purpose for our lives and for the world as a whole, are no longer only to be found in the nation of their origin, just as Christians are no longer limited to the land in which Jesus Christ lived. Christians can no longer expect to live purely in ‘our own’ community, but rather in a world where members of the other world faiths are present alongside us and deserving of no less mutual awareness and respect from Christians than Christians will wish to be shown by them. Diversity and ‘differences – whether of gender, ethnicity, class, able-bodiedness or religion – are no cause for fear, hatred and conflict, rather as sources of enrichment3.

The second is all that has started to arise – and there is no doubt much more yet to be discerned – out of the appalling economic ‘crash’ that began in 2007 in the USA, spread rapidly to European nations and then to virtually all nations that are caught up in international trade and economic transfers. We are at present having to face up, throughout the world, to a decisively new stage in setting economic goals and expectations. We are having to learn, in the richer areas painfully but of the highest importance, that sheer economic and financial competition for its own sake is extremely damaging to the human ‘flourishing’ of those trapped in its tangles. We all, of whatever background and tradition, urgently need to be developing simpler, more locally based and above all more collaborative patterns of behaviour and exchanges, financial and other, with whoever are our neighbours.

These new patterns must now be seen in the same context as the hugely urgent need to respond to the vast challenges of climate change, as sketched by Hastings in the passages quoted above, and which have come over the horizon of scientific and social awareness more quickly and with more urgent demands even than Hastings was spelling out in early 2000. The great majority of scientists are now warning us that the our dependence on fossil fuels as our major source of energy is raising the global temperature at a speed

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3 The quotation is from ‘Strangers and Citizens’, a lecture by Barbara Einhorn, Professor of Gender Studies at Sussex University, UK, in June 2009.
which is threatening the very sustainability of life on the planet. Yet the G20 leaders’ meeting in April 2009, for instance, gave as good as no attention to this dimension. That shows how unthinkingly we have let ourselves and our leaders be governed by a seriously unrealistic set of aims and expectations. It is of the highest urgency that Christians, by all means in alliance with many others, play as full a part as we can in opening up new possibilities for understanding God’s purposes for the planet, and finding new ways of putting these into practice, e.g. in the limitation of carbon emissions and many other significant reductions in what we humans demand of the natural environment to which we owe the very possibility of being alive.

Challenges That Contribute to the Larger Whole

These three challenges belong together. Yes, they have rather different origins in the human history of our time, and face Christians with specific demands which will not necessarily recall the other two as we try to find ways of responding creatively. But it is obvious, for instance, that the challenges of climate change belong to the entire world, to the planet as a whole, and therefore that it cannot just be a question of finding responses that Christians by ourselves can adopt. Whatever useful steps we become aware of deserve to be shared with our Jewish and Muslim neighbours, just as ways of behaving that they may discover within their obedience may – indeed should – prove no less significant to Christians. Similarly, ways of ordering our economic patterns and expectations that are more conducive to collaborative patterns – and in the West also to much simpler lifestyles – as to the fairer distribution of resources, need to be developed in relation to the impact of climate change, and in partnership with whoever among the other faith communities and across humanity’s many diverse cultures can come up with valuable practices and approaches. So in theological education, whether, for example, in pastoral theology, ethics, or in the study of leadership in congregations and synods, it is important to keep in mind all three of these major challenges, in effective relation to each other and to the total situation facing humankind.

So, What About the Many Separate Churches and Their Unity in Christ?

Does this awareness of three major, world-wide and profound challenges to humanity mean that the ecumenical movement, in its service of the ‘wholeness and integrity of our one world’ is giving up on the goal of the comparable wholeness and integrity of the one Church of Christ? Not at all, though it will undoubtedly be wholesome if concerns for reform and renewal of the many divided churches are always seen as within, and so as deliberately hoping to better serve, God’s purposes for the world and humanity as a single whole.

It is in this light that the World Council of Churches, as the ‘flagship’ of the total ecumenical movement, even if it lays no claim to automatic pre-eminence, deserves to be judged for the coherence and quality of its work. Throughout its first century it has struggled no less hard in the fields of ‘faith and order’ and of ‘world mission and evangelism’ to discover ways of overcoming doctrinal and organisational quarrels between the separated churches, as of exploring new paths of more united obedience and renewal, whether at local, national or world-wide levels. Since the 1930s the first aim defined in the WCC’s constitution has been this:

The primary purpose of the fellowship of churches in the World Council of Churches is to call one another to visible unity in one faith and in one Eucharistic fellowship, expressed in worship and common life in Christ, through witness and service to the world, and to advance towards that unity in order that the world may believe.

Much advance within that aim has been achieved, yet always with at least two major obstacles. One is the gap, in theology and Christian obedience, in the churches no less than in politics and world affairs, between theory and practice. The WCC has again and again known imaginative and apparently meaningful
agreements reached by thinkers from divided churches in its conferences, yet which, when taken back to the member churches, find the authorities there all too often unwilling to agree to put them into practice.

The other, even more difficult to overcome, from the evidence to date, is the way in which the churches which consider themselves ‘older’ than those who, as the former see it, break away and form ‘new’ churches, find it almost impossible to loosen their understandings and disciplines to accept those ‘younger’ churches as equally belonging to Christ, and so equally acceptable as partners as their own long-standing members. This has long been the case with the way the Orthodox churches behave towards almost all others, even the Roman Catholic Church, especially when this does something new in one of their ‘own’ nations. But it is no less true of the Roman Catholic Church as it regards and responds to whatever may come from Protestant churches, and hardly less so for the ‘historic’ Protestant churches which remain distressingly slow to offer real understanding and partnership to the thousands of newer churches which have sprung up by fresh initiatives and with their own leaders over the last century. One cannot deny that all too often the ‘new’ churches are themselves slow to approach the ‘older’ in charity and expectation, but this is no excuse for the ‘older’ not to offer friendship. In this connection the Global Christian Forums that I mentioned earlier are making a highly significant, and to my knowledge totally new contribution.

**How Can Theological Education Deal With These Huge Subjects?**

Precisely because the three areas of concern are bound to remain high in our agendas throughout the 21st century, it is vital that all those preparing for Christian leadership in any form acquire as part of their ‘basic’ training a reliable grounding into the realities and complexities of each of these, along with a strong understanding of the relation between Christian faith and contemporary social dilemmas. As with many questions about the total span of human living, future clergy should be strongly encouraged to recognise how vital the witness and leadership of several of their lay members and friends, not least those with professional positions involving expertise in these areas, will prove for the total Christian community. Clergy and laity are together responsible for preaching the Good News on every possible occasion, so it’s not a matter of one giving way to the other. Rather of friendships and partnerships becoming profound enough for either clergy or lay to seek out the most appropriate minds and voices and advice as each new particular situation or need arises. So I hope that virtually all programmes of theological education can enable all students to meet, as speakers, as members of working groups, as visitors who can become friends, persons with specific experience and expertise in matters to do with the three challenges set out above.

**Key Practical Steps**

I will finish with two simple, yet surprisingly far-reaching suggestions of practical steps that absolutely anyone in training for Christian membership and leadership can and should follow. The more programmes of theological education that deliberately provide opportunities and set aside time and energy for these, the better alike for those who teach and those who study.

First, seek out one or more persons from whom you are separated (perhaps belonging to a Christian church different from your own, or to a different faith community, or of a different culture or nationality) and do all that you can to make friends with her/him/them. In this, be sure to practice the pattern of listening before speaking and only speaking yourself when asked to do so. Respect the person(s) from the first contact onward as ‘other’, not a copy of what you are. And as you grow into friendship, make sure to ask her/him/them to tell you about their beliefs and their struggles with obedience before ever taking any

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4 Details and public materials are available from www.globalchristianforum.org.
time to tell them of yours! Learn that you will grow more surely into obedience to the God who is creator of all and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, if you can do so in deep friendship and reconciliation with at least one person whose background and opinions you would earlier have hardly thought it right to explore. The same disciplines can also apply to seeking reconciliation between hostile political attitudes, or peoples who were formerly enemies in war or oppression, of both of which tomorrow’s world will probably still have all too many examples.

Second, ensure that any commitment that you enter into with such friend(s) is one that promises worthwhile service of the wider community around, at any and every level, not only to your fellow-believers, good as they can and will be as allies in what the Spirit is encouraging you to explore and do for the ‘common good’. Whatever we do as Christians, in worship no less than in social work, is for the sake of the wider and whole community of human beings and of created nature. The three new challenges laid out above will no doubt deserve our priority and obedience for significant lengths of this new century, so even when you set out to deal with rather smaller concerns, don’t forget that the ‘wholeness and integrity of our one world, as created by God the Father’ deserves always to be kept in mind, as the basic and overall reality we are called in Christ to serve.

**Bibliography**


ENVISIONING POSTCOLONIAL THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION:
DILEMMAS AND POSSIBILITIES

Namsoon Kang

Much confusion and uncertainty in theological schools today seems to be due to lack of clarity about the community – the church; about its form and matter, its relations and compositions – Richard Niebuhr.¹

Who is speaking and from what location? Whose purpose does the discourse serve? What vision is produced through the practical possibilities? In what way is this vision one of great social, personal, and planetary flourishing? – Rebecca Chopp.²

Postcolonialism as Discourse of Resistance and Liberation and Its Implication for Theological Education

A large number of theologians have pointed out the crisis of theological education especially in the context of North America, the space in which I currently write, teach, and live. However, the “crisis” they respectively identify is hardly unitary because their position differs from one another in terms of their angles and approaches. Those crises of theological education are related to such issues as the “widespread discontent with the schools” from the “main-line Protestant churches,”³ the current organization of the curriculum, the issue of Christian identity and of theory and praxis especially in the schools with ecumenical spirit,⁴ and the problem with the specialization of disciplines, or clericalization of theological education, banishing the classical sense of habitus—theology as wisdom and science.⁵ Feminists from various racial/ethnic backgrounds have also indicated that although the number of women seminarians has been drastically growing in theological schools and seminaries, theological education has not fully reflected feminist perspectives and approaches into the curriculum and teaching, which claim women as the subjects of theological education.⁶ As of 2002, for example, the women students comprise thirty-six percent of the total enrolment in all degree programs in theological schools and women make up more than fifty percent of the student body in some schools.⁷ The rise of women students in theological education has

⁷ Charles R. Foster, Lisa E. Dahill, Lawrence A. Golemon, and Barbara Wang Tolentino, eds., Educating Clergy:
brought not just a demographic change but also fundamental questions regarding the nature of curriculum, the composition of faculty, pedagogy, and the traditional framework of theological discourse. All these crises call for a transformation of theological education that requires critical thinking and reflection on the very concrete context in which we are located. I would argue that one of the angles that theological educators have not fully adopted in the current discourses on theological education is a “postcolonial” perspective. Theological education, like education in general, has been playing two roles: a mere reproducer of existing reality and a visionary challenger of status quo for an alternative reality and possibility. The “postcolonial theological education” that I would like to propose is a transformative way of doing “theological education as a visionary challenger” of existing reality of Christianity and society. It envisions a transformative theological education that seriously takes up and challenges the issues of “power and knowledge” on the one hand and to fundamentally seeks to re-construct theological discourse, curriculum, pedagogy, or theological institutional systems from a perspective of the geopolitical human context of justice, equality, and human plurality on the other. In this sense, postcolonial theological education is a theological education for “public” theologies that concern a public relevance of theological education and turns its face toward the “public” world in order to participate in making a more “just” world. 8

One cannot simply write a kind of “universal” perspective on the theological education in world Christianity. If one does, it would be an act of homogenization through the lens of the discursively powerful. Therefore, I intend neither to generalize nor homogenize the unimaginably diverse contexts of theological education in world Christianity. What I would like to do, instead, is to open up a space for a transformative learning and teaching, in which we can critically examine and eventually “de-learn” or “un-learn” the colonial mentality in the theological education for the betterment of our world. The analytical lens that I employ is from the power-sensitive discourses such as post colonialism, feminism, or postmodernism, which arise from a different socio-political milieu respectively, but offer profound insights with a different emphasis and primary space of socio-political and discursive engagement. These discourses help one to see how “knowledge” production and reproduction, and the “truth-claim,” are inextricably linked with the hegemonic “power.” There is a deep-seated “suspicion” among scholars in/from the global-south about employing critical discourses such as feminism and postmodernism primarily due to the “foreign” or “Western” origin. The question that such “suspicion” raises is twofold: loyalty and authenticity. Those who raise the skeptical question about the discursive effectiveness of feminism and postmodernism have a desire to confirm one’s “racial/ethnic” loyalty and authenticity-as-African/Asian/Latin American. Claiming the significance of the authentic “Asianness,” for instance, in one’s doing theology is based on the politics of “ethnic identity” as being “essentially” different from the “Westernness.”9 Overemphasizing one’s gender, or racial, ethnic, or sexual attributes without relating them to a wider historical human context blinds one from seeing the intersectionality of different attributes, the intersection of subject and history, and the inter-linked nature of the seemingly separate attributes and...
social markers. Those gender, racial/ethnic, sexual attributes are interconnected one way or the other due to one’s being simply “human” in the world, where everything interrelates to everything else, with or without one’s awareness. I sense that there lies an unwitting and subtle, but strong cultural, racial/ethnic, or sexual essentialism and binarism in this kind of question of the “origin,” “loyalty,” or “authenticity.” In this context, the society often forces one to choose only one type of identity from other identities of gender, race, ethnicity, class, age, or sexuality that constitutes who one is. Revisiting and reconsidering the “politics of identity” in a wider context of theological education in world Christianity are significant in the theological endeavor to move beyond the racial, ethnic, sexual confinement towards a worldly human context and human plurality, but not falling into the trap of “false universalism” that suppresses the experiences and lives of the marginalized people. The power-sensitive discourses such as feminism, postmodernism, or postcolonialism are significant in constructing a new way of “doing” theological education because they offer theologically provocative and educationally valuable insights for theological education to construct a transformative politics of human plurality, of justice and equality, and of responsibility and solidarity, which counters and moves beyond a colonial mentality of domination, hierarchy, or kyriarchy.\(^\text{10}\)

Postcolonialism has emerged as one of the major critical discourses in academia since its development in the 1980s. Defining “postcolonialism” is, however, not easy simply due to its complexity and variety of the implication. That scholars write the term in two ways, “post-colonialism” and “postcolonialism” further reveals the multiple understanding and perception of postcolonialism itself.\(^\text{11}\) Some scholars use the two terms interchangeably without making a distinction between the two. However, there are scholars who use hyphen between “post” and “colonialism” in order to emphasize the historical, chronological aspect of postcolonial discourse, whereas others use non-hyphenated “postcolonialism” to denote the “trans-historicity” of postcolonial discourse, “like the concept of patriarchy in feminism”.\(^\text{12}\) I intentionally use “postcolonialism” without a hyphen to show that, from my specific position, I employ postcolonial discourse as a “trans-historical” discourse in the sense that one can apply its analytical insights to various socio-political-cultural and religious contexts of power, domination, and subjugation that run through a specific historical time and space and, in different forms, through human daily reality in various time and spaces. The trans-historicity of postcolonial discourse is, however, definitely far from being “a-historical.” Postcolonial discourses, along with feminist and postmodern discourses, help people see the tyranny of the colonial mentality of “domination and control” of one over the other. The colonial mentality runs through inter-personal relations, inter-national or inter-continental relations, or inter-religious relations. People can construct, legitimize, justify, perpetuate, and disseminate the colonial mentality with the “logic of domination” based on one’s gender, race and ethnicity, class, age, religion, birth-origin, sexuality, nationality, citizenship, familial or educational background, or physical or mental ability, and so

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\(^{10}\) The term kyriarchy is a neologism by Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza. She argues that the term ‘patriarchy’ refers only to the domination of the father/male over women and, therefore, does not reveal the multiplicative structures of domination based on gender, race, class, and ethnicity. For this reason, she replaces “patriarchy” with “kyriarchy” as a key analytical category. According to Schüssler Fiorenza, “kyriarchy” means the domination of the lord, slave master, husband, the elite freeborn educated and propertied man over all wo/men and subaltern men. It is to be distinguished from kyriocentrism, which has the ideological function of naturalizing and legitimating not just gender but all forms of domination. Kyriarchal relations of domination are built on elite male property rights over wo/men, who are marked by the intersection of gender, race, class, and imperial domination as well as wo/men’s dependency, subordination, and obedience—or wo/men’s second-class citizenship.” Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, Jesus and the Politics of Interpretation. New York: Continuum. 2000), 95.


forth. However, postcolonial discourse also makes it clear that one can no longer so easily position the old, simplistic binary of men-women, the west-the rest, white-color, rich-poor, right-left, or center-margin in terms of the binarism of “oppressor-oppressed,” “victimizer-victim,” or “colonizer-colonized” due to the intersecting, complex nature of various forms of oppression and discrimination. A person, for instance, can be both a victimizer in one sense and, at the same time, a victim in another.13

Postcolonial discourse deals with the questions of identity and subjecthood, authenticity, representation, or the interconnectedness of power-knowledge. The postcolonial discourse that I adopt is, however, not about “nativism” that desires to go back to the “indigenous,” “unpolluted” tradition and culture of the “non-West.” Furthermore, it is neither about “binarism” of the West versus the Rest, nor about claims for “authenticity” of and “loyalty” to the non-West, the “indigenous.” Instead, the postcolonial perspective that I employ is about dismantling any type of domination and subjugation between and among different cultures, races and ethnicities, genders, geographies, sexualities, or religions, both on the interpersonal and institutional level. Therefore, the “colonial mentality” that I am referring to is not only about the “colonialism-out-there,” but also the “colonialism-in-here” that requires a sense of self-criticality, a “healthy self-skepticism.” If one criticizes the ideology of the “West-as-normative,” or the “men-as-the normative,” for instance, the alternative should not be the “non-West-as-the normative,” or “women-as-the normative.” If one sees the deep-seated problem of the “West-being-center” of theological discourse and practice, the solution to the problem is not the “non-West-being-center” instead. The “politics of reversal” repeats the same hierarchical, oppressive binarism, in which the colonial “politics of domination” is grounded. What the postcolonial consciousness does is to problematize and de-center the very perception of the paradigm of “center-margin.” It further seeks a transformation of the very bipolar perception of the other in a manner of superior-inferior, authentic-inauthentic, normative-deviant, and so forth, into the relations of justice, equality, and affirmation, perceiving every individual person as equal, as a member of humanity, and created in the image of the Divine.

Postcolonial discourses have made theologians and practitioners revisit how people in the West have constructed the superiority of the West, how people have embedded the West-centrism in the production and reproduction of theological knowledge and have disseminated it through the educational system. Postcolonial discourse also struggles to redefine meaning and truth-claim as a historical and socio-political construction and to understand how people have produced and reproduced such truth-claim and knowledge within the ideological legacies of imperialism and colonialism. Postcolonial discourses, therefore,

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13 In the first year of my teaching at my school in Texas, USA, 2006, the students in the four courses (two courses per semester) that I offered were predominantly “white.” On the first day of the class, I asked the question, “what did you see in me at the moment when I entered the class room?” Students looked extremely puzzled, and seemed to struggle inside to figure out the nature of this seemingly “odd” question and to come up with a “correct” answer on the first day of the class by the newly arrived “yet-unknown” professor. The question was out of my pedagogical intention to provoke them to fundamentally re-think the stereotypical perception of social oppression and discrimination in a bipolar mode of “black and white.” As a non-white in a white dominant world, for instance, I can claim myself racially-oppressed; as woman, a victimized by patriarchy and male domination. If I keep following this line of bipolar categorization of social oppression, I can simply claim the “authenticity” of my “victim-hood” in the classroom where the “whiteness” and “maleness” are predominant attributes of the social markers of my students. However, I cannot simply identify myself as a “pure-victim” based on my gender, race, language, nationality, or citizenship. For I could play the role of the oppressor as a “professor,” for example, who is institutionally granted to exercise the professional power to grade/rank the works of students, which would become a significant part of the permanent markers for their academic competency throughout their entire life journey. As a heterosexual, I can also be, wittingly or unwittingly, a part of the homophobic system of sexual oppression against the homosexual. As a middle-class professional, I cannot simply categorize myself under the banner of “oppressed” group, in spite of my marginalized status as woman, non-white, or English-speaker-with-accent, due to my other “privileged” social statuses. This personal anecdote of mine is to show the exemplary case for the complexity and intersectionality of various forms of oppression and discrimination that one can encounter in one’s everyday reality.
fundamentally problematize and de-center the imperial centers of power of grand narratives and totalizing systems and authority. In this context, postcolonial discourse is a discourse of resistance that resists interpersonal, institutional, socio-political, or religious practices that legitimize the logic of domination and relegate the powerless to the periphery of power. Moreover, postcolonial discourse is also a discourse of liberation, which seeks to liberate one from the colonial mentality and practice in the materialized everyday reality.

Universalized West and Subalternized non-West – A Global Outlook

Immanuel Kant rightly claims the “cosmopolitan rights” of every individual human being through his well-known remarks on the “perpetual peace,” in which he says “the people of the earth have thus entered in varying degrees into a universal community, and it has developed to the point where a violation of rights in one part of the world is felt everywhere.” However, Kant, ironically, also contends that German is the best combination of the sublime and the beautiful, and goes on to conclude that “humanity is at its greatest perfection in the race of the whites.” Kant eloquently articulates the Enlightenment humanism for a “universal community” through his notion of “cosmopolitan rights” of every individual human being, but, at the same time, he ends up denying it in his notion of “human geography” that “naturalizes” the superiority of the “white” races. In a similar manner, the Western colonizers, along with Christian missionaries, preached the vision of modern Enlightenment of human equality, autonomy, reason, and Christian love and dignity of all individual human beings created in the imago dei, but they, at the same time, denied those visions for humanity in their very colonial practice of sub-alternization of the colonized and their knowledge. A number of postcolonial theorists, along with feminist and postmodern theorists, have pointed out that “the all-knowing and self-sufficient Cartesian subject violently negates material and historical alterity/Otherness in its narcissistic desire to always see the world in its own self-image.”

However, problematizing the “universalized West” and “sub-alterned non-West” in my postcolonial approach to theological education is neither to entirely reject nor to discard the Western thought and tradition, and neither to blindly exalt nor to universalize the non-West reversely. The primary point that postcolonial analysis makes is to debunk the West’s privileges, power, and authority of “canonical status” in knowledge construction of the world. In the colonial process of “canonization” of the Western knowledge system in the world, the West has become “universalized,” whereas the non-West and its knowledge have become “sub-alternized.” Thinking about theological education in the context of world Christianity requires one critically to re-visit and re-examine what Michel Foucault calls “subjugated knowledges,” a term for, first, “historical contents that have been buried and disguised in a functionalist coherence or formal systemization,” and, second, “a whole set of knowledges that have been disqualified as inadequate to their task or insufficiently elaborated: naïve knowledges, located low down on the hierarchy, beneath the required level of cognition or scientificity.” The West or Europe remains “the sovereign, theoretical subject” of all knowledge in theological education, whereas the non-West is in a

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15 Immanuel Kant, “Physical Geography,” in Emmanual Chukwudi Eze, Race and the Enlightenment: A Reader (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1997), 63. Eze points out that those philosophers who were drawn to Kant’s philosophical anthropology, including Martin Heidegger and Michel Foucault, did not mention about Kant’s “race question” and that A Kant Dictionary does not have any entry on “race.” Eze, Race and the Enlightenment, 3. Cf. Howard Caygill, A Kant Dictionary (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1994).
position of sub-alternity. Dipesh Chakrabarty, a historian of modern South Asia, argues that scholars in the West have consistently excluded the non-Western thought from the constitution of knowledge system:

Third-world historians feel a need to refer to works in European history; historians of Europe do not feel any need to reciprocate...the “greats” and the models of the historian’s enterprise are always at least culturally “European.” “They” produce their work in relative ignorance of non-Western histories, and this does not seem to affect the quality of their work. This is a gesture, however, that “we” cannot return. We cannot even afford an equality of symmetry of ignorance at this level without taking the risk of appearing “old-fashioned” or “outdated.”

People have regarded the theological discourses from the West as “normative” theology, whereas they have labeled theologies from the non-West as “indigenous” or “contextual” theology. This perception and labeling imply the very Westcentric idea that the theologies from/by the non-West are applicable only to a “particular” context and lack a “universal” status, unlike theologies from the West, the absence of “reciprocity” of knowledge between the Third-world and Europe seems the “natural” order of things. In this context, theologians from the West have produced and reproduced “universal” theologies that “embrace the entirety of humanity” but “in relative, and sometimes absolute, ignorance of the majority of humankind – that is, those living in non-Western cultures.” The question of how an “insurrection of subjugated knowledges” or a “return of knowledge” is possible in the theological education within the global context remains a shared task across regional boundaries of world Christianity. Here it is important to remember that reclaiming the sub-alternized knowledges, which scholars in the West have excluded and degraded in the Westcentric theological curriculum and construction of theological discourses, does not mean to simply reverse the Western colonial universalizing gesture and replace the Western with the non-Western knowledge and perspective – which one could call a “postcolonial revenge.” The task of getting beyond Westcentrism in theological discourse, curriculum, or institutional system in theological education in a global context is far from exercising a “politics of reversal” or “postcolonial revenge” by the non-West. Franz Fanon calls for a “new humanism,” while not giving up the Enlightenment idea of the human. He declares:

[T]he European game has finally ended; we must find something different.... Europe has done what she set out to do and on the whole she has done it well; let us stop blaming her, but let us say to her firmly that she should not make such a song and dance about it.... let us stop envying her.... What we want to do is to go forward all the time.... in the company of Man[sic], in the company of all men.... For Europe, for ourselves, and for humanity, comrades, we must turn over a new leaf, we must work out new concepts, and try to set afoot a new man.

That Fanon seeks for a “new humanism” in his struggle for decolonization, but not to discard the Enlightenment vision and idea of the human, indicates that one cannot simply deny the noble heritage of the Enlightenment humanism simply because of its Western origin. Fanon goes on to claim: “All the elements of a solution to the great problems of humanity have... existed in European thought. But the

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20 Foucault, *Power/Knowledge*, 81.
22 Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, preface by Jean-Paul Sartre, trans. Constance Farrington (1961; New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1963), 312-316. It is worthy to note that there is a gender-bias in Fanon’s language. Despite the gender-biased languages in his works, I believe Fanon’s vision for “new humanism” does include both men and women.
action of European men [sic] has not carried out the mission which fell to them.”24 Postcolonial paradigms for theological education are, in a way, to envision a “new humanism,” a new language through which theological education becomes possible to de-center, deconstruct, and challenge dominant relations of power and knowledge, and further to create an alternative vision for humanity that moves beyond any types of superiorism, domination, or discrimination in the individuals, institutions and faith communities, and in the world. Postcolonial theological education seeks also radically to affirm the equality and dignity of whoever/whatever one is. It is impossible, I believe, to address the issues of the non-West without engaging with the intellectual and theological tradition of Europe, either critically or affirmatively, when all the concepts, which are fundamentally significant in the construction of theological and philosophical discourses and practice, “such as citizenship, the state, civil society, public sphere, human rights, equality before the law, the individual, distinctions between public and private, social justice, scientific rationality, and so on all bear the burden of European thought and history,” and “these concepts entail an unavoidable... universal and secular vision of the human.” 25 Therefore, the task before us theological educators is neither to totally deny the very values of the Enlightenment ideas of the human nor to create a “third Europe,” following the United States of America which has tried to become the second Europe.26 Instead, the task of the postcolonial theological educators is to help all students and practitioners of theology to advance a step further, so that they become those “whose connections must be increased, whose channels must be diversified and whose messages must be re-humanized.”27 In practicing postcolonial theological education, it is therefore fundamentally important for theological educators to deepen and sharpen their own understanding of the discourses of various “others,” in terms of gender, religion, race/ethnicity, nationality and citizenship, sexuality, class, and so forth, in order to achieve a more self-critical understanding of the “partiality” and “provinciality” of their own locations, positions, values, worldviews, and theologies, before they offer theological education to students. Teaching, I believe, is teaching oneself, no matter what one teaches. Postcolonial theological education also entails speaking to and engaging with significant socio-cultural and geo-political issues from a perspective of radical justice and equality, a perspective that is against any types of domination and control, which compose the fundamental nature of colonial mentality. In this sense, postcolonial theological education is to teach and practice “Jesus’ commitment to a new way of being in the world, one that does not rely upon domination....”28

Colonial Practice of “Standardization” in Theological Education: A Case of Language

Those who attend the “international” meetings would easily notice that there is always a deep-seated, internal “rankism” as is in the airliner. There are usually three classes in the plane: the first, business, and economy class. The airfare people pay determines the “human ranks” in the plane. In the academic world and the international conferences, a similar rankism seems to exist, determined not by money but by the “language,” with which one is competent. The first-class-humans are those whose native language is English, the business-class-humans are those whose primary language belongs among the former colonial/European languages, such as French, German, or at least Spanish which easily gets translated/interpreted into English, and the economy-class-humans are those whose primary language is other than English or former colonial languages, which seldom gets translated/interpreted into English –

24 Fanon, The Wretched of the Earth, 312 & 314.
25 Chakrabarty, Provincializing Europe, 4.
26 Fanon, The Wretched of the Earth, 313.
27 Fanon, The Wretched of the Earth, 314.
the “international” language. Those scholars in English-speaking countries in the West do not have to try to become “international/global/universal” because whatever they write or speak, people usually perceive it as “international/global/universal.” However, those scholars in non-colonial language-speaking countries need to try always hard to become “international/global/universal” by speaking and writing in English, which is for them a “foreign” or “acquired” language, not a heart-language. Even when they write and speak in English, people often categorize it as “indigenous,” “local,” “contextual,” or “particular” and often it turns out to be simply “as-discourse” because they write only “as-Asian,” “as-African,” “as-Latin American,” and so forth. It is not surprising to learn that “the present-day world status of English is primarily the result of two factors: the expansion of British colonial power, which peaked towards the end of the nineteenth century, and the emergence of the United States as the leading economic power of the twentieth century. It is the latter factor which continues to explain the world position of the English language today.”

Although only one quarter of the world population is “now capable of communication to a useful level of English,” and the majority of people--three-quarters of the world population – does not communicate in English, it is impossible to be a “global netizen” or to be internationally effective scholars, for instance, without handling English. Needless to say, the “language-holder” becomes “power-holder” in many ways, and “the choice of language and the use to which it is put is central to a people’s definition of themselves in relation to their natural and social environment, indeed in relation to the entire universe.”

In an era of globalization, the English language becomes the more and more powerful means of “neo-colonization.” It is important therefore to scrutinize the impact of the spread of English as a “universal” language in theological education in a global context because the dominance of a particular language would mean the dominance of the values, worldviews, and powers of the very language in the rest of the world, which takes a form of “linguistic imperialism.”

“Linguistic imperialism,” according to Robert Phillipson, is “ideologies, structures, and practices which are used to legitimate, effectuate, and reproduce an unequal division of power and resources (both material and immaterial) between groups which are defined on the basis of language,” and English linguistic imperialism occurs when “the dominance of English is asserted and maintained by the establishment and continuous reconstitution of structural and cultural inequalities between English and other languages.” In this regard, the English-holder becomes power-holder, and the English language becomes a powerful means of imperialistic domination. Gloria Anzaldua demonstrates how the hegemony of English terrifies people who speak language other than English, which she calls “linguistic terrorism”: “Because we speak with tongues of fire we are culturally crucified. Racially, culturally and linguistically… we speak an orphan tongue… as long as I have to accommodate the English speakers rather than having them accommodate me, my tongue will be illegitimate.”

The discursive hierarchy between English-speaking nations and non-English-speaking nations takes a form of “discursive colonialism.” “Language” has been one of the significant sites of power, domination, control, and struggle for colonial and postcolonial discourse because the colonization process itself always begins in language. The colonial control over

30 David Crystal, English as a Global Language, 69.
33 According to Phillipson, “English linguistic imperialism” is a sub-type of “linguicism.” Robert Phillipson, Linguistic Imperialism, 47.
34 Gloria Anzaldua, Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza (San Francisco: Spinsters/Aunt Lute, 1987), 58 and 59. Italics mine.
languages through “standardization” has remained the most potent instrument of control. In this sense, I would say that the “language” issue is one of the most critical issues in the “Westcentric” theological education in world Christianity, and that it is a significant exemplar for the colonial residue in the theological schools and universities in the US. Acknowledging that today the US is not just one of many nation-states in the world, as the term “US-Empire” indicates, non-Western academics and schools do not have the luxury to ignore what is happening in the US academy because of its powerful influence on the global context in terms of the production, dissemination, standardization, and impact of academic discourse and disciplinary structure on the rest of the world.

From my perspective, “linguistic imperialism” is still at work in the academy of the US and it affects in the educations of the other regions of the world. For instance, most theological schools in the US have “language requirements” for doctoral and advanced masters students, and it is obvious that the “standard” academic languages are predominantly “French” and “German.” I examined the language requirements for the doctoral students of sixteen theological schools among the ATS (Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada) member schools. It is interesting to see the terms those schools use in the language requirement guidelines, the terms such as “scholarly language,” “modern languages,” “languages for scholarly research,” or “modern language of scholarly discourse,” which most schools refer, in fact, to French and German. There are a couple of schools that add Spanish or Italian to German and French. Only a few schools allow students to take a second language other than French or German, but the students need to submit the “rationale” for the approval for substituting a language other than French or German, while the schools do not offer a “rationale” for why German and French are the standard “scholarly” languages as if it were self-evident that require no explanation. In this context, only English, German, and French become the most “authentic” languages for scholarly research, whereas other languages become, automatically, “inauthentic” for academic research and discourse. Through this institutional policy of “standardization of academic languages,” most theological schools reinforce and reproduce, though unwittingly, the colonial mentality of West-centrism in the theological education in world Christianity. The “standardization” of academic languages only in the four former colonial languages--English, French, German and Spanish--in the US theological schools makes non-Western theological scholars/students and their works look more inadequate for the production and reproduction of theological discourse on a global level.

One can also extend the question of “academic standardization” to the issue of the “required” and “elective” courses in theological education. The questions that we must ask are: What are the “standards” in making the institutional decisions about the required or elective courses? Whose perspective is applied in the decision making process? Whose voice is heard or silenced in the decision-making process and body? Who has the power to include or exclude some courses from the required courses? The postcolonial perspective further invites one to re-think the fundamental question of “why-it-is-what-it-is” in theological educational systems and practices so that the “hegemonic centers” of theological education, in terms of race and ethnicity, gender, class, sexuality, or traditional disciplines, get “de-centered” and “un-learned.” The wave of reforms in theological education seems to focus on “quantifying” the outcome of education, when one cannot in fact “quantify” the outcome. Furthermore, institutional practices in such as a “standardized” curriculum, raising language test scores such as TOEFL or GRE especially for the students from overseas, the student/faculty evaluation criteria, the institutional request for a “visible” leaning outcome and so forth often lack the deep philosophical and theological questions as to what the purposes of

35 Those schools are: Boston College, Chicago Theological Seminary, Claremont School of Theology, Drew University, Duke Divinity School, Emory University, Graduate Theological Union, Harvard Divinity School, Iliff School of Theology, Princeton Theological Seminary, Union Theological Seminary, Union Theological Seminary and Presbyterian School of Christian Education, University of Chicago, University of Notre Dame, Vanderbilt University, and Yale University.
theological education are and what kind of Christians, ministers, theologians, citizens, or public intellectuals the theological educators envision to produce. In this sense, a postcolonial theological education can be possible only with the transformation of the very consciousness of the theological educators and administrators themselves. Without the internal transformation of the consciousness and worldviews of the theological educators, a mere external change of the curriculum, the content of the learning objectives and goals, or the learning outcome, for instance, would bring only the “exterior fix” but not the actual change of the nature and purpose of the theological education. Postcolonial discourse, along with other power-sensitive discourses such as feminism and postmodernism, reminds us that theological education and its pedagogy are always inextricably linked to “power” and theological educators exercise “power” both institutionally and personally, whether or not they intend to do so. The question that we must wrestle with is, however, not how to eradicate the power itself but how to bring the enlargement of human liberation, equality, and justice in the world, regardless who/what one is, through the “right exercise” of the pedagogical power that theological educators have.

**Toward a Practice of Postcolonial Theological Education: Decolonization as Theological Education**

According to Paulo Friere, the educators are not and should not be “bankers” who simply deposit knowledge/information into the students’ account of “facts.”³⁶ The students are not passive receivers of knowledge from the educators but ever-evolving human beings who embody a history of knowledge and action that provides the context in which new questions, knowledge, ideas, and interactions take place. Therefore, the theological educators are to teach from the very context in which the students are located and positioned. Following Friere’s critical pedagogy, it is significant to remind the theological educators that theological educators are to work for social justice in a world of injustice and to teach a passion for transformation of not only the churches but also the world so that they can become the “critical mass” who are willing to work for change beyond the walls of the classrooms and the churches. Teaching and learning the significance of the act of “crossing” the borders of one’s location, in terms of one’s religious/denominational belonging, nationality and citizenship, gender, class, race/ethnicity, ability, or sexuality, are essential in practicing postcolonial theological education in order to develop the strategies and coalition for change of the various forms of injustice in the world. Here the traditional boundaries of binary distinction between teachers and students, texts and contexts, or teaching and learning lose the meaning they once had. Teaching is itself an ongoing learning process, contexts become the very center of the texts as significant resources of learning, and teachers are to become the “permanent” learners who learn from the students through their new questions, insights, experiences, dilemmas, contestations, and challenges. Here students become “teachers” of their teachers through their being “Dasein” in the world as the very embodiment of human history, knowledge, struggles, experiences, visions, and deep longing for the new possibility of the impossible.

The question as to how theological education produces and reproduces the colonial mentality of domination, hierarchy, and control is an extremely significant issue to constantly wrestle within the practice of postcolonial theological education. “Theory of practice,” which Pierre Bourdieu well illustrates, shows the mechanisms through which the hierarchical domination reproduces itself, via the formation of subjects, in practice of the educational institution and program. According to Bourdieu, “in any given social formation the different PAs [pedagogic actions] tend to reproduce the system of cultural arbitraries characteristic of that social formation, thereby contributing to the reproduction of the power relations  

which put that cultural arbitrary into the dominant position.”37 The task of theological educators is then not to promote the reproduction of a colonial mentality but to participate in activities that encourage students to counter the reproduction of the power relations based on one’s class, gender, race, and so forth. Furthermore, theological education should mean not to reproduce the power relations of colonization and domination in the name of the doctrines and the religious, racial, or gender superiorism but to dismantle any form of “colonization” of the other so that students do not participate in the construction of the world of colonial power over against the other but to become the active agents for change for a more just world in their “everyday” realities. Practicing postcolonial theological education, therefore, requires “decolonization” as Fanon articulates:

Decolonization never takes place unnoticed, for it influences individuals and modifies them fundamentally. It transforms spectators crushed with their inessentiality into privileged actors.... It brings a natural rhythm into existence, introduced by new men [sic], and with it a new language and a new humanity. Decolonization is the veritable creation of new men.... In decolonization, there is therefore the need of a complete calling in question of the colonial situation.38

The practice of postcolonial theological education is an ongoing process of “decolonization,” which should happen both individually and institutionally. The educators in practicing postcolonial theological education must be aware of the needs of individual students to realize the importance of human freedom from any form of hierarchical, colonial domination, and to remove both the material and symbolic constraints on their actions for decolonization.

I would like to conclude my essay on postcolonial education with Derrida’s passionate invitation to “the world for the impossible” because I firmly believe the very essence of practicing “postcolonial theological education” is an “impossible” task to achieve. It is, therefore, working for the “impossible” vision for the world in which justice within, between, and among individual persons, institutions, religions, nations, and regions flows like a river and in which no one exercise one’s power to dominate and control the other simply because no one, no race, no religion, or no culture is superior nor inferior to the other.

Go there where you cannot go, to the impossible,
It is indeed the only way of going or coming.
To go there where it is possible is not to surrender,
rather, it is to be already there and to paralyze oneself in the in-decision of the non-event.39

Bibliography


38 Fanon, The Wretched of the Earth, 36-37.
Geh hin, wo du nicht kannst;
Sih, wo du sihest nicht:
Hör wo nichts schallt und klingt, so bestu wo Gott spricht.


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*Part I: Theological Education in Global Context: Issues and Themes*
(3) THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION AND THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH

THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION AND MISSIONAL PRACTICE: A VITAL DIALOGUE

Steve de Gruchy †

The practice of mission engages with theological education in a dialogical manner. On the one hand, theological education requires missiological practice; while on the other hand, missiological practice requires theological education. By examining this two-way relationship we will gain an insight into the fundamental questions posed by the contribution of missiology or missional practice, to theological education.

Theological Education Requires Missional Practice

We have learnt in the last fifty years that mission is not something that belongs to the church. It belongs to God. God is a missionary God, a sending God. This *missio Dei* configures the *missiones ecclesia*, in that the triune God calls and sends the people of God into the world, to live and work amongst all God’s people. The practice of mission is therefore fundamental to what it means to be Christian and to be church. As David Bosch notes, this has huge implications for theology.

Just as the church ceases to be the church if it is not missionary, theology ceases to be theology if it loses its missionary character. The crucial question, then is not simply or only or largely what church is or what mission is; it is also what theology is and is about. We are in need of a missiological agenda for theology rather than just a theological agenda for mission, for theology rightly understood, has no reason to exist other than crucially to accompany the missio Dei.\(^2\)

If theological education has anything to do with the church, it must therefore be obvious that theological education must engage with missional practice. Here we suggest that theological education requires missional praxis in at least four important ways.

An orientation towards the world

First, and most obviously, missional practice gives to theological education an outward orientation, one that gives a focus to the world rather than the church or the academy. This claim is rooted in the important missiological recognition that God is at work in the world (rather than just the church), and that the church finds the reason for its existence in its willingness to respond to what God is doing in the world. As Bongani Mazibuko puts it, “The praxis of missiology is life”.\(^3\) This very obvious and simple insight should have a profound impact upon theological education, in that it should guide both the content and process of such education. Let us deal first with the question of content.

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\(^1\) See David Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1993), and in particular the discussion on 389-393. The concept has had its critics, but I remain convinced that rightly understood it provides the most theologically adequate foundation for Christian mission.

\(^2\) Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 494.

The classic theological curriculum includes the biblical languages and studies of the old and new testaments, the history of the Christian faith, systematic theology or dogmatics, ethics, and practical theology. Sometimes missiology is added as a ‘sixth’ subject, usually in those seminaries or colleges that have a strong evangelistic emphasis. What is often forgotten, however, is that missiology is not just a ‘sixth’ subject; it should provide the orientation for all the other subjects. If the church finds the reason for its existence in responding to the _missio Dei_, then theological education should take that seriously. We should not study the bible, or church history, or practical theology, or any other theological subject, without constantly being aware of its missiological implications, and of making students aware of this too. In the words of Winburn Thomas, “To teach theology is to affirm the missionary imperative”.4

When theological education is removed from its missiological orientation it loses touch with the world, and it turns inwards. What happens then is that it creates problems, tensions, arguments and debates that are wholly internal to the academics involved, and which soon bear little resemblance to the lives that ordinary people are living. Books and essays are written, conferences are attended and research projects are undertaken to deal with issues raised by other academics, as theological educators seek to mimic their colleagues in the academy in the search for wider cultural acceptability. Yet, the gnawing question remains: if there is no missiological orientation towards the world, in response to the challenge of the gospel itself, then is theological education theological?

_Furthering the telos of life_

Acknowledging that theological education must engage the world is important, but missiological reflection and practice also provides theological education with a sense of _telos_, of purpose or direction for that engagement. For the _missio Dei_ is not a general principle of God’s beneficence or providence. It is a statement of faith about God’s redemptive intention in a world struggling with injustice, sickness, alienation, corruption, violence, oppression, and dislocation. Comprehending this is a crucial element in our work as theological educators, because the goal of God’s engagement in the world should drive our energies, perspectives and concerns.

This is not the place to offer a full examination of God’s missional telos, other than to say that the Biblical model suggests at least three guiding metaphors: shalom, kingdom, life.

In seeking to define the purpose of the _missio Dei_, we are helped by the biblical term _shalom_. This word is used to indicate all aspects of human life in its full and God-given maturity: righteousness, truth, fellowship, peace, etc. This single word summarizes all the gifts of the messianic age; even the name of the Messiah can simply be _shalom_ (Micah 5:5, Eph 2:14); the gospel is a gospel of _shalom_ (Eph 6:15), and the God proclaimed in this gospel can often be called the God of _shalom_… The goal towards which God is working, i.e. the ultimate end of his mission, is the establishment of _shalom_.5

Throughout the Old Testament the vision of _shalom_ emerges as the powerful telos to which God wants the world to move. The hope of shalom stands against the oppression and injustice that is experienced by the poor, the alien, the sick and the widow. This vision is one of peace, of healing, of justice, of inclusion.6 It is a vision of wholeness, and holiness in which all of creation, including the lion and the lamb will co-exist together. The prophets of the Old Testament look forward to the coming messiah who will establish this time of shalom, and the gospels announce its fulfillment in the person of Jesus Christ.

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6 See the discussion in Nicholas Walterstorff, _Until Justice and Peace Embrace_ (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983), 69-98.
For Jesus the telos is the kingdom of God. All things point to this kingdom which is coming and yet is experienced in fleeting glimpses even now. It is a vision of a time in which the sick are healed, prisoners are set at liberty, the lame walk, the blind see and the poor are told the good news of their free welcome into God’s family. This is a kingdom which is at odds with the kingdoms of the world, a radical alternative, a counter-culture movement in which the last will be first and the lamb that was slain, rather than the emperor, will rule. Running through these visions of shalom and kingdom is the powerful theme of life. It holds together creation, redemption and consummation, providing a clear telos for what God is doing in the world: creating life, protecting life, celebrating life.

Grasping this is profoundly important for theological education, because if theological education is to have any connection to the missiones ecclesia as shaped by the missio Dei, then it must be directed towards life. “Because the kingdom is the mission of the triune God, creator, redeemer, sanctifier, it is concerned with the whole of reality. Nothing especially nothing human, is outside this loving concern.”7 It practical terms this means that the way we read and study the bible, engage with the history and systematic concepts of our faith, or consider our pastoral ministry, must all be undertaken in the service of life. Engaging in the life of the church means shaping our curricula around HIV and AIDS, climate change, gender-based violence, food security, and the like. These are the issues of life and death in the world today, and if our theological education is not preparing students for providing leadership to the people of God in their response to the missio Dei, then it falls short of its goal.

Learning from engaged praxis

Theological education requires missional praxis in terms of content, but also in terms of process. The point is that God’s people are already involved in the world, engaged in the telos of life. They are not waiting for theological educators to tell them what to do; but in response to the gospel and the prompting of the Spirit, throughout the centuries many people (both inside and outside the church) have responded, and are responding to the missio Dei. There are countless Christians and others working with the poor, the sick, the marginalised, victims, refugees, or orphans. By engaging in such praxis they are at the cutting edge, creating new opportunities and generating new ideas about how to engage the world in the name of Christ.

This missional praxis is an incredible laboratory of theological reflection. Social theorists speak of ‘grounded theory’, a theory that emerges as people step into action in a certain direction, but without a clearly articulated a priori theoretical position. The theory is clarified as the praxis unfolds, through a constant hermeneutical engagement.8 What this means for theological education is that the world is not just a place for ‘applied theology’ learnt in books and classrooms, but a place in which theology itself emerges from the ground up. Here we can echo the words of the Lutheran World Federation:

Mission as accompaniment needs a theology that is reflective of and developed in the context of the church. Such contextual mission theology must also reflect on the praxis of the church. Mission theology, using the hermeneutical spiral already refers to and draws from the practice of mission.9

In this way, missional practice is constantly generating new ideas and frontiers for theology, and if theological education is to prepare students for an engagement in the world then it needs to be constantly learning from such praxis.

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7 Emilio Castro, Sent Free: Mission and Unity in the Perspective of the Kingdom (Geneva: WCC, 1985), 74.
By way of comparison one might think of the difference between medical education and theological education. In the former, the education of the next generation of health professionals is driven by constant attention to clinical practice, drug trials, and technical breakthroughs. It makes no sense, and in fact endangers lives, to train students in procedures which are no longer up to date. By contrast, theological education often proceeds on the basis that we have learnt nothing new about the Christian faith in the last centuries, and students can be educated solely on the basis of the wisdom of the ages. Without negating the importance of history and tradition, the truth is that missional practice provides an ongoing contextual laboratory for theological reflection raising new issues and new perspectives on old issues almost daily. Our commitment to life, and to being on the cutting edge of responding to life, should be as profound as that of medical educators.

In South Africa we have found that the missional engagement of Christians alongside people of other faiths or of no faith, in the struggle against HIV and AIDS (for example) raises new questions about God, suffering, inter-faith dialogue, stigma and inclusion, the boundaries of the church, health and sickness, and church-state relationships. Likewise, the missional engagement of Christians in countries in which they are minorities such as India or China or Britain, raises significant questions about culture and faith; and the ways in which ordinary people navigate these tensions generates new ways of seeing the gospel, the bible, the church, or God. And the point is that what is being learnt in this laboratory of the missiones ecclesia demands to be understood and shared in the lecture halls of seminaries, bible colleges and universities.

**Being intentionally interdisciplinary**

Given that God is at work in the world, and not just in the church; and that the calling of the church is to participate in this work in the world, then missional practice demands an adequate understanding of the world. “A new emphasis for theology upon the world in which mission takes place, or the world in which the church ministers comes to the fore here. Understanding the world in which the church ministers and its need… becomes in this view of theology, a major task of theology.” This means that theological education needs to be intentionally interdisciplinary in nature, and that theological education needs to help students to understand the world just as much as they need to understand the bible, the tradition, the creeds and the liturgy.

During the heyday of the Protestant missions of the nineteenth century, the preparation of missionaries included an orientation to the history, culture and language of the ‘exotic natives’ to whom they were being sent. There is much about this which is embarrassing, but there is also a truth in this form of education, namely, that missionary work involves more than just knowing about the Bible and Christian doctrine. It also involves knowing something about the context into which one is being sent. Whilst we have quite rightly discarded the understanding of mission as something that takes place amongst the ‘exotic natives’ in favour of recognising the essentially missionary nature of the local congregation in its own context, we should nevertheless not discard the wisdom about ‘knowing the context’.

If our missional practice is amongst orphans and vulnerable children in our own city we may not need to learn a foreign language, but this missional engagement means we need to learn something about the psycho-social needs of the young, and particularly those who are vulnerable. If we are to engage our community in overcoming gender based violence, then we need a working knowledge of patriarchy and the legal system as pertains to such violence. If our missional practice involves working with the poor and

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10 See for example the double issue of the *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* dedicated to theological reflection on the HIV and AIDS pandemic. Volumes 125 (July 2006) and 126 (November 2006).
unemployed, we would be foolish to not try to understand the economy both locally and globally, and likewise if we are seeking to engage with questions of climate change, food security or safe water we cannot begin to do so in the name of God and the gospel until we are fairly certain that we have a firm knowledge about these things. Here I am in agreement with Jose Miguez Bonino who, in dealing with Christian political ethics, speaks of “social analysis as a constitutive moment in theological reflection on politics”:

It is ‘constitutive’ for theology because theology has no other way of ‘knowing’ the real or the political except through such analysis; theology has no direct access to the political subject matter.13

Missional practice therefore asks of theological education that it would open a space for such disciplines as sociology, psychology, economics, anthropology, philosophy and studies pertaining to such areas as gender, religion, ecology, health, and governance. Given the cost and time implications of opening up the theological curriculum to such studies, this may not always be easily undertaken. However, the point has to be stressed again and again: God is at work in the world, and the church is called into the world. Theological education seeks to prepare future church leadership for this missional practice, and a significant aspect of that education therefore has to enable that leadership to have an adequate understanding of the world.

Missional Practice Requires Theological Education

We have argued that theological education requires missional practice in at least four significant ways. This is because missional practice is so fundamental to what it means to be church, that it is irresponsible to consider training the future leadership of the church without reference to such practice. Yet, this is not one-way traffic. As David Bosch noted, “The best models of contextual theology succeed in holding together in creative tension theoria, praxis and poiesis – or, if one wishes, faith hope and love. This is another way of defining the missionary nature of the Christian faith, which seeks to combine the three dimensions”.14 This interplay of practice and theory makes clear that while theological education requires a relationship to missional practice, missional practice in turn requires a relationship to theological education. Again we shall suggest in four ways in which this should happen.

Conceiving the agenda

Missional practice is precisely that: engagement, doing, action. There is enough written to suggest that such action without on going reflection is bound to degenerate into activism that soon loses its way. Theological education provides an important sphere in which missional activity has to answer for the content and process of its engagement, sharpen its perspectives, and emerge chastened and more able to engage the world. In an environment of teaching, learning, reading, research, reflection and dialogue, the missional practice of the church can be explored, interrogated, and critiqued. Old traditions and trajectories can be recovered or new ideas and insights can emerge, all of which contribute towards propelling the missiones ecclesia towards the telos of life.

One of the key roles that theological educators can play, as they undertake their work, is to assist the church in conceiving the agenda for missional practice. As educators they are (hopefully) in touch with what is emerging in the worlds of both theology and society, and are (hopefully) open to changing contexts and emerging concerns. By being set aside by the church for a ministry of teaching, they are (hopefully) afforded the chance to read, reflect, attend conferences, undertake research, and work in the context of

14 Bosch, Transforming Mission, 431.

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other open and enquiring minds. The simple act of having to work with a constant stream of young people, year by year, asking questions and seeking answers makes theological educators a vital resource for keeping the missional practice of the church attentive to the ever-changing signs of the times. An excellent example of this is the five volume series edited by Anderson and Stransky under the title *Mission Trends* published between 1974 and 1981.15

These anthologies of missiological literature served tens of thousands of mission professors and students in taking the measure of contemporary theory and practice of Christian mission; the series also served to introduce Western readers to Third World voices.16

One cannot be involved in a pedagogical environment today without being forced to think and reflect on matters such as religious pluralism, climate change, globalization and poverty, war and violence, refugees and xenophobia, HIV and AIDS, TB, malaria and cholera, rape and domestic violence, and the like. Thus theological educators and students contribute hugely to the missional practice of the church by reading and reflecting on such matters, and thinking about their relationship to the Christian faith and the missio Dei. One of the more intentional examples of this is the Network Of Theological Enquiry (NOTE) of the Council for World Mission (CWM). Since 1999 this network has brought together theological educators to reflect on missional practice, and has contributed significantly to the work of CWM and the wider ecumenical understanding of mission.17 CWM has also experimented with having a theological educator on sabbatical as a ‘theologian in residence’ to assist with theological reflection on its own missional praxis. In such ways theological education makes a significant contribution towards conceiving an agenda for the *missiones ecclesiae*.

*Who are we talking about?*

Even as theological education assists in conceiving the agenda for missional practice, it must constantly ask: ‘who are we talking about?’ There are two aspects to the question, and the first concerns the primary actor in missional engagement. For centuries the established church conceived of itself as the primary actor in mission through the selection and training of missionaries, the financial and logistical support of mission work, and the benefit of seeing ‘daughter’ churches planted in far off exotic lands.18 Theological education, through its openness to new perspectives and insights into the scriptures, the tradition and missional practice, is in a position to provide a significant critique of this church-centred mission.

Already in this essay we have pointed to the importance of the *missio Dei* as a fundamental category for thinking about missional practice, and therefore of shifting the focus of the main agent of mission from the churches to the triune God. This is a profound movement, because it immediately relativises the churches and down-plays their primary significance. They are of secondary importance in missional activity because they are not setting the agenda, but are responding to it. This response is vital, of course, and this gives to

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18 See the discussion on ‘Mission in the wake of the Enlightenment’ in Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 262-348.

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the churches their particular significance in the world, namely that they perceive themselves to be naming, celebrating and responding to what God is doing. It is important to say this over and over again, and to ingrain it within the life of the church, and this is why missional practice requires theological education. Each generation in the life of the church has to be educated anew to the fact “the mission is Gods”\(^\text{19}\) (Newbigin). When it comes to missional practice, the church does not set the agenda but is required to respond to it.

Alongside this, theological education also engages with the second aspect of the question as to who we are talking about by reminds the institutional church that God calls people from both inside and outside the formal church structures to respond to the missio Dei, and that therefore the church stands constantly under judgement in terms of its willingness to be attentive to its missional calling. It is too easy for the church to become self-satisfied and self-righteous about its role in the world, and it is here that the educator points to renewal movements on the fringes of the church that are responding to the changing missional context with creative intent. Here one may think of the emergence of the base communities in Latin America, the house-church movement in many parts of the world, or grassroots Christian engagement in HIV and AIDS work in many parts of Africa and Asia. Reflecting on this, a recent Church of England report says “The variety of fresh expressions is an encouraging sign of the creativity of the Spirit in our age. Fresh expressions should not be embraced simply because they are popular or new, but because they are a sign of the work of God and of the kingdom.”\(^\text{20}\) Noting these, researching and reflecting on them, and introducing students to what they represent is a crucial way in which the missiones ecclesia stays attentive to the missio Dei.

**Deconstructing the colonial missionary legacy**

Pushing this agenda further, it should be clear that a vital way in which theological education contributes to missional practice is to pursue the clear study of missionary history and practice. Thus while all theological work should be missionary in focus, there is an important role for missiology as a specific subject, dedicated to the crucial task of reflecting on the missional practice of the church through the centuries. Fundamental to this, for churches in both the North/West and South/East is the thoroughgoing deconstruction of the colonial missionary legacy.\(^\text{21}\) Theological education around mission needs to include the history of mission throughout the centuries, but specifically in our day and age as the centre of the Christian faith shifts from the North/West to the South/East, there has to be an important focus on this legacy for at least three reasons.

In the first place, with very few exceptions, the churches of the South/East owe their very existence to this missionary period. They were ‘planted’ by the churches of the North/West, and their identity is completely tied up in that maternal moment. Again, with very few exceptions, they carry the names of European denominations, use the same liturgies and often the same hymn books, and wear the same clerical attire of their ‘mother’ churches. They relate to other churches in the South/East through the communicative networks established by the missionary movement, and often share the same colonial language with them because of missionary influence in education. Thus a study of missionary history is a vital moment of thinking through ministerial identity during theological education.\(^\text{22}\)

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\(^{19}\) Lesslie Newbigin, *The Open Secret*, 18.


Without the chance to deconstruct this legacy during one’s training, there is little possibility of pursuing a creative re-construction in a post-colonial era, which is the second reason theological education must focus on this legacy. The point is not simply to critique and bemoan one’s history, but to seek ways to re-shape it in creative and energetic ways. As much as one may be critical of ‘what the missionaries did’, the point is that the church cannot exist without reference to missional practice, and therefore each generation has to think carefully about what this means here and now. Studying the colonial missionary legacy is vital for this, because it also serves as a reminder to the arrogance and self-righteousness that can so easily come to characterise the churches of the South/East too.

The third reason that theological education must focus on this is that the power relationships that were established during the colonial missionary period continue to characterise relationships in global Christianity. In some ways the churches themselves have made positive moves to shift this, but they are embedded within a global economic system which has a powerful role in dictating the way churches still relate to one another. Studying and learning about this provides an important background to enable the leadership of future generations to tackle this problem.

Theological education as missional practice

A final way in which missional practice needs theological education is that – at its best – theological education itself provides an experiential moment in which future leaders in the church can grasp what missional practice is all about. Theological education is (or should be) a time when teachers and students problematise the power relationships that exist between those who know and those who do not know, and find dialogical ways of learning and growing together. In this way theological education exemplifies what sharing the gospel in mission can and should be.

Theological education thus should be a moment of liberation for the student. The environment and location in which such education takes place introduces (or should introduce!) both teachers and students to a range of new insights and ideas about the world in which the church is called to minister. Jerisdan Jehu-Appiah, reflecting on the work of the first black South African missiologist, Bongani Mazibuko, who was co-director of the Centre for Black and White Christian Partnership at Selly Oak Colleges in Birmingham between 1982-85, captures this when he writes:

Mazibuko saw education as contained in the whole enterprise of mission. Fruitful mission, like fruitful education, is liberation rather than domesticating. Liberating mission starts with the idea that the educator (or missionary) does not have all the answers, that many of the answers lie within the subjects themselves. Its aim is to “set the human mind free to respond to liberating forces” (Mazibuko). Theological education is best when all are actively involved, students and lecturers, in searching together for knowledge and truth.

The church, with its own institutional and bureaucratic concerns, can often be a stifling environment for new and creative thinking. It’s leadership is often threatened by talk of new agendas. Theological education, on the other hand, stands as a crucial place in which one can ‘think outside the box’, re-conceive new ways of doing things, and explore possibilities that have yet to be born in the reality of church life. This is one of the reasons why Mazibuko, whose book is titled, Education in Mission – Mission in Education, did much of his mission and education work outside of the formal, main-line churches.

23 See D. Preman Niles, From East and West.
25 Jerisdan Jehu-Appiah and John Adegoke, “Education in Mission: Reflections on BA Mazibuko’s Teaching at the CBWCP” in Gerloff, Mission is Crossing Frontiers, 73.
26 B.A. Mazibuko, Education in Mission – Mission in Education: A Critical Comparative Study of Selected Approaches
In pursuing this agenda, good theological education will introduce students to a reading of the scriptures, of renewal movements in the history of the church and the emergence of critical prophetic theologies in contexts of injustice and oppression. Learning the lessons of the past, and making them come alive in our contexts in ways which challenge the established orthodoxy, is a vital way in which theological education assist the missional practice of the church to stay on the cutting edge of what God is doing in the world.

We began this essay by suggesting that the practice of mission engages with theological education in a dialogical manner. By exploring four ways in which theological education requires missiological practice, and a further four ways in which missiological practice requires theological education we have drawn attention to the contribution of missiology or missional practice, to theological education.

**Bibliography**


27 See the reflection on Mazibuko’s Umlazi Project by Thulani Ndlazi, “Bridging the Gap between Christianity and African Culture” in Gerlof, Mission is Crossing Frontiers, 103-116.
THEOLOGICAL FORMATION FOR MISSIONAL FAITHFULNESS
AFTER CHRISTENDOM:
A RESPONSE TO STEVE DE GRUCHY

Darrell L. Guder

Steve de Gruchy’s cogent exposition of the vital dialogue that must take place between theological education and missional practice must be affirmed as a whole and in all its parts. It would be difficult to argue that there is any aspect of his exposition that would not be relevant to the task of theological education in any part of the global church. Although the agenda of dialogue between theological education and missional practice will be implemented in culturally specific and diverse ways, it is crucial for all theological formation that it be intentionally engaged in and defined by this dialogue. Dr. de Gruchy has, in fact, developed our theme of “theological education and the mission of the church” in a way that is both supra-cultural and thoroughly contextual. I would like to push the discussion a little further by considering how this vital dialogue relates to the structures and practices of theological education in the old and established cultures of western Christendom.

One of the great ironies of the emergence of global Christianity in the 20th century is the much discussed contrast between the burgeoning growth and expansion of the Christian church in non-western cultures and the disintegration of western Christendom.¹ When speaking of “western Christianity,” I am using the term “Christendom” as convenient shorthand for the large and very complex project initiated by Constantine and his heirs, by which the Christian movement became the “established religion” of the realm, and the church became an institution with property, wealth, social prestige, and considerable power. The disciplines and ultimately the institutions of western theological education developed within that Christianized context. The advancement of learning was an exercise of committed piety, conducted for centuries in monastic communities. With the emergence of the European university in the high Middle Ages, theological education was guaranteed a privileged status as “the queen of the sciences,” and its resources, methodologies, specializations, and investigations rapidly expanded. As a result of those centuries of institutional and disciplinary development, theological education within the boundaries of Christendom became a vast intellectual and cultural complex that comprises an incredible variety of institutions of learning, libraries, scholarly guilds, academic standards and expectations, and diverse ways of relating to the churches it is allegedly supposed to serve…and financial endowments of various kinds that still fund the entire enterprise.

The complexity can be illustrated by merely describing how theological education happens institutionally within the boundaries of North America. It happens in divinity schools that are attached to universities that were themselves originally founded as Christian institutions of learning and services. The vast majority of these originally Christian institutions have secularized, so that the divinity schools that survive face particular challenges when addressing the question about the relationship between theological education and the mission of the church. For many of them, any linkage with the church competes with the requirements of the secular academic guild, and the guild appears to be winning. Then, there are the several hundred seminaries that conduct theological education in the service of a particular denomination or as representative of a particular theological or ecclesial tradition. Of course, as Christendom has weakened, more of these institutions tend to describe themselves as “non-denominational” or even “post-denominational.” This movement is paralleled by growing networks of Christian communities that quite

¹ With all justified criticism of the western missionary movement of the last centuries, the fact remains that “it worked” – as the actual globalization of the Christian movement demonstrates.
intentionally do not continue the legacy of historical denominations, that is, ecclesial traditions carried across the Atlantic from Europe. Many of these academic institutions are linked in an official network (the Association of Theological Schools) that sets standards for their educational programs and carries out the discipline of “accreditation” in order to validate their undertakings – using standards that are largely shaped by the secular world of higher education. Beyond the divinity schools and seminaries, there are diverse Bible colleges and schools which also conduct theological education, often as intentional alternatives to the older and established forms of education which are perceived as too compromised in their intellectual embeddedness in “liberal” western intellectual spheres. With the growing importance of various expressions of “emergent churches,” new forms of theological and ministry formation are beginning to appear that, as yet, defy any systematic definition or assessment. The dominant intellectual mood for the last few centuries, shaped by the Enlightenment, has become progressively more skeptical about the authority and validity of the very Christian traditions that spawned the large educational enterprise of the west. This results in the odd situation that much theological education seeks to function in a secular institutional world whose intellectual presuppositions disqualify the enterprise!

One of the outcomes of this complex process has been the possibility, and sadly the frequent reality, that theological education and missional practice in western settings were and are not always engaged in a vital dialogue. De Gruchy’s delineation of the ways in which “theological education requires missional praxis” actually reveals the breakdown of that vital dialogue in much of western theological education as Christendom ends, and provides some helps to analyze that process. The loss of the crucial “orientation toward the world” is perhaps the most telling way in which the vital dialogue has greatly diminished if not ceased. What happens when the essential “orientation toward the world” is lost and theological education “loses touch with the world and…turns inwards?” One of the most dramatic examples for the way in which that outward orientation has been weakened is the literal disappearance of mission as a defining theological theme in the ecclesiologies of Christendom.

While it may be argued that early and classical Christianity understood itself as “missionary by its very nature” (Vatican II), and that the theological work of the early church was driven by its missional identity and context (Martin Kähler: “Mission is the mother of the theology!”5), the gradual so-called Christianization of western cultures generated theological traditions that addressed the nature, purpose, and action of the church with almost total neglect of that missionary calling. As the culture was “Christianized,” the theological relevance of mission appeared to diminish. Thus, through all the centuries of western Christendom, the activity of mission continued in various ways (e.g. the Irish and later Iro-Scottish mission, the Byzantine mission to the Slavs, etc.), but the emerging theologies of the church did not address mission thematically. One seeks in vain for evidence of the church’s fundamentally missional vocation in the confessional documents of the 16th century Reformation. North American Presbyterians do not refer to mission in their confession until they added par. XXXV, “Of the Love of God and Missions,” to the Westminster Confession in 1903. Princeton Seminary was probably the first western Seminary to introduce the topic of mission into its curriculum in the 1820s,3 but the theme does not occur in Charles Hodge’s Systematic Theology, although he frequently preached on the subject. The discipline called missiology does emerge in the 19th century in response largely to the issues raised by the foreign missionary movement. But it functions as a discrete and largely marginal discipline within the theological canon.

It is only in the course of the 20th century that the theology of mission emerges as a serious question, marked by Anderson’s landmark collection of essays on “The Theology of the Christian Mission” in 1961.4 Gradually the western theological establishment is beginning to realize that its perhaps last great

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2 Martin Kähler, Schriften zur Christologie und Mission, Munich: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1971 [1908], 190
theological voice, Karl Barth, powerfully restored mission to the center of ecclesiology, by persistently insisting in the *Church Dogmatics* that the church’s “mission…is not secondary to its being; the church exists in being sent and in building up itself for the sake of its mission.” For Barth, “the vital dialogue” must necessarily be between theological reflection and missional practice, as he profoundly expounds that linkage in his exposition of “the Sending of the Community of the Holy Spirit”:

> There would be no theology if there were not a community obligated in a special way to the witness of its word. Its central problem is posed for theology not in an empty space but by the community’s service, and this is the problem that constitutes theology as a science next to other sciences. If one disregards its origin in the ministry of the community, then all of its problems would lose their theological character, if they had not become ephemeral already, and they would be consigned to the area of general and especially historical arts and letters…. In the service of theology, the community tests all that it does on the basis of the criterion given by its commission, ultimately and finally in the light of the word of its Lord and Commissioner.⁶

If, then, the vital dialogue between theological education and missional practice is to be re-kindled in the context of late or post-Christendom, it will require of theological educators and their institutions that some skills and priorities be developed that have not been strongly emphasized until now. The dialogical process that is now needed will, in some way, have to address questions like these:

1. How does theological formation equip churches to engage critically the Christendom legacy which so profoundly shapes western Christianity? This legacy can only be engaged dialectically, that is, in a process that recognizes and appreciates its faithfulness while defining and rejecting its cultural captivities, compromises, and reductionisms. The contemporary western mission field is pervasively shaped by its Christendom legacy, and one can only carry out the missional mandate of the church in such a context if one understands what happened to the gospel and to the church’s understanding and practice of its vocation over the centuries since Constantine. The study of church history needs to become a study of mission history which examines both the activity of mission and the theological understanding of mission from one chapter to the next. In the process, it will be necessary to de-construct many of the assumptions and outcomes of assimilation that shape western Christendom, especially with regard to the issues of power, wealth, violence, and systemic injustice. This is a process that parallels the necessary critique and de- construction of the colonial missionary legacy, as laid out by de Gruchy. In fact, these processes obviously need to interact with and inform each other, since their common basis is the Christendom project both in its continuing influence in the west and its impact upon the non-western world mediated by the modern mission movement.

2. How does theological formation take seriously the broad consensus that the gathered community (or “local congregation”) is the primary agent of God’s mission in the world? It is generally recognized that the apostolic strategy reflected in the New Testament documents was the formation of witnessing communities whose purpose was to continue the witness that had brought them into existence. This continuing formation is the actual purpose of the New Testament documents that become the canonic scriptures. One could argue that the canonic acknowledgement of these scriptures as authoritative for the church is related to the ways in which the Holy Spirit works through these texts for that continuing apostolic formation. Such an approach will raise many questions about the ways in which the doctrine and use of Scripture have developed in Christendom. From the perspective of the vital dialogue between theological education and missional practice, the challenge is to equip “ordered ministers” or “teaching

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⁵ David’s Bosch’s summary of Barth’s argument in *Church Dogmatics*, vol. IV, part 1, par. 61, 725; see David Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, Maryknoll: Orbis, 372.

⁶ Karl Barth, *Kirchliche Dogmatik*, vol. IV, part 3, 2nd half, par. 72, 1007 (my translation; see 879 in the English edition).
elders” (to use the Reformed terminology) to enable that biblical formation in the communities they serve. This calls for a “missional hermeneutic” that relates responsible exegesis to concrete formation of witnessing communities in their contexts. Further, in the late Christendom context, it requires a shift in emphasis in the educational process. Western cultures, with their pervasive emphasis upon individualism, shape their educational processes to focus upon the skills, competence, and expertise of the graduate. Seminary graduates are customarily compared to the graduates of other professional schools, such as lawyers and doctors. The vital dialogue calls for the focus to be upon the formation of communities and how graduates serve that process. This emphasis will profoundly shape course design, outcomes formulations, and assessment procedures. The missionally necessary outcome of theological education needs to be the missional practice of the witnessing congregation, which is served in this vocation by its pastor-teacher (Eph. 4:11), who, together with apostles, prophets, and evangelists “equips the saints for the work of ministry for the building up of the body of Christ.”

3. How will theological institutions equip congregations, through the ministry of their graduates, to lead their lives “worthy of the calling to which they have been called?” (Eph. 4:1). This injunction, repeated in the Pauline literature several times, is the over-arching theme of the apostolic formation of witnessing congregations. It establishes that the gospel is not only a message, or a doctrinal content, but an ongoing event realized in the transformed life of called and sent communities. In Lesslie Newbigin’s memorable phrase, the congregation is “the hermeneutic of the gospel.” What “worthiness” actually means must constantly be explored and often re-defined, as the Christian community seeks to be faithful to its witness. Its equippers, the theological servants of missional congregations, are to be guides in that process of exploration. The goal of this exploration is the missional practice that witnesses to the inbreaking of God’s kingdom. It is a process of shared discernment that will result in enabled obedience informed by the confidence that Jesus Christ is truly the Lord “to whom all authority is given in heaven and on earth” (Matt. 28:18). The community will constantly ask, what conduct is worthy of that lordship? What decisions must we make so that our way of life is congruent with the message we share? In what ways are we so conformed to our context that our actions are not worthy of our calling (Romans 12:2)? Especially in the context of late and post Christendom, this exploration is pressing, since there are so many ways in which the compromises of this long history have rendered Christian witness unworthy. This is perhaps the most pressing aspect of the need for the vital dialogue between theological education and missional practice.

4. How does the witness of particular congregations testify to the global scope of God’s love and the global calling of his gathered and sent people? How does the vital dialogue of theological education and missional practice contribute to the church’s witness to its God-given unity, in all of its cultural and contextual diversity? It is well known that the modern ecumenical movement emerged out of the modern missionary movement. This enormously important ecclesiological and missional development is at the heart of our current celebration of the centenary of World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh in 1910. Many are concerned that this ecumenical movement appears to be foundering, especially in the regions of western Christendom. Might the problems have to do with a particular aspect of that legacy in the west? Is it possible that our search for unity has been too much influenced by the preoccupation with power, structure, and hierarchy which has marked the institutional movement of the church in the west? Do we truly desire to be one out of faithfulness to our missionary vocation? Do we know what a unity that points towards Christ really looks like? And further, how do we relate that mandated unity (John 17!) to the cultural diversity of the church? Has it not been the case since Pentecost that the movement of the Spirit has always been towards diverse cultural expressions of the Christian calling and its servant community?

In the early church, the practice of unity never meant uniformity, although it was clearly an essential part of the apostolic understanding of the church’s witness. From the outset, the Christian movement was

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intended to be multi-cultural, multi-lingual, and multi-organizational and at the same time radically centered on the person and work of Jesus Christ. One can interpret the catholicity of the church (the *kat’holon*) as the intentional diversity of the forms of the church in all the languages and cultures of the world, all of them expressions and translation of the *holon*, the person, work, and mission of Jesus Christ. That unique event reported in the gospels unfolds as an enormously diverse continuing history; it is an ongoing event of translation from one culture to the next, resulting in the formation of witnessing communities that enflesh that testimony in their particular contexts. In that Spirit-empowered process, every receiving culture is itself challenged and transformed by the radical healing brought about by the risen and reigning Savior. What the “watching world” (John Howard Yoder) experiences in its encounters with the diverse expressions of missional communities is a unified witness to the same good news. It is as though every particular incarnation of the called and sent community is always perceived as pointing towards Jesus, like the celebrated figure of John the Baptist portrayed by Grunewald on the Isenheim Altar.

Missional practice is the action of the missional community that knows that it exists to serve God’s mission in the world – rather than its own maintenance. The theological education that informs such missional practice, through the service rendered by those it schools, should be defined by the same understanding of the *missio Dei*. On that common ground the vital dialogue can take place that will result in the continuing conversion of late Christendom communities to their missional vocation.8

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Introduction

Over the last twenty-five years there has been a notable increase in the numbers of women studying and teaching theology in Africa. These women are found across the board in the diverse models of theological institution that exist in Africa. The history of women in theological education in Africa is best understood in the context of the church’s original aims for theological education generally which, throughout the majority of African mission churches, was specifically designed for ministerial formation. This meant, and still means, that churches sent only the people it wanted to ordain or to employ in the full time service of one of its different departments: e.g. Women’s Desk. It has been the introduction of theological studies in state-owned universities that has opened doors for more African women to study theology as their enrolment there tends not to be limited to that supported through church sponsorship.

The aim of this chapter is to highlight the stages of theological education for women and to assess the impact this has made on theological education generally. The stages include the missionary period and the post-missionary period around the time celebrating Edinburgh 2010.

Women and Theological Education in the Missionary Era

During the early period of the evangelisation of Africa, theological education was often linked only to ordained ministry. This tended to mean that the denominations and missionary societies that were against the ordination of women were also unlikely to include women in their programme of theological education. This changed, however, and Klaus Fiedler has argued that the faith mission movement was different. They developed a new theology and approach which accommodated the ministry of women. Fiedler illustrates this using the example of Hudson and Maria Taylor whose work included both married and single women as full missionaries in their own right. He goes on to state that “All faith missions followed Hudson Taylor in so far as they always counted women, single or married as missionaries in their own right. This meant that, in principle, women were to receive the same training as men.” Africa benefited greatly from this policy meaning that from the earliest faith missions, women were sent as pioneers to Africa. An excellent example of this is Emma Herdman who, until her death in 1899, headed the North African Mission. Her work included the training of Moroccan evangelists. It is not an exaggeration therefore to say that women were very active evangelists spreading the gospel in Africa. Nevertheless, as rightly observed by Fielder, “but, as a rule, the female missionaries’ comparatively advanced position in the church was not passed on to African women. This is more astonishing because in Asia both classical and faith missions had developed the institution of ‘Bible women’.”

2 Fiedler, 1994, 293.
3 Fiedler 1994, 294.
4 Fielder, 1994, 303
schools that had been established by women missionaries, only men were trained because there was an expectation that they would take over from the women missionaries as leaders of the church.

During this period women went to Bible schools largely as wives rather than as independent theology students. At a later stage, when women began to be allowed to study theology so that they would work among women, they would only be allowed to study in small numbers, and then with the wives of the male students - such as was the case with Sarah David of Kenya:

Although there were four students at the divinity school under Rev. J.E. Hamshere, yet a couple of classes were necessary. Three men constituted the class for senior readers but one of them was not equal to the work. Mrs Hamshere had a class consisting of the wives (for all of them were married) and a Bible woman Sarah David who was under training in the divinity school.  

The reasons for African women not being allowed to study theology at all were influenced by the views that the then mission agencies had about Africa and its peoples. For instance, while writing about women when in the mission field, Willis Hotchkiss of the Friends African Mission observed that:

Practically a slave; a beast of burden reckoned as just so much Mali (property). Woman is still a slave even though slavery has ended in Africa. Womanhood is reduced to servitude doomed to drudgery as mere beasts of burden. The women are bulwarks of superstition. Womanhood in Africa is womanhood without God.  

The very low position of women in the African culture of the time was the reason given for blocking their way to theological education. Commentators argue that missionaries were following African cultural practices and beliefs concerning women. But Klaus Fiedler made a valid observation when he argued that:

This argument is not convincing merely because it is often repeated and widely accepted, and there are a number of arguments and observations which indicate this notion. The missionaries, if they felt it to be necessary, did not budge even from all-out conflict- for example, in the case of polygamy. Why should they shrink from confronting African culture on such a matter as women’s position in the church? The other observation is more important: there is no evidence even in those areas of Africa where women have a much higher position in society, such as among the Baulé in the area of the Mission Biblioque en Côte d’Ivoire. The reason is not African culture but missionary subculture.  

The theology used to suppress African women in this way raises questions about the way the church viewed what it meant to be women and human, and, in turn, women as part of the church of the Triune God.

When mission agencies thought about education for women they started from a fixed image of the degraded African women. The reasons missionaries took women into their care and gave them simple literacy skills was mostly to prepare them as wives suitable for educated men. So, mission agencies worked towards raising the status of women through education though still with a view to preparing them for house work. This was no different from what women learnt before the mission agencies came. Records of this period on women’s education across agencies show that the aim of education for women was to train future wives of the elite of the society who were the chiefs, teachers and clergy. An example is the case of the

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6 Willis Hotchkiss, Sketches from the Dark Continent, London: Headley Brothers, 1943, 30.
Dutch Reformed Church Mission in Malawi. According to the constitution of the girls hostels, the aim of the hostels was to ‘lead the girls to Jesus as Saviour: to build up a good Christian character by inspiring them with the principles of obedience, order and helpfulness and by education in all kinds of domestic and manual work (washing, ironing, pottery, soap making etc)’. Basically this shows that the type of education given to girls was to prepare them for home management. The Dutch Reformed Church Mission in Malawi also believed that the formation of an indigenous church depended on the establishment of Christian families. According to Retief, the establishment of Christian families depended on mission work with women and young girls. He went on to say that:

They (women) have the shaping and training of the next generation to a great degree in their hands, and they have great influence over their husbands, either for good or for evil. If a Christian native should marry a pagan woman, then it is practically certain that he will revert to paganism. On the other hand, Christian wives, generally speaking, are a very great help and encouragement to their husbands in their Christian lives. It is particularly necessary that teachers, evangelists, native preachers and members of the Church Council and Presbytery should have wives who are Christians.

Perhaps this explains why the mission provided women and girls with just enough education to be good wives but not enough to be economically independent. This was not only true for the mission field but also reflected what was happening to women in the homeland of the Dutch Reformed Church, South Africa.

For women married to clergy, theological education was basic and just that necessary for supporting the husband in the ministry. Thus lessons included basic bible study, preparation of sermons, leading services, and home visitation. There were no women studying theology as a subject for ministry in most churches. In east Africa the Quakers opened a bible school to train pastors and among the first students was Rasoah Mutua. Although she studied alongside the men, after completion she was not engaged as a pastor like the other men. She worked more as a volunteer and became prominent as a preacher of women in the prisons.

From Wives of Theologically Trained Men to Students of Theology

With the post independent period in Africa, educated women began to take their rightful place in business, government, education and professions. But in most of the churches women were still relegated to the margins, as scripture and tradition was used to perpetuate the subordinate status for women, thus denying them opportunities to study theology and limiting their position in the church. As mentioned previously, the purpose of studying theology was primarily for ordination. Most churches did not approve of women’s ordination for various reasons. These included the belief that a priest is the icon of Christ and therefore of necessity male; that Jesus appointed twelve male apostles (assumed to be leaders of the later church) therefore indicating that ordination is only for men. Perhaps not surprisingly, these churches chose not to take that latter argument to its full conclusion, such as arguing that since Jesus was also a Jew, then only Jews may become priests. For some of the churches ordination of women was resisted on the grounds, of ‘headship’ necessarily being a male role, based on the practice of the late first century church described in some portions of the bible. The basic argument was that the bible commands all women to keep quiet in the churches. Therefore women cannot preach in a congregation where men are present. For example, this

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11 Isabel Apawo Phiri, Women, Presbyterianism and Patriarchy: Religious Experience of Chewa women in Central Malawi (Blantyre: Kachere: Kachere 1997); 53.
13 For example I Corinthians 14:34-35, I Timothy 2:11-12.
is the theology followed by the Southern Baptist Mission Board. Despite this policy, the research of Rachel NyaGondwe Fielder has shown that Baptist women in Southern Malawi have acted against the flow to become Pastors of churches within the Baptist Convention in Malawi.  

The Role of the Ecumenical Movement

It has been the role of probing ecumenical initiatives to cause the churches to think through the role and place of women in the study of theology and ministry in the church. In Africa the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) played a key role in providing space for views on the role and place of women in the church to be discussed. In 1963 the AACC consultation held in Kampala discussed the place of women in the church including ordination. The question that the ordination of women raised was how women should be integrated into the life of the church including its sacramental life rather than being excluded on the basis of their gender.  

During the third AACC assembly, held in 1974 in Lusaka, Zambia, women challenged the theological training offered to them only as wives and not as students in their own right. The voices of women were heard urging the church to include them in areas such as theological education, which was still almost exclusively male. An advisory committee of both men and women was set up with the mandate to draw up programmes for the advancement of women in all spheres of church and society. They were also to look at the need for churches to open doors of theological training centres to women, and the inclusion of regular courses at theological colleges for women as wives of pastors, as laywomen and as students. Following this, from 1975, some churches began sending women to study in theological colleges. Before this time, most women who wished to study theology studied it in public universities in the departments of Religion which enabled them to go out and teach Bible Knowledge in high schools.

In 1980 a conference was held in Ibadan, Nigeria, under the title ‘African women in church and theology’. This conference discussed various issues on the topic and passed several resolutions including:

A call for equal rights and opportunities for service in the church as laity and ordained ministers with full pastoral responsibilities in parishes and administrative areas be assured to women.

By 1980, although the numbers of women in theological institutions and serving in churches were few, discussions on the role and place of women continued in Africa. Despite being but a few, the women’s continued presence helped churches to realise that they were not going to be able to keep quiet about women in ministry; neither were they going to keep women confined to serving only women’s organisations and in the service roles of the church. Pressure to include women in the church structures and to include them in the study of theology continued to mount through ecumenical organizations challenging traditions, cultures and the readings of the biblical texts.

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17 Bishop Tucker Theological College now Uganda Christian University, St. Paul’s United Theological College now St. Paul’s University Limuru. The first women included Deaconess Mildred Owani and Rev. Dr. Nyambura Njoroge.


Towards the end of the 20th century two movements contributed to the greater presence of women in theological education and in the church as well. The first of these was the Ecumenical Decade of Churches in Solidarity with Women (1988-1998). The second one was the Circle of the Concerned African Women Theologians (hereafter the Circle).

In 1988 the Ecumenical Decade of Churches in Solidarity with Women was launched. It was aimed at empowering women to challenge oppressive structures in the global community, including the churches. Its aims were to affirm - through shared leadership and decision making, theology and spirituality - the decisive contributions of women in churches and communities; to give visibility to women’s perspective and actions in the work and struggle for justice, peace and integrity of creation; to encourage the churches to take actions in solidarity with women.20

In Africa, national and regional gatherings launched the decade in more than a dozen countries. Some were women-only events; others were mixed and included processions, seminars and workshops. Heads of churches and even heads of states participated in many of these events, which received considerable media coverage. When one looks at this period in particular, many denominations agreed about the need to discuss opening the study of theology to women and others invigorated the discussions on the ordination of women and/or began to ordain women.

The second ecumenical movement, the Circle of the Concerned African Women Theologians, was launched a year after the 1988 Ecumenical Decade of the Churches and Women. The Circle was inaugurated at Trinity College, Legon, near Accra, Ghana, in 1989. It was started and still is an ecumenical and interfaith body of African women theologians tracing their background to organizations such as Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians (EATWOT), Ecumenical Association of African Theologians (EAAT), and Conference of African Theological Institutions (CATI). However the Circle was different from the other ecumenical bodies whose membership was predominantly Christian. The Circle membership includes women from all the faiths that are predominant in Africa including Islam and indigenous African Religions.

The Circle was aimed at empowering women, both lay and ordained, to study and write theology that would impact the churches. And since 1989 members of the Circle, discussing various themes in theology, have published a good number of books.21

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Engendering Theological Education

The area in which the Circle has impacted theological education the most is in engendering it. Although women have studied theology in the past, it has not been inclusive of their experiences in terms of structure and content. But the Circle stimulated the process of making change happen. Processes included a revision of the philosophy, the theoretical framework and the content of the curriculum for theological education. It turned its attention to the methods of delivery, which generally have turned dialogical, bringing people into conversation with one another about their environment, context, faith, and praxis thus discerning what is normative and binding, and what is contextual and relative. Engendering theological education challenged the traditional assumptions of what are normative – which had been a western theological model, African patriarchy, and male-centred theology. It proposed truly inclusive alternatives, relevant and fruitful for an affirming life of faith. Engendering theological education recognised that theory did not reflect any form of praxis and that constructive criticism and reflective interrogation were essential in theological inquiry and learning. Since theory often is abstracted from concrete contextual situations, true objectivity is not always definite. Therefore engendered theological education stressed the importance of contextuality, dialogue, openness, grace and willingness to learn and to discern God’s will and truth in every context.\(^2\)

The process of engendering theological education was two fold. The first was to make theology available to all people at all levels, moving away from being exclusively male. In this case, it was a process that among other things, sought to ‘demystify’ theology by de-linking it from ordination, and making it accessible to the whole people of God. In contexts where theological education was traditionally strongly linked to ordination, only a few men could go through the process of selection, qualify and take the opportunity. Gender played a big role in the selection process. Female candidates often faced tougher interviews as their call to ministry was often tied with such other notions as their age, marital status and cultural demands and expectations.\(^3\) Married women, on the other hand would be asked to show prove that their family life, marriage, etc would not come under strain on account of their marital status. Single women, divorced, separated or widows were often not considered for theological education on account of stigma, social prejudice, cultural inhibitions or norms. Financial considerations also played into the picture where unmarried women were seen as risky investment just in case they may marry elsewhere and leave their home church after theological training. Through the process of engendering theological education, theology become open to all people of God and by the people of God, regardless of their social backgrounds or cultural baggage.

The second aspect of engendering theological education was to provide space to clarify theological vision, reformulate theology and offer a theological curriculum which was both relevant and life affirming for both men and women. This process, among other things, led to a continual examining and re-examining of policies, structural and organisational dynamics as well evaluation of impact in terms of empowered persons and transformed lives. This process, although slow, provided for increased gender awareness and critical self and program assessments in areas such as power analysis, social dynamics and theological critique of cultural and contextual bigotries or popular trends.

Then, in 2003, the Circle embarked on the process of engendering the theological education in Africa project.


In addition to the reasons already mentioned above for engendering theological education, Musa Dube has articulated very well the reasons why this seemed to be the right time for the Circle to have such an impact:

- most members of the Circle were drawn from the teaching departments of both faith communities and academic institutions
- the drive behind the production of literature came from the need for social transformation towards justice, and from this has grown a great amount of literature – making it more widely viable to undertake gender sensitive theological education
- HIV/AIDS, a gender and poverty driven global catastrophe, is not only highly concentrated in Africa, but women are particularly vulnerable to high risk of infection and they carry the heavy burden of care
- many departments and male colleagues, often lacking a readily available curriculum have been interested in undertaking gender-sensitive theological education

Thus, the interactive process of engendering theological education systematically, through curriculum development, started in September 2003. Members of the Circle were invited to work in discipline teams to design gender sensitive courses, according to their area of specialisation. Each course was designed to be aware of the existence of multiple oppressions of people on the African continent. Thus, gender discrimination was to be viewed in the context of other forms of oppressions such as racism, classism, HIV/AIDS, globalisation, anti Semitism and other forms religious intolerance. The courses were also to be ecumenical and inter-religious as they meet theological and religious needs at both undergraduate and post graduate levels. Realising that structure and content of the theological curricula is not the same in African theological institutions, the courses were to be designed in such a way that each user from any institutions, communities and contexts can adapt any part of it to meet their needs.

Most of the Circle conversation on engendering theological education in Africa was done through e-mails. In addition, two small workshops each consisting of 12 Circle members were organised to examine in detail the drafted curricular. The Anglophone and Lusophone workshop was held at the Kempton Conference Centre, Johannesburg, from the 15th to 20th May 2004. The Francophone workshop was held in August 2004 in Cameroon. The whole document was then scrutinised and tested by the Pietermaritzburg Cluster of theological institutions discipline committees before printing it in a form of a handbook that was sent to all the Circle members, and the teaching departments, both in faith communities and academic institutions in Africa, by 2005.

The interactive process of engendering theological education in Africa through curriculum development gave the Circle a chance to grapple with issues of self identity, the quality of theological literature that the Circle is producing, and with the vision of the way forward for the Circle. This paper will now turn to a brief discussion of these three issues.

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24 This information is taken from the proposal for systematic engendering of theological education in Africa, which was initially drafted by Musa Dube and developed further by a team that consisted of Nyambura Njoroge, Esther Mombo, Sarojini Nadar and Isabel Phiri.


26 The Pietermaritzburg Cluster of Theological institutions includes the School of Religion and Theology at the University of KwaZulu Natal, St Josephs (Catholic) Theological Institute and the Evangelical Seminary of Southern Africa. The Cluster was chosen as a testing ground because of its commitment to ecumenical formation. The Cluster also has already started the process of engendering theological education through its Cluster gender committee. See Beverley Haddad, “Engendering Theology: What does it entail?” a paper presented at the Lutheran World Federation Consultation “Engendering Theological Education for Transformation” Montreux, Switzerland, 4-8 November, 2001.
Naming Our Work

The whole exercise brought back issues of language and people’s perceptions of the work of the Circle and how that relates with the engendering theological curriculum. We had to clarify for ourselves the difference between “women’s issues” and “gender issues”. Without going into detail, women issues centre around raising awareness on the experiences of women which have been sidelined for a long time due to the existence of sexism and patriarchy. In the words of Mercy Oduyoye:

Feminism has become shorthand for the proclamation that women’s experiences should become an integral part of what goes into the definition of being a human. It highlights the woman’s world and her worldview as she struggles side by side with the man to realise her full potential as a human being... Feminism then emphasises the wholeness of the community as made up of male and female beings. It seeks to express what is not so obvious, that is, that male-humanity is a partner with female-humanity, and that both expressions of humanity are needed to shape a balanced community within which each will experience a fullness of Be-ing.27

On the other hand gender issues go beyond examining women’s experiences. In principle, gender studies highlight the relationship between men and women, which is more inclusive than women’s studies. It raises questions of power, authority and control.28

The Circle is aware that in Africa, the question: “are you a feminist?” is loaded. There are some theological institutions and communities where the name itself is enough to cause people to close up and not listen. It is for this reason that many Circle women prefer to call their work African Women Theology(ies). However, the Circle feels that it is important to have dialogue over the word so that we dispel the myths that dominate our theological institutions. Our experience in the classroom has shown us different students understanding of the word: at the beginning of a course on feminist theology, most students in Africa define a feminist as a woman who is divorced, single, frustrated, a men hater etc. After the students have been properly introduced to what feminism and gender are all about, there is always a conversion experience and change in attitude.

Therefore, a conversation is on going among ourselves as to who we are. It was noted that Circle members have used different names to describe their work. Some are comfortable to use the word feminist when describing their work. Others have resisted using that word even though their work is from feminist perspectives. Some shared experiences of having been forced to use the word in the title of their books by publishers. The designed curricular has accommodated all the names that blossomed for the work, which include: Circle Theology; Communal Theology; Bosati Theology; African Women Theologies. The users of the curricular are invited to use the title that seems most comfortable for their situation.

Although some African women link themselves to Womanist Theology, which describes the theology of African American women theologians, at the workshops it was agreed that the Circle embraces the similarities that we share with our sisters but also see the importance of acknowledging the differences. Womanist theology arose out of experience of slavery. The American context informs their theology. Therefore when African Americans are talking about survival, it is not the same as its meaning on the African continent. The Circle encourages African theologians to read what the womanist theologians are saying, to affirm them, and to learn from them, but also to acknowledge our differences. What is important is that the Circle is in dialogue with other gendered theologies around the world.

While the Circle is aware of the differences between women’s and gender issues, the curriculum has highlighted the experiences of women more than the relationship of women and men because women’s

28 Beverley Haddad, 2001, 11.
experiences in Africa have been ignored for a very long time and this has contributed to the imbalance in the two genders.

Quality of the Circle theological literature

The engendering process gave the Circle an opportunity to start the process of stock-taking all that has been written in the past 15 years. The process started internally with members of the Circle critically analyzing the work of their peers. The need for a workshop where this initial work could be evaluated and the way forward redefined was indentified. When the Circle say that publishing is a requirement to individual membership in the Circle, it is understood that writing for publication presupposes that one has skills to do research, to theologically reflect on the information and to write, which is not true for everyone. It has therefore become a greater necessity than before that the Circle should vigorously promote the theological education of African women. Besides that it was felt that even for the Circle women with theological education, there was a need for regular workshops to develop the relevant academic skills to enable them to write professionally. Such workshops could cover topics such as: ethical issues of research; methodology; publishing; editing and co-publishing. The internal stock-taking was coupled with, and complemented by, an invitation to objective external review of the work.

Research gaps

The original plan for the development of engendered curricula for theological education in Africa was to use as many of the Circle’s publications as possible. The stock-taking process, though, revealed gaps in the Circle writings. The advantage of identifying these gaps in research material though was that future directions for research could be developed strategically to meet specific areas of need. The identified gaps are too many to be included in this paper, but they will appear in the handbook that will be published soon.29

Collaborating with African Male Theologians

The African women theologians in theological education are aware that the success of the engendering the theological curriculum is connected to their collaboration with African male theologians in the academy and the churches. Thus, from the onset, the Circle did not introduce African women’s theology as a replacement for African theology, but as an addition, with the aim of providing the missing voice in African theology. Hence, it is with gratitude that the Circle acknowledges those African male theologians who have walked alongside the Circle to affirm its voice. Those who have been overt in their support of the work of the Circle are many, but at the risk of leaving some names out, those who should be especially acknowledged are the following: John Pobee, who through PTE and ETE has been in the forefront to seek African women and encourage them to study theology. (The author is one of his products). Even in his writings, he has encouraged other men to take seriously the emergency of African Women’s Theology. In the Ecumenical review of July 2001, whose theme was ‘Transforming Ecumenism in Africa in the 21st Century,’ a number of articles paid homage to the contribution of the Circle in ecumenical formation in Africa. Some examples of African male theologians who spoke positively of the contribution of the Circle to theological formation were given by Sam Kobia (2001:295-305) and John Pobee (2001:319-332).

Simon Maimela is another African male theologian, who used his space at the University of South Africa (UNISA) to offer courses that included the work of African women theologians. This culminated in the book that he co-edited with Adrio König entitled, *Initiation into Theology: The Rich Variety of Theology and Hermeneutics*. Christina Landman and Mercy Oduyoye have articles on African Women’s

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*Handbook of Theological Education in World Christianity*
Theology and African Women’s Hermeneutics respectively. John Mbiti also dialogues with African women theologians. It has now become fashionable to include articles by African women theologians in any edited book that is penned by African male theologians. However, it is Tinyiko Maluleke (1997, 2001), Laurent Magesa (2005) and Ogbu Kalu (2006) who have heeded the call of African women theologians in theological education’s call for serious and deliberate critical engagement with African women theologians.

The emergence of articles written by African male theologians on issues relating to masculinities form other important examples of African men and women theologians collaborating in teaching, research and writing on gender issues. Discussions on masculinities took centre stage at the Circle 2007 Pan African Conference, when in partnership with the World Council of Churches (EHAIA) it organised two panels for the Circle to dialogue with African male theologians on the topic of ‘Liberating Masculinities and Combating HIV & AIDS.’ What is important is that such presentations and discussions form the resources that African women theologians would like to see being used by students and staff in theological institutions.

The biggest challenge left to the Circle remains the need to motivate more male students and the staff of theological institutions to be in dialogue with the literature produced by African women theologians. This has begun, but it needs to be nurtured.

Towards Edinburgh 2010

Commission III of Edinburgh 1910 was on the aims of mission education, which were to be evangelistic, edificatory and leavening. Most of the education reports were shaped by perspectives of the foreign countries. Missionaries in Africa saw education as intrinsic to the wider ‘civilising’ task of ‘weaning’ from their ‘ignorance’ and ‘barbarism’; The education of women was not high on the agenda because the women were being prepared to become supporters of the men as wives.

This paper has shown that there have been some changes in the areas of theological education for women now over women in the past. While the numbers are still few, there are openings for them to study in most theological institutions within the continent of Africa. The world study report on theological education is recommended for having a strong section on women in theological education. That said, it is important to note that patriarchal ideologies that existed unquestioned one hundred years ago are still alive in the church and its theological institutions in Africa today. While churches pride themselves for having educated women theologically and also having ordained them, women continue to be on the margins of the church rather than the centre. John Pobee has observed that to refuse to take women seriously, or to deny them the right to make a serious contribution, and to see them only as decorations and tokens, is to deprive the community of men and women in the church and theological institutions of a substantial and vital contribution, and with the lack of their identity we are poorer for it.

30 See the Journal of Constructive Theology 12/1 (2006) and 14/1 (2008), which are dedicated to a discussion about issues on masculinities by African male theologians.
31 The titles of the presentations were as follows: HIV and AIDS and Masculinities (Dr Ezra Chitando); The Bible and Manhood in African Culture (Prof Tinyiko Maluleke); Church and Masculinity (Prof Ka Mana); Youth and Masculinity (Mr. Zeferino Teka); Modern Masculinities (Dr Manoj Kurian); Colonial/Rural-Urban Masculinities (Rev Dinis Matsole); Ammon, Son of David: Subverting Biblical Masculinity (Prof Gerald West); ANARELLA and Masculinities (Rev. Johannes Heath).
As the world moves towards Edinburgh 2010, women have made strides in theological education in Africa, but the very ecumenical organisations that were instrumental in bringing about the discussions of women in theological education, appear to have lost the zeal of the 20th century, falling back to pushing women to the margins, even within the ecumenical movement itself. There are many examples that one can give but here will mention a few. In the case of Edinburgh 2010 conference, the “Women in Mission” was introduced only as one of the transversal themes, with no direct budget and its international study group coming only as an afterthought. The work done by Ecumenical Theological Education in designing a major resource book on “women in mission” is to be commended, as well as its intervention to have this group officially invited to join the Edinburgh 2010 process. However, the additional involvement of African women theologians in the Edinburgh 2010 process was made possible only after the intervention of Ecumenical Theological Education.

Outside the process of Edinburgh 2010, the Circle is concerned to see the changes that have taken place at the World Council of Churches leadership level, which have sidelined women. This issue was raised at the 2009 Central Committee meeting of the WCC, where the women delegates lamented that recent staff cuts in WCC were to the disadvantage of women in senior staff positions, where there was a previous agreement of fifty-fifty gender balance.

In the case of the All Africa Conference of Churches 2008 General Assembly, gender issues were excluded from the list of key issues for organisational focus for the next five years. Such exclusions become a concern when assumptions are made that this issue has been sorted out, when the experiences of women in the church and society indicate that the problem of the exclusion of women is nowhere near resolved. So, the struggle for the recognition of the humanity of women continues!

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WOMEN IN THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION FROM AN ASIAN PERSPECTIVE

Limatula Longkumer

Introduction

It is not an easy task to write in detail about Asian women’s experiences in theological education due to some factors: (i) the vastness of the geographical context, marked by diversity and complexity of different races, multi-ethnic groups, multi-cultures, languages, and multi-religious traditions of Asia, that makes it difficult to survey in detail; (ii) there are many Theological Associations in Asia (to mention a few, ATESEA, BTESSC, NEATS, SEAGST, ATA),\(^1\) with diverse forms of theological education and so a multiplicity of perspectives are found in theological education management; and (iii) the level of women’s exposure to theological education differs from context to context and so women’s experiences in theological education and ministry are not the same everywhere in Asia. Hence, the difficulty is in giving a detailed picture of Asian women in theological education.

However, in spite of the diversities and complexities, Asian women draw together as “Asian” in search of justice for all. Some of our common concerns are: (i) the search for identity as women – Asian women attempt to search and define who we are and what we do and together what and how can we do; (ii) we share the experiences of suffering, poverty, oppression and discrimination mainly because of our sex, race, socio-economic and cultural status. Therefore, Asian women attempt to articulate theologies of liberation starting with Asian women’s experiences; (iii) as Asians, our theologizing is contextually-grounded in our Asian contexts of plurality, poverty, and deep spirituality; (iv) we share histories of being colonized because many countries were under the imperial powers in the past; (v) our struggles are manifold – against massive poverty, and the negative impact of globalization, continuing conflicts and terrorism, religious fundamentalism and many emerging issues; (vi) we share the struggles for peace with justice and for egalitarian communities of people and creation.

Theological education is a process of equipping and moulding God’s people in community to respond to various emerging issues. Hence, theological education can play a prominent role to bring justice and peace in Asia. Gender justice in theological education is one of the key issues today. In this paper, a few concerns on Asian women in theological education are highlighted in general. However, many of my reflections are drawn from an Indian perspective.

Asian Women in Theological Education

A conscious attempt to do Asian feminist theology did not begin until the late 1970s. Only since then, have Asian women formed theological networks and organized their own theological consultations to share resource materials, to stimulate creative theological thinking, and to publish their own theological writings. Asian feminist theology traces its growth and development to three events: the publication of *In God’s Image* in 1982; the formation of the Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians Women’s Commission (EATWOT) in 1983, and the founding of the Asian Women’s Resource Centre (AWRC) for

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\(^1\) The Association for Theological Education in South East Asia (ATESEA), The Board of Theological Education of Senate of Serampore College (BTESSC) in India, The North East Asia Theological Schools (NEATS), The South East Asia Graduate School of Theology (SEAGST), Asia Theological Association (ATA).
Culture and Theology in 1987. In addition to this, the Christian Conference of Asia (CCA) involved the empowerment of women from the very inception of CCA (EACC) in 1959.

While tracing back the history of Asian women in theological education, women are relative latecomers in the field of theological education. Until the 1950s, women theologians were very few in Asia but now women are increasing in number. For example, in some countries like the Philippines, Indonesia and Myanmar, female students outnumber male students in several schools. In China over one-third of the faculty in the 18 seminaries and Bible schools are women, more than 400 women ordained ministers, and there is a conscious discussion about the importance of women’s studies in theological education. There are a number of women leading the colleges as principals/presidents in Asia. We are proud to say that women are advancing in theological education. But on the other hand, in many countries in Asia, women are poorly represented in theological education. There may be hardly one or two women theologians in some countries like Nepal, Pakistan, Bangladesh, etc. In some church traditions women are not encouraged to apply for theological studies. Hence, women’s participation in theological education differs from context to context in Asia.

Even though women theologians are increasing and women’s leadership is progressing in some parts of Asia, the nature and content of existing theological education remains male oriented. Despite feminist movements and feminist theologies challenging and critiquing gender issues for many decades, there is still gender inequality in theological education. Women’s issues are not integrated well in theological education but are at the periphery of the theological curriculum. Search for gender justice in theological education should be treated as an important agenda in theological education programmes.

Gender Issues in Theological Education

A few reasons are given below as to why the problem of gender issues exists in theological education. Gender issues can be due to many factors.

Long histories of submissive roles

The culture of a given context conditions and determines the nature of theological education. Asian society, regardless of all cultures and traditions in general, is a male dominated society where women are treated as inferior. In other words, patriarchal culture is predominant in Asia. As a result, theological education in Asia might be influenced by a patriarchal and male dominated culture.

Patriarchy articulates structural and institutional relations of domination and power relations between women and men; women’s freedom of choice, behaviour, actions and thoughts are restricted. Under patriarchy, women have been nurtured to be submissive and passive for many centuries. So, the vestiges of the long history of women occupying subservient positions in society are not easily effaced over-night. The passive compliance with and resignation to the subordinate functions allotted to them are so deeply

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2 Introduction to Asian Feminist Theologies: Book 1(Kuala Lumpur: AWRC, 2005), 38.
3 Sientje Merentek-Abraham, “The Association for Theological Education in South East Asia The Ecumenical Theological Education: South East Asia Perspective”, in Ecumenical Theological Education in Changing Context: Problems, Challenges and Hopes ed. A. Wati Longchar (Jorhat: ETE-WCC/CCA, 2004), 34.
6 A. Wati Longchar (ed.), Ecumenical Theological Education in Changing Context, 14.
engraved on the minds of the women that any questioning or rejection of the status quo are hardly entertained by most women. The majority of Asian women are still cultivating passive roles as given paths to be followed. The traditionally defined model of “an ideal woman” as fragile, dependent, humble, passive, motherly, caring and feminine are so deeply rooted in the minds of the people that aggressive and outspoken women are regarded as not “womanly” by many cultures. In fact, smart and outspoken women are looked down upon by the society as “uncultured women.” Such ideologies have dominated women for so long that even some of the women theologians are more comfortable to carry on the traditional stereotypical roles in the church rather than breaking down the oppressive structures in the church. Many women theologians do not critique male oriented theological education, but simply accommodate it. Though women get opportunities to pursue theological education they are trained to carry on the traditional ministry of women leadership. Asian women need to come out from their passive roles and assert their rights. Theological education should play a great role in this regard.

Christian theology

The problem of women in theological education is not merely women’s historical lack of participation, but also how theological education is defined, formed and structured. Theology is the foundation and basis for formulating theological education. The existing theological education in Asia depends on two dominant theological expressions: Western theology and indigenous or contextual theologies. The theologies, which had been shaped in Western patriarchal culture and an imperial context, were transported and transplanted in Asia. As a result, anything coming from the West is regarded as superior. This leads to a regard for a Western theological degree as a superior degree – the most aspiring one – a sine qua non – and then to a looking down upon those who pursue theological education in their home country.8 This Western model ignores women, tribal/indigenous people’s heritage and their experiences.9 The content of theological education remains highly abstract and detached from the reality of the people, especially the women, the poor and marginalized peoples. Secondly, many indigenous or contextual theologies have emerged like Minjung, Dalit, tribal, Indonesian, Filipino, etc., responding to a particular context but these theologies often fail to integrate women’s concern. For example, Indian Christian theology utilizes Indian philosophical thought, mainly Advaita philosophy, to formulate theology. Such theological formulation is not transformative for women because it perpetuates Brahmanical traditions of male biases and its highly abstract philosophy neglects women and marginalized peoples. Therefore, for women it has no meaning. Hence, in most cases theological education has been too theoretical, academic, a carbon-copy of Western culture, and male oriented both in content and method. There is a need to formulate a relevant contextual theology for theological education.

Theological curriculum

The theological curriculum model we follow in Asia is from Western academia. For example, the Senate of Serampore College (BTESSC) in India follows the conventional Western model with departments of specialized branches like: Biblical Studies – the Old and New Testaments – Theology and Ethics, History of Christianity, Religions, Christian Ministry. Along with this, some new branches are added like Social Analysis, Communication, Women’s Studies, Missiology, etc. I do not reject the compartmentalization of the branches, but the rigidity of the compartmentalization without relating much to other areas is a problem. This conventional model creates serious problems for women. First, a theological curriculum developed to meet the needs in a specific cultural environment may not be a successful instrument in another setting. Second, this specialized department model creates a hierarchy of courses between required

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9 K. Thanzauva, Theology of Community: Tribal Theology in Making (Aizawl: MTC, 1997), 64.
or core subjects and elective/optional subjects. Required courses are regarded as superior and optional papers are regarded as less important courses. Third, this fixed framework of the curriculum makes it very difficult to add new emerging courses. Even when a course is added, it is often framed within the parameters already laid down rather than opening up new ways of doing theology. Very often women’s concerns are placed alongside the main curriculum as an “appendix.” Often those courses on women’s concerns end up as courses exclusively for a few women students because courses on women’s concerns are mostly optional/elective subjects. In some courses, women’s concerns are added but are inserted only as a “sub-point” within the overall courses. This “sub-point” policy system cannot bring gender justice within theological education.

We should aim to integrate the perspective of women and marginalized people into the mainstream of the theological curriculum, thereby affecting the education of all men and women. The word “integrate” should be used rather than the word “add” because one cannot simply add new perspectives without changing traditional ways of thinking. The integration of feminist concerns in theological education is not only adding a few feminist books to the reading list, offering a few elective courses on women’s concerns and appointing a few women faculty members; one must revise the whole conceptual framework. In that sense, women speak of new paradigms and transforming the curriculum. That means there is a political process involved in trying to change the existing structure of the curriculum and to move education toward wholeness and mutuality. It means that persons in power will have to change their attitudes towards women, and sincerely endeavour to evaluate the curriculum in order to integrate women’s matters properly in theological discourses.

Structure of theological education

By and large, the theological colleges/seminaries have preserved male power structures in theological institutions. Many women theologians are coming up in Asia, more women students are being enrolled in the seminaries/colleges, and a few of the women are in the top leadership positions, yet male leadership structures still dominate at the administrative level of theological education. The churches sponsor fewer women candidates because women have fewer placements in church ministry. At the same time, due to a limited infrastructure of many theological institutions, only a limited number of women are enrolled.

Theological colleges/seminaries need to reconsider administrative structures, admission policies, membership to its committees and boards, scholarship grants, and faculty recruitment in order to have gender justice in all these areas. Theological education needs to develop structures which encourage a more democratic pattern of administration. The recommendation policy of the church and the recruitment policy of the theological institutions need to be changed. There is a need for a fairer proportion of women in the faculties and in high-level administrative positions by sharing power and leadership roles between men and women. It is time for innovation, for rediscovering old ways and opening up new paths in the structure, content and method of theological education. Gender justice should be maintained in the structure of theological education by restructuring leadership roles.

Denominational oriented theological education

Many theological colleges/seminaries in Asia are denominational colleges. Almost all the theological colleges are denominational church based institutions whose curricular offerings are mandated by their denominational bodies. Theological education tends to uphold their denominational teachings and policies. We need to know that the church in Asia remains one area where male leadership strongly exists and where

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women, half of the population, are not fully incorporated in ministry and decision-making. Hence, the male ideologies become the governing principles of the theological institutions. As a result, many women are deprived of privileges in doing theology.

Ministry

God calls both women and men for full time ministry. Both women and men study the same courses/subjects or earn the same degree from the theological colleges. But after the training, many churches do not give equal opportunities for women in ministry. Women are not ordained in many churches and even though they are ordained, women presbyters are given less status and facilities. In many parts of Asia, women are barred from the top leadership roles in the church’s ministry. Unless the churches open the space for women’s involvement for ministry, undergoing merely theological studies becomes meaningless. Different pay scales are still maintained in some churches in which women’s pay is lower than the men. It is clear that male biased theological education and patriarchal church structures blend so well that women are discriminated against in both aspects. The present theological education prepares women to take up only the traditional roles (or ministry) reserved for them – either as women leaders in the women’s department, associate pastors, Sunday school teachers or theological teachers in seminaries.

Suggestions to Develop Gender Justice in Theological Education

Theological education for ministerial formation: There is a need to develop an integrated focus in our theological institutions beyond compartmentalized education by introducing interdisciplinary and integrated theological education. It means we need to focus theological education as ministerial formation, not only in training the clerics for the professional ministries of the church. According to Konrad Raiser, ‘formation’ means it is not limited to programmes of instruction; it is more than training and even education. It refers to the whole process of equipping, enabling, raising awareness, shaping or transforming attitudes and values. Formation is designed to create leaders of the people, not theologians of the establishment. Formation is a process that integrates scholarship and praxis – action oriented education. It is experiential and not attainable exclusively through academic pursuits. It calls for an entirely new theological and educational methodology.

Need based curriculum: We need to develop a new paradigm in theological curricula. It should be contextual, people-centred and issue-based aiming at preparing people in all contexts to opt for life and, in solidarity with those whose life is threatened, the marginalized and oppressed, to struggle for their liberation, through working towards building communities of justice and peace for all. The focus should be on real life experiences of people – their misery, poverty, suffering, pain, and oppression. Theological education should consider the contextual realities of religious plurality, injustices, globalization, peace, environmental degradation, gender justice, racism, classism, HIV/AIDS, issues of migrant workers, rape and molestation, human trafficking and prostitution, etc. These aspects should be in the core of theological education. This demands radical changes in our theological education system, in its structure, content, nature and teaching methodology.

Integrated approach: Theological education requires an integrated approach if gender justice is to be carried out in theological education. The present character of theological education is so disciplinary and compartmentalized that any emerging issue cannot be integrated fully in the narrow disciplinary approach of learning. Though new courses like women’s concerns, interreligious dialogue, HIV/AIDS, etc., are added in theological curricula, it cannot make any difference in the way we do theology. In fact, this disciplinary approach marginalizes minorities and others. We need to develop an interdisciplinary character.

in our theological studies and research because emerging issues are often beyond our training and expertise. Hence, in many fora, women have made their position clear that it should be an “integrative approach” rather than an “adding approach” to theological education, because one cannot simply add a new perspective without changing the old pattern. Gender perspectives should be integrated in every branch of theological education. Sensitivity to gender issues, cultures, classes, castes and tribes must be emphasized.

More interdisciplinary courses: For years we have promoted departmentalized models of education without relating much to other disciplines, and so more emphasis should be given to interdisciplinary approaches. The disciplinary approach to theological education is not sufficient to unravel the complexity of emerging societal issues. The curriculum must provide space for equipping students to handle various dimensions of emerging issues, to handle various dimensions of social and biblical contexts, and bridge the gap between the branches. This can be adequately handled only through developing more interdisciplinary and multi-disciplinary courses. Interdisciplinary courses need to be issue-oriented approaches to learning. Women’s issues in theological education can be solved by developing more courses around the issues or themes.

Interdisciplinary Pedagogy

Firstly, interdisciplinary pedagogy is to promote team teaching. It means a course may be taught by a team of teachers who plan and implement courses together. This kind of teaching is not only enriching for students but also for teachers. Interdisciplinary or team teaching can also be fostered when teachers regularly have a time for sharing how they can improve their teaching – from different disciplinary perspectives. It is important for teachers to know and learn from each other’s philosophy and methodology. Interdisciplinary teaching is also getting help from the so-called secular disciplines. Issues such as environmental degradation, the spread of HIV/AIDS, war and terror, globalization, fundamentalism, women’s issues, poverty and interreligious dialogue demand that we open our seminary doors to other disciplines, even to secular disciplines, and other faiths for help in our analysis and attempts at finding ways of dealing with such issues. It is important to utilize talented and expert teachers from various disciplines to develop team teaching and interdisciplinary teaching.

Secondly, interdisciplinary pedagogy is concerned with an issue oriented approach as a form of learning. The disciplinary approach, which is the legacy of Western academia, cannot provide sufficient responses to the multi-dimensional social realities in Asia because courses are designed according to subject disciplines. Therefore, there is an urgent need to formulate issue oriented theological education. Women’s issues in theological education cannot be solved by inserting a few courses on feminism but through designing the courses within the theme “feminism.” Issue-based theological education means courses and syllabi can be designed around the issues or themes, not designed in departmental disciplines in order to do justice to various issues. Issue oriented theological education can only deal sufficiently with the emerging societal issues. Thus, an interdisciplinary model of education should be taken seriously in theological education.

Courses on Women’s concerns: Like in any other branches, at least a few courses on women’s concerns should be made compulsory subjects at the B.Th. and B.D./M.Div. levels. By doing so, feminist concerns will be at the core of the theological curriculum. In some colleges, courses on women’s concerns are not taught at all in the colleges. ATESEA has already made a feminist course one of the compulsory

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14 Hope S. Antone, “Reclaiming Theological Education as Education for Life,” 58.
courses. Critically serious efforts should be taken by all the colleges to make the courses on women compulsory for all.

**Reserve scholarships for women:** Special scholarships for women need to be created at all levels of theological studies. A certain quota of seats must also be reserved for women in theological colleges. Criteria for awarding scholarships must be relaxed for women. Such opportunities will encourage and promote women in theological education.

**Conclusion**

The argument in this article is that women’s issues are not integrated adequately in the existing theological education process. Mere curriculum reform and the insertion of a few feminist subjects cannot bring a total transformation in theological education. What changes have been done so far is only at the level of tokenism. Women’s issues in theological education are justice issues. Therefore, a new paradigm shift in theological education can only bring drastic changes. Integrated, interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approaches need to be adopted in theological education. Such a paradigm shift would produce a different emancipatory knowledge, and a holistic vision of theological education for both women and men.

It is important to recognize that theological education is a contextual education and it should be grounded in contemporary issues – having to do with shaping people’s lives and transforming their attitudes and values in both church and society. It should be a socially responsible and action-oriented education. These include culture and gender issues aimed at pointing out the androcentric bias in theological formation, issues of poverty, religious pluralism and growing religious fundamentalism, ecology, globalization, peace-conflicts, HIV-AIDS, etc. These emerging issues bring new challenges to the whole realm of theological education. It seriously calls for a rethinking of the whole process of theological education – approaches, prevailing models, curricula, purposes and methods of teaching – and urges an integration of these issues into the core of theological education. These contextual needs should be made central in theological education.

Theological education is a process of equipping and moulding God’s people for the variety of leadership roles in the church and society. God called both women and men equally to be involved in this task of ministerial formation. Therefore, there should not be any discrimination on the basis of gender. This demands a paradigm shift in theological education, theology and pedagogical perspectives to bring justice for both men and women in theological education.

**Bibliography**


*Part I: Theological Education in Global Context: Issues and Themes*
(5) Race, Power, and Migration in Theological Education

Global Migration and Challenges to Theological Education

Henry S. Wilson and Werner Kahl

“For I was..., a stranger and you welcomed me.” (Mt 25:35)

I

From time immemorial, human communities have been moving from one geographical location to another. “The phenomenon of migration is rooted in human prehistory… it only became politicized… beginning in the nineteenth century, when the modern nation-state arose and erected political-territorial borders around ethnocultural communities.”1 People migrate in search of security, safety and that continues to the present shaped by various reasons, environmental, religious, “political and military upheavals, economic inequalities, intellectual quests, natural disaster and sheer wonder lust.”2 Migration is a significant human phenomenon which affects both the areas/communities from where people leave and people arrive. As such “migration is a process which affects every dimension of social existence, and which develops its own complex dynamics.”3

By and large emigrating communities are concerned in preserving their cultures, customs and especially religious beliefs and practices in the adopted countries. In order to assure that, they would take along with them relics, sacred books, religious literatures, religious arts and artifacts. In some cases even priests, chaplains or religious teachers accompanied the emigrant communities so that in the new places the people were not deprived from practicing their faith and the passing on of their religious traditions to the succeeding generations.4

According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), “Migration is considered one of the defining global issues of the early twenty-first century, as more and more people are on the move today than at any other point in human history. There are now about 192 million people living outside their place of birth, which is about three per cent of the world’s population. This means that roughly one of every thirty-five persons in the world is a migrant. Between 1965 and 1990, the number of international migrants increased by 45 million – an annual growth rate of about 2.1 per cent. The current annual growth rate is about 2.9 per cent”.5 In 2005, woman accounted for 49.6% of global migrants. If the present trend of approximately 10 million migrating annually continues it is going to have enormous implications on all segments of communities both the host country and the home country of migrants. The culture and religion

5 www.iom.int/jahia/page3.html.
of immigrants often becomes a point of contention contributing to socio-economic and political confrontations and clashes.

People who are determined to migrate take great risks. Paying high prices they travel in overcrowded boats, try to cross deserts with little food or water, lend themselves to be hurdled like animals in transport vehicles or containers. With all such dangerous ventures a number of them get captured and end up in prisons, camps or deported back to their home countries. Those who make it may end up doing menial jobs, just to survive. Some others continue to move from place to place hoping that someone will help them.

Religious institutions and worshipping communities have been involved in rendering services to the immigrant communities. A number of mainline churches have set up offices with staff members to give thought to this concern. They have created programs and activities to reach out to the migrant communities. A number of statements and position papers on the matter of Christian response to migrant communities have been issued to educate the Christians about caring and ministering to the migrants, refugees and asylum seekers as well lobby with the policy makers for better amenities for the migrants. As the demand for such ministries are on an increase, greater attention is given for training persons who can render such services. Wherever it is possible, persons from the migrant and refugee communities are recruited for ensuring better communication with the migrants.6

Engaging with migrant peoples and communities is not new to Christianity. According to Fr. Donald Senior (President of Catholic Theological Union in Chicago), migration is a central theme of the Bible, both Old and New Testaments beginning with the examples of Abraham and Sarah’s journey from their homeland, Jacob’s migration to Egypt, the Hebrew exodus from Egypt and so on. “Even the Incarnation can be seen as a kind of migration of the Word of God into the world of humanity”7. In some sense the early Christians were religious migrants as they made transition from Jewish faith to a new faith centered on Jesus as the Messiah/Christ. As a result of that transition many of them faced rejection from their Jewish community as well as persecution from the religious and the Roman state authorities. This story repeats to this day as people convert to Christianity in various parts of the world. So experiencing the sense of being alien, despised and labeled as foreigners, is not new to Christians. Christians have appropriated the phenomenon of being religious migrants as a transitory status. So, even death for the sake of their faith becomes a heroic martyrdom.8

When reflecting on migration and Protestant theological education we have to see it in relation to the intense European migration between 1800 and 1945. “An estimated 50-60 million Europeans moved to overseas destinations during this period. By 1915, 21 per cent of Europeans resided outside Europe and Europeans effectively occupied or settled in over a third of the inhabited world.”9 Indeed a most remarkable human migration on record.9 “The following are estimates for European transoceanic migration between 1846 and 1932 from major countries of departure: 18 million from Great Britain and Ireland, 11.1 million from Italy, 6.5 million from Spain and Portugal, 5.2 million from Austria-Hungary, 4.9 million from Germany, 2.9 million from Poland and Russia, and 2.1 million from Sweden and Norway... and primarily


Part I: Theological Education in Global Context: Issues and Themes
to the United States (34.2 million), Argentina and Uruguay (7.1 million), Canada (5.2 million), Brazil (4.4 million), Australia and New Zealand (3.5 million) and Cuba (0.9 million).” The people who moved from these European countries took with them their cultures including their brand of Christianity. That is something natural that communities do when they migrate from their place of origin to the new unknown territory. Such transportation of cultures help them to organize their individual and community lives in the midst of the challenges they have to face in adjusting to the new place, society and environment.

European immigrants of Protestant belonging brought Protestant Christianity to the countries of their immigration and also among many European institutions, the theological education in the European mold. The predominantly European Christian migration from eighteenth to early twentieth centuries allowed these migrants to create in their countries of settlement enclaves of their brand of Christianity on their denominational, national and ethnic/linguistic lines and also organize theological education facilities accordingly. The cooperation with each others, across denominations and nationalities, was not a main concern at that time. Rather preserving ones religious heritage was the motivating principle.

As the new waves of migration from South to North and other countries that are open to receive immigrants is in increase since 1960, the social environment in these receiving countries have also changed through the phenomenon of globalization to be more accommodating plurality and multicultural ethos. In some sense that has synchronized well with the nature of new immigrants who are no more coming from the colonies but independent nations with a sense of rejuvenated national and social identities and determination to preserve them. As Christians these immigrants no more see themselves as replicas of the European churches and denominations established by western mission outreach; rather they come with a sense of being members of local autonomous churches or indigenous churches with self management and contextualized Christian traditions. So when they arrive at a new country they would prefer retaining specific Christian religious practices as part of their social identities to the extent that is possible. Therefore one gets to see many hyphenated names for Christian congregations like Nigerian-Anglican church, Ghanaian-Presbyterian congregation, Korean-Methodist, Guyana-Lutheran church besides coming across totally independent congregations without any reference to western historical denominations. Apart from the Anglophone community of immigrant churches in Europe there is also a growing francophone network of immigrants and immigrant churches which sometimes is less reflected in the public discourse.

In the recent decades there is increased eagerness on the part of the Christian communities (in the immigrant receiving countries) to be open to the migrant Christian communities and eager to engage with them by welcoming them to be part of their denominations or congregations. ‘Welcoming Strangers’ was a new missiological challenge that was posed to congregations from denominational headquarters. The overall emerging societal ethos of being open to the new immigrants and declining membership among the European decent denominations have also contributed to this openness. There is a great awareness among Christians today that, plurality within Christianity should be welcomed and celebrated depending on the parameter for such plurality set by the denominations and churches. Closely related to this openness is the awareness of special types of pastoral care that has to be provided to the new immigrants and where

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11 One of the key studies on recent “Migration in Europe” has come from the WCC project Migration after Porto Alegre Assembly 2006 in cooperation with the Churches’ Commission for Migrants in Europe (CCME) which published a major study “Mapping Migration in Europe – Mapping Churches’ Responses” in 2008. It brings together data and analysis on immigration and emigration figures from 47 European countries and outlines some key answers churches are developing on migration in Europe: “Mapping Migration in Europe – Mapping Churches’ Responses”, CCME, Brussels, 2008.
possible by incorporating the ministerial leaders of these communities into the main stream predominantly European/European decent Christian communities.

In many of the immigrant communities, the rites and rituals associated with birth, coming of age, marriage, child birth, sickness and death are often immersed in traditional cultural practices and are valued equally as the rites and rituals that are received from the western Christianity. So, providing pastoral care as well as developing facilities to prepare pastor leadership for the non-Europeans Christian communities is a concern in almost all the immigrant communities and those who engage with them. One approach has been to provide short term courses for those who have already been pastors in their country of origin so that they can function in tune to the new social and cultural ethos of the countries they have migrated. The other approach has been to recruit and train persons from the migrant communities with curriculum that will prepare them for the types of ministries they are expected to do. The one more approach was to equip the local pastor with social and cultural skills of a select migrant community, and assist in developing further pastoral expertise on the job. Sometimes such an approach has been implemented through team ministry consisting of local clergy and an immigrant clergy. These different approaches and others have been undertaken in several major denominations in North American, European, Australian and New Zealand.

In order to provide appropriate education and formation for different ministerial approaches mentioned above, there have been attempts in many theological faculties to recruit theological educators from South. Such attempt of having faculty members from South has not only helped to train candidates from South but also train candidates from the North to be aware of the plurality of Christian traditions and practices. In addition, having persons from South as faculty colleagues, help the faculty in general to be sensitive to the variety of theological articulation and pastor practices so that they will incorporate that reality in their teaching and even research.

II

We cite some attempts that are carried out in Great Britain, Germany and North America to provide some examples:

In Great Britain it has become obvious in the past years that as we reach the first decade of the 21st Century the cultural and ethnic landscape of Britain has radically changed. A new wave of migration has hit the British shores. People from many parts of the globe (in particular Africa, Asia and Eastern Europe) in search of educational and economical betterment have chosen Britain as the country to pursue this goal. However, this advancement is not just based on educational and economical grounds. For those who profess the Christian faith, significant numbers of such persons have specifically come to Britain in order to evangelize the nation believing that although it is officially declared a Christian State, in practice, in the everyday busyness of life and living, its inhabitants can no longer be said to actively adhere to the principles and tenets of Christianity. A new wave of migration has brought a new wave of Christianity, one that is vibrant and purpose-driven to effect spiritual and social change. Almost in a kind of role reversal, this missional activity is seen by those who offer it as a gift to Britain and the world.


14 The following paragraphs are from a paper contributed to the Edinburgh 2010 study process on theological education by Lynette Mullings, Ministry/Leadership Development Officer, Centre for Black Ministries and Leadership in The Queen’s Foundation for Ecumenical Theological Education.

15 According to the findings of the last church census of 2005, churches started by ethnic minority groups across a whole variety of languages have included those sent as missionaries from Africa or the Caribbean or Asia to help
statistics from the last Church Census in England show that the growth in Black Pentecostal Churches partly account for the slow in rate of decline in churchgoing. Black people now account for 10% of all churchgoers in England and in inner London alone, 44% of churchgoers are now black. With many of such Black Pentecostal Churches achieving mega-church status, the implications for impacting the theological training of those who are called into some form of lay or ordained ministry are particularly significant.

The enthusiasm and vigor (with) which these migrant churches bring to their faith is fertile ground for theological reflection, mission formation and leadership development. Many of them (whom) have set up their own Bible institutes to provide a level of training for the burgeoning congregations whom desire to know more about God and become actively involved in ministry. However, such training only goes so far and requires those theological colleges that have been long established in Britain holding appropriate course validation from Certificate level right through to PhD to work in partnership with migrant churches and ethnic minorities as a means of resourcing their theological education and training. The importance of theological institutions across Britain positioning themselves to accommodate this factor cannot be overstated. Not only is it important for the new growing migrant churches but it is especially crucial for those denominations, particularly from the Caribbean, who have a much longer history of establishment in Britain from the mid 20th century and are now assessing their priorities for relevance in the 21st Century. This includes the training of leaders to be suitably qualified to engage with society that has changed considerably and continues to be on the move. The kind of training required then is one that develops their leadership craft, provides them with practical tools for mission and ministry within diverse cultural and religious contexts. Space should also be provided for them to critically reflect on the practice of ministry that takes into account their specific cultural heritage. Herein lies the case for theological education that embraces intercultural teaching and learning. Courses and programmes with an emphasis on contextual theology need to be developed along with the teaching of liberation theologies such as Black and Asian Theology. The Queen’s Foundation for Ecumenical Theological Education in Birmingham, UK presently is the leading institution in Britain and Europe for teaching Black Theology, where it is mandatory for all students (preparing for ordained and/or authorized ministry) to sit the modules in Black and Asian Theology and Bible and Liberation. It is worth pointing out the observations of Black British theologian Anthony Reddie who identifies Oxford Brookes University outside of The Queen’s Foundation and The University of Birmingham, as probably the only other institution that offers a taught course in

evangelise the “mother country which gave them the gospel a century or so ago. See Peter Brierley, Pulling out of the Nosedive: A Contemporary Picture of Churchgoing – What the 2005 English Church Census Reveals, London: Christian Research, 2006, 8-9.

For this and further statistical details on growth of churches in England, please see Peter Brierley, Pulling out of the Nosedive. A commentary on the statistics from the 2005 English Church Census. Christian Research 2006.

Pastor Mathew Ashimowolo is Founder and Senior Pastor of Kingsway International Christian Centre (KICC) the largest Black Majority Church in Britain with an average attendance of 12,000 people. Other large churches include Ruach Ministries with an average attendance of 5000. See “Britain’s Largest Black Churches,” in The Voice, March 21, 2005, 14. The Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG) is currently one of Britain’s largest and fastest Black denominations with 313 branches across Britain and Ireland. They organize Britain’s largest regular prayer gathering called the Festival of Life attracting over 20,000 Christians from across the UK. See “Historic visit by the Prince of Wales and the Duchess of Cornwall to one of London’s largest black majority churches, Jesus House” in Keep the Faith Issue 35.

A case in point are denominations like the Church of God of Prophecy (CoGoP) and New Testament Church of God (NTCoG) who have established links and partnerships with the Centre for Black Ministries and Leadership at the Queen’s Foundation for Ecumenical Theological Education, identifying The Queen’s Foundation as a viable institution to send their key leaders and serving clergy to advance their theological training.
Black Theology in the UK.¹⁹ This is clearly not enough. For equity and justice in the curriculum development of theological education and for the equipping of leaders within migrant churches whom will engender a bold and radical outlook, the stark call is for other institutions to take up the challenge to embrace this new and exciting direction.

In Germany there is the case of Hamburg where there are about 80 churches with a membership of a West-African background.²⁰ The churches represent the charismatic or neo-pentecostal version of Christianity as it has become mainline in West-Africa. It is estimated that roughly the same number of Africans of the first or second generation some of whom have actually become German citizens, and Germans of the Lutheran tradition visit Sunday services in Hamburg. Besides, there is a number of migrant churches with Chinese, Indian, Philipino, and South-Korean memberships present in this northern German metropolis.

Migrant church leaders from these different cultural backgrounds normally would find it difficult to enter into university based educational programs and theological degree courses which have different entrance requirements and were not designed for the specific purposes of these groups. Therefore committed theologians around Missions academy of Hamburg launched a special theological education program for African immigrant churches which is described in the following case study on “African Theological Training in Germany” (ATTiG), a study program of the Academy of Mission for, and with African migrant-church leaders in Northern Germany:

In 2001 a unique program was inaugurated at the Academy of Mission at the University of Hamburg designed to provide theological training for African migrant-church leaders in Northern Germany. ATTiG is a two year program during which the participants meet once a month for a weekend. Each course has about 20 participants, mostly from Hamburg and other areas in the northern part of Germany. The program was the outcome of deliberations between African migrant pastors in Northern Germany and German theologians at the Academy of Mission, held in the second half of the 1990s. It is no coincidence that this development took place in Hamburg since this metropolis has the highest density of migrants originating from West-Africa most of whom are Christians from Ghana and Nigeria. The beginnings of the 1990s saw a sharp rise of West Africans migrating to Germany which was accompanied by the establishment of numerous, mostly neo-pentecostal ministries. Today there are not less than 80 churches in Hamburg with an African membership and leadership (all over Germany about 1000 of these churches were founded within the last two decades). Besides the neo-pentecostal ministries there are relatively few so-called African independent churches (AIC) like Aladura from Nigeria or MDCC from Ghana, traditional pentecostal churches like The Church of Pentecost or The Assemblies of God, and missions by, in West-Africa so-called orthodox churches like The Methodist Church of Ghana or the Presbyterian Church of

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Ghana. In addition, the Catholic Church provides here and there services for Catholics from Africa, run by African priests.

Interestingly, many of the migrant churches celebrate their services in church buildings belonging to the Evangelical Church of Germany (EKD) making use of the church premises after the service of the locals has ended. Because of cultural and theological differences between the old and the new population there have only occasionally been points of qualified encounters such as joined services. However, it has become obvious – also to the migrants – that most of them have come to stay. As a matter of fact, many have become German citizens due to intermarriage, and the second generation is coming up.

Therefore the need is increasingly felt by pastors of a West-African origin, to deepen their knowledge about church-life and theology in Germany, in order to be able to connect in meaningful ways to the German system, to reach out successfully to Germans, and also to be accepted as pastors of an equal standing by their German counterparts and by the society at large. Most neo-pentecostal pastors have no formal theological training but they claim to depend on spiritual insight in leading a congregation. This contradicts the positive value attributed by the Evangelical Church of Germany, to a purely academic theological training required of its ministers.

The Academy of Mission attempts, by means of ATTiG, to meet this need and to bridge the gap between African migrant pastors on the one hand, and German theological thinking and church life on the other hand. However this is not meant as a one-way street of theological instruction. ATTiG rather creates an interface in Germany where African migrant pastors learn about German and Lutheran traditions in a critical way and where they exchange theological views with German theologians. However, it is the mission of the Academy of Mission to enable the participants to reflect critically on their faith and experience and to communicate the need of contextually aware theologies.

ATTiG has been sponsored mainly by the Evangelisches Missionswerk (EMW: The Association of Protestant Churches and Missions in Germany). Many of the instructors are theology professors of the University of Hamburg of whom it is required that they are open for theological debate. The participants most of whom are neo-pentecostal or charismatic “mainline”-Christians tend to represent their versions of Christianity in rather self-confident ways and they do not shy away from challenging their professors theologically, albeit respectfully.

In the course of the theological debates it becomes clear to everybody involved that we all have our theological predilections and respective, culturally bound hermeneutical keys in reading Scripture. We come to an appreciation of this variability of Biblical interpretation. In such a way it becomes possible to learn from one another, e.g. of dimensions of Biblical passages that have been overlooked in certain traditions, and to become aware of certain blind spots and areas to grow. All this contributes to laying the foundation on which Christians with different cultural and confessional origins may grow-together in church and society.

Similar developments can be reported from the context of North America. The Christians from the South are bringing a hybrid Christianity to North America as they migrate there, that is a combination of the 19th century evangelistic western missionary Christianity (with particular denominational affiliation) and the local religio-cultural practices (which the local converts brought with them). This hybrid Christianity is alien/strange to North American churches that follow Western Christianity with some North American nuances. The North American churches are eager to welcome the migrants with their Christianity and accommodate them especially in the context of diminishing membership of European decent, but are unable to fully integrate them to the denominational setting as exists now in North America.

The North American churches have also opened up to the multicultural and multiracial challenges and have created programs in their seminaries for multicultural and multiracial exposure and experience. Besides through the initiatives of ATS (Association of Theological Schools in US and Canada) from the 80s, the globalization program has become an important part of theological education. And from the 9/11
incident interfaith engagements especially with Muslim communities are also taken up by many seminaries as an important area of future ministerial challenge in the US.

These new challenges have led to the appointment of a number of faculty members from churches in the South, from Diaspora communities and minority community like in North America, African American, Asian American and Latino/Latina scholars. As their numbers increases the ethos of seminaries are bound to change sometime creating challenges to the status quo of theological institutions they are called to serve. It has also contributed to the frustration of faculty members from the South or from minority communities as changes often do not happen amicably and easily.

In organizing appropriate theological education, one can benefit from what is experimented and attempted in the general education for migrants and minorities in different countries. Especially, educating the migrant children has been a common challenge in countries open to immigrants so that they will not be at socio-economic disadvantage and their community experience segregation. For example, A Green Paper adopted by the European Commission on 3 July 2008 encourages public debate of interested parties on how education policies may better address the challenges posed by immigration and internal EU mobility flows. Key issues to be addressed are:

- how to prevent the creation of segregated school settings, so as to improve equity in education;
- how to accommodate the increased diversity of mother tongues and cultural perspectives and build intercultural skills;
- how to adapt teaching skills and build bridges with migrant families and communities. 21

However, the aim of appropriate theological education among immigrants is not to groom them to become good residence and citizens of host country with needed assimilation of local brand of Christianity and culture. Rather its goal should be that the immigrant Christians would be able to preserve their Christian faith and respective practices with integrity without flouting the opportunities offered by the state and society for becoming residence and citizens. Even though acquiring residence and citizenship is often a prime concern of members of any immigrant community that process swings according to the political climate of a country not necessarily always keeping in mind the wellbeing of the immigrant communities. Besides, theological education should provide Christian immigrants, especially their pastoral leaders skills for intercultural communication and interaction so that the wealth of theology and Christian traditions they possess can be shared with the local Christian community and visa versa. Today there is a greater recognition of vitality and dynamism of Christianity as practiced in the South as well the greater recognition of cultural captivity of Northern Christianity which sometimes acts as impediment for Christian hospitality.

Welcoming the stranger among us: unity in diversity: A Statement of the U.S. Catholic Bishops issues in November 15, 2000 has observed that, “A kind of nativism appears in the church itself when established members insist that there is just one way to worship, one set of familiar hymns, one small handful of familiar devotions, one way to organize a parish community, one language for all – and that immigrants must adapt to that way of doing things”. 22 Challenging such an attitude, Gemma Tulud Cruz comments that the experience of journeys of migrants offer resource to Christians “to rediscover the God of revelation in the context of leaving, of going to unknown places, as did Abraham, Jesus, Paul, and countless Christian missionaries over the ages because, for “‘in-betweens’ like migrants, reality is always someplace else”. 23 It once again challenges Christian and churches rediscover their nature as pilgrims, foreigners and strangers on their earthly abode, and people of faith on the move in the midst of other faith communities.

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In the recent years, in general education greater recognition is given to getting to know the cultures and especially religions of immigrant communities and developing positive attitude towards them with a vision of promoting multiculturalism in society. The emphasis is not just on including information on world religions but shaping the curriculum in such a creative way so that multiculturalism becomes the significant principle in imparting education. Theological education can benefit from a large amount of materials on multicultural pedagogical experimentation.

As mentioned above, there have been attempts in number of theological seminaries in the North to create curricula both to help native/local candidates to face the challenge of plurality in society party contributed through migration as well as for preparing candidates from immigrant communities to appropriately to minister to their communities in the new migrant situation. However, there is the need from time to time to engage in wider debate bringing together educators and others, both theological and other faculties to address this challenge of our time, migration and education. Such debate and search is very important as it is widely recognized that, “Cultural diversity is necessary for humankind as biodiversity for nature.” (UNESCO) And one can add that cognizance of the importance of religious diversity (within a single religion and between religions) is important as they are deeply rooted in the human civilization and collective human psyche. The role of education in general and theological education in particular in preserving them is crucial for the enriched lives of humans.

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RECOVERING THE BODY: WHEN RACE AND POWER MIGRATE

Lester Edwin J. Ruiz

“What has WTO got to do with your being a domestic helper?” Almost indignantly she replies: “Don’t you know that I am a product of this WTO? I never dreamed I would end up a domestic helper in Hong Kong. I had to leave my family because the salary I earned back home would not allow me and my family to live decently. I’ve been here for more than six years now. I want to return home but I cannot. No job awaits me there... each time I try to start saving (part of my salary), the price of oil at home rises. I am stuck. I am a stock...

Turning to a migrant advocate, she said, “Di ba, Ate? Para akong toilet paper sa tindahan? Kung mabili ka, okay. Kung hindi, diyan ka lang. At pag nabilang, pagkagamit sa iyo, tapon ka na lang. Hindi ka naman kinukupkop. [Is it not true, Big Sister that I am like a roll of toilet paper in a store? If I am not sold, I remain on the shelf; if someone buys me, I get used up and thrown away afterwards. I am not cared for...]”

I can’t help but dream about a kind of criticism that would try not to judge but to bring an *oeuvre*, a book, a sentence, an idea to life; it would light fires, watch the grass grow, listen to the wind, and catch the sea foam in the breeze and scatter it. It would multiply not judgments but signs of existence; it would summon them from their sleep. Perhaps, it would invent them sometimes – all the better... Criticism that hands down sentences sends me to sleep; I’d like a criticism of scintillating leaps of the imagination. It would not be sovereign or dressed in red. It would bear the lightning of possible storms.

My Agenda

What I hope to achieve in this essay is at least three things: first, to create a space for dialogue/conversation among the readers of this huge volume about how the signifying *practices* of “race” and power help (de)form (global) theological education; second, to provide a map, not about the disciplinary fields in


3 Situated in the context of a post-positivist, post-empiricist, poststructuralist tradition, I deploy the term “practice” much in the same way Michel Foucault used the term *dispositif* – “a resolutely heterogeneous assemblage, containing discourses, institutions, architectural buildings (*managements architecturaux*), reglementary decisions, scientific statements, philosophical, moral, philanthropic propositions... said as well as non-said (*du dit aussi bien que du non-dit*)...” – to signify the delightful and frustrating entanglements between “theory” (speculative reason), and “praxis” (practical reason), and their interplay with the personal, the political, the historical, and the sacred – in the service of transformation. See Michel Foucault, “The Confession of the Flesh” in *Power/Knowledge Selected Interviews and Other Writings*, ed., Colin Gordon (New York, NY: Pantheon, 1980), 194-228.

Additionally, Giorgio Agamben’s notion of “apparatus,” by which he means, “a kind of formation… that at a given historical moment has as its major function the response to an urgency...always located in a power relation... and appears at the intersection of power relations and relations of knowledge” [he uses the example of the “mobile phone”] provides a richly textured and constructively suggestive description of how one might understand “practice.” Cf. Giorgio Agamben, *What is an Apparatus? and Other Essays*, trans. David Kishik and Stefano Pedatella (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2009), 2-3. Both Foucault and Agamben signal my methodological preference for “thinking about” the question of “race” and power within a wider polymorphic discursive formation, the resulting ambivalence of which allows for a more inclusive analysis, and therefore, their possible transformation.
which “race” and power are often formally located, but a map that identifies those elements which, while not directly about “race” and power, may be critical to our description and evaluation of them; and third, to offer some interpretive metaphors that might allow improvisation in how “race” and power especially at their intersections can be “re-thought” for the purpose of fundamental change.4

However, I want to accomplish these tasks with the recognition that the intellectual production, reproduction, and representation, in which I am engaged, despite their aspirations towards transformation, are still the discourse of a privileged Asian male in the US. As Foucault reminds us, because all intellectual work is a passage through privilege, it is fraught with both dangers and possibilities: dangers, because we are a species marked, not only by reason, or by freedom, but also by error; possibilities because the history of thought, read as a critical philosophy appreciative of “fallibility,” can become a “history of trials, an open-ended history of multiple visions and revisions, some more enduring than others.”5

Therefore, the need for self-critical accountability which begins with the acknowledgement of location and positionality, not to mention maneuver, is a spiritual, methodological, and political necessity. It helps to 1) frame the production and reproduction of knowledge as a passage to transformation – the creation of the fundamentally new which is also fundamentally better in the context of conflict and collaboration, continuity and change, and the creation of justice;6 and 2) define the appropriate roles that producers and reproducers of this kind of knowledge can play in society, particularly in the context of those for whom and for what purpose knowledge is produced.7 As Foucault notes:

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4 While there may be disagreement on the substantive, methodological, and, institutional definitions of “race” and power, I believe there can be agreement that their multistranded locations and positionalities are necessarily articulated in the interstices of a people’s political, economic, and cultural life and work. See, for example, Cornel West, “A Genealogy of Modern Racism,” in Cornel West, Prophecy Deliverance: An Afro-American Revolutionary Christianity (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1982), 47-65; Kwame Anthony Appiah, In My Father’s House (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1993); Angela Davis, Women, Race, and Class (New York, NY: Vintage, 1983); Margaret Andersen and Patricia Hill Collins, eds., Race, Class, and Gender: An Anthology (Florence, KY: Wadsworth Publishing, 2009).


6 Manfred Halpern, Transforming the Personal, Political, Historical and Sacred in Theory and Practice, ed., David Abalos (Scranton, PA: University of Scranton Press, 2009).

7 The question of “the purpose of knowledge” is of fundamental importance to any aspiration for transformation. In theologies of liberation, this notion is expressed methodologically in terms of the “preferential option of the poor” which gets modified over the years as “the epistemic privilege of the marginalized” or the “hermeneutical significance of the excluded.” With recognition of the importance of location and positionality, and therefore, the profound challenges to the notion of “the poor,” I believe we are called again to think more critically and creatively about the “for what and for whom?” of knowledge. Here, the task of the intellectual ought not to be extricated from its entanglements with “political struggle in the name of the victim.” Jacques Derrida notes in “Passages – from Traumatism to Promise,” that “one of the meanings of what is called a victim (a victim of anything or anyone whatsoever) is precisely to erase its meaning as victim. The absolute victim is a victim who cannot even protest. One cannot even identify the victim as victim. He or she cannot even present himself or herself as such. He or she is totally excluded or covered over by language, annihilated by history, a victim one cannot identify. But there is also the unreadability that stems from the violence of foreclosure, exclusion, all of history being a conflictual field of forces in the history of...”

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The work of an intellectual is not to shape the other’s political will; it is, through the analysis that he carries out in his field, to question over and over again what is postulated as self-evident, to disturb peoples’ mental habits, the way they do and think things, to dissipate what is familiar and accepted, to reexamine rules and institutions and on the basis of this re-problematization… to participate in the formation of a political will (in which he has his role as a citizen to play).  

Focusing the Conversation

One way to focus the conversation about the practices of “race” and power is to ask the question, “What might be learned about the practices of “race” and power by re-locating them in the context of the “pursuit of the body politic” especially under conditions of (racialized and gendered) Diaspora?”

Are there grounds, in fact, to transpose the question of “race” and power to questions of “the body”? In an intentionally textured, highly nuanced essay entitled “Navigating the topology of race,” Jayne Chong-Soon Lee, affirms Kwame Anthony Appiah’s relentless and uncompromising challenge to the “uncritical use of biological and essential conceptions of race as premises of antiracist struggles,” and acknowledges that “the term ‘race’ may be so historically and socially over-determined that it is beyond rehabilitation.”

At the same time, she is convinced, along with Ronald Takaki, that racial experience is both quantitatively

which it is a matter of making unreadable, excluding, of positing by excluding, of imposing a dominant force by excluding, that is to say, not only by marginalizing, by setting aside the victims, but also by doing so in such a way that no trace remains of the victims, so that no one can testify to the fact that they are victims or so that they cannot even testify to it themselves. … To name and to cause the name to disappear is not necessarily contradictory. Hence the extreme danger and the extreme difficulty there are in talking about the effacement of names. Sometimes the effacement of the name is the best safeguard, sometimes it is the worst “victimization.” …Cinders… is a trope that comes to take the place of everything that disappears without leaving an identifiable trace. The difference between the trace “cinder” and other traces is that the body of which cinders is the trace has totally disappeared, it has totally lost its contours, its form, its colors, its natural termination. Non-identifiable. And forgetting itself is forgotten.” Jacques Derrida, Points…: Interviews, 1974-1994, ed. Elizabeth Weber (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1995), 387-391.


9 The linguistic device “(racialized and gendered) Diaspora” however awkward is intentionally deployed in this essay to signal that “Diaspora” not only cannot be understood apart from “race” and “gender” but also that it cannot be understood as a fixed, objective, essence. Moreover, this cipher cannot be extricated from its entanglements with the demographic realities of “race in the US.” 2008 US population projections by race/ethnicity provided by the US Census Bureau gives a rather dramatic perspective of “race in the US.” With 2010 as the baseline, the White population of 201 million is expected to reach 215 million by 2050; African Americans will grow from 40 to 59 million; Asians from 16 to 38 million; and Hispanics from 50 to 133 million. This means that by 2050, the 2010 population projected at 312 million will reach approximately 452 million. By mid-century, Whites will be 48 percent of the population, African Americans, 13 percent, Asians, 8 percent, Hispanics, 30 percent, and Others, 2 percent.

Numbers, of course, do not tell the whole story. But they suggest trajectories that invite thought. If these projections are accurate, even leaving room for variances in the unreported or undocumented US population, what the numbers indicate is that Whites will remain the largest ethnic group in 2050; and while all four groups show an increase in number, with Hispanics being the fastest growing of the group, these increases remain circumscribed by the predominantly White population even though there will be no clear majority. Still, as Daniel Aleshire, Executive Director of ATS has recently pointed out this is a demographic sea-change which has huge implications not only for accredited graduate theological education, but for polity and economy as well. For a recent discussion on “race” in accredited graduate theological education in the US and Canada, see the special issue on “Race and Ethnicity” of Theological Education 45: 1 (2009).


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and qualitatively different from ethnic experience; and that, therefore, Kwame Appiah’s preference for “ethnicity” or “cultural identity” to refer to the structures and processes of “race,” fails:

... to account for the centrality of race in the histories of oppressed groups... and underestimates the degree to which traditional notions of race have shaped, and continue to shape, the societies in which we live. (p. 443)

In this context, Chong-Soon Lee concludes, not only that “race as ethnicity may actually hinder our ability to resist entrenched forms of racism,”¹¹ but that “race” as a creature irreducible to “ethnicity” is needed in order to understand, for example, that colonialism, say in Africa, as an expression of imperialism, is both about racial domination and cultural oppression. For this reason, Kwame Appiah’s abandonment of “race” in favor of “ethnicity” or “culture” may be both flawed and premature.

More important, drawing on the work of Michael Omi and Howard A. Winant which deploys the term “racialization” to signify “the extension of racial meaning to a previously racially unclassified relationship, social practice or group,” thereby underscoring the “contingent and changing nature of race and racism while recognizing its pervasive and systematic effect on our history,” Chong-Soon Lee argues that there can be no homogenous or unitary notion of “race” and that its meaning will, of necessity, arise not only out of its multistranded contexts, but also will have multiple accounts: biological, social, cultural, essential, and political.¹²

This abbreviated, admittedly oversimplified, summary of Chong-Soon Lee’s narrative about the nature of “race” and ethnicity or cultural identity is interesting for several reasons. First, it clearly describes the fundamental divide between the proponents of “race as social construction” and the proponents of “race as biology” that continues to cast its long, if epistemologically-flawed shadow on present-day discourses on “race.” Second, and probably more directly relevant to the agenda of this essay, it suggests that the discussion on “race” cannot be extricated from socio-historical and physicalist considerations of “the body” precisely because such “ontological differences” rely on racialized physical and morphological traits. Third, it points to ongoing discussions, say in the work of Omi and Winant that the very notion of “race” not only continues to change over time, but also that “race” may be more productively understood by its effects rather than its definitions.¹³

_The pursuit of the “body politic”: root metaphor for interpreting the practices of “race” and power_

In fact, what this discussion does is it suggests that at the center of particular discourses on “race,” especially in the US, one finds not only a notion of “the body,” but also a particular interpretation of that body which shapes the very practices of “race” to which it is attached. Here, we are dealing not only with “the body” as an epistemic paradigm, but also with what Aristotle called, praxis, i.e., a practical activity that addresses specific problems which arise in particular situations. Until we find our way through to the root metaphor of that “body” that informs our notions of “race,” it will be almost impossible to deal

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¹¹ Chong-Soon Lee writes, “The benefits of substituting the notions of an ethnic or cultural identity for a racial one are many. First, we can move away from the notion that race is a biological attribute possessed only by people of color. Second, we can undermine the racist premise that moral and intellectual characteristics, like physical traits, are inherited. Third, we can counter the belief that nature, not effort, binds together members of a race. Fourth, we can rebut the idea that the ways in which we act, think, and play are inherited rather than learned. As Henry Louis Gates, Jr., has instructed us, ‘[o]ne must learn to be ‘black’ in this society, precisely because ‘blackness’ is a socially produced category’ (442).


¹³ “We should stop thinking of race,” Chong-Soon Lee writes, “as an essence, as something fixed, concrete and objective... we instead [should] think of ‘race as an unstable and ‘decentered’ complex of social meanings constantly being transformed by political struggle...” (443).
comprehensively and adequately with the problems of “race” and power.\textsuperscript{14} Perhaps, more important, because this “body” is a “practical activity,” it cannot be anything other than a “political body.” And because the question of “race” and power, noted earlier, is articulated at the contested interstices of personal, political, historical, and sacred life, it essentially and strategically becomes a political struggle to rediscover or re-constitute, if not re-assert the importance of, the “body politic,” much in the same way that some women have articulated their struggles around questions of “their bodies” in political life.\textsuperscript{15}

What can we learn about “the body” from these struggles?

In the first place, feminist and womanist struggles to recover the place of the body in political life involve different ways of producing and reproducing knowledge (epistemology), affirming the connections among situated knowledge, partial perspectives, and, subjugated and insurrectionary knowledge and agents of knowledge. Such struggles have consistently focused, among other things, on the necessity, if not desirability, of rethinking the relationship between reason and desire and the construction of conceptual models that demonstrate the mutually constitutive rather than oppositional relationship between them.\textsuperscript{16} On face value, this may be a straightforward, even simplistic, if not obvious, statement about the nature of knowledge – and the bodies that produce and reproduce them. However, when one understands that these claims are set in the context of the historical pretensions about the universality of (masculinist) reason as opposed to say, feminist desire, and of the reality that the latter is associated with subordinate groups – particularly women – and deployed to discount and silence those realities deemed to be incongruous with (masculinist) reason, then one begins to realize how these new epistemologies actually explode patriarchal myths about knowledge in political life\textsuperscript{17} and asserts that bodies are constituted by both reason and desire, matter and spirit.

In the second place, feminist and womanist struggles to recover the place of the body in political life involve different modes of being (ontology), insisting, not only that thinking, feeling, and acting are relational practices, but also that bodies are more than (passive) biological objects; that, they are, in fact, “volatile bodies,” that can be re-figured and re-inscribed, and that move through and beyond the conventional divide – not unlike the divide on “race” noted earlier in this essay – of gender as socially-constructed, on the one hand, and of sex as biologically-given, on the other hand, to “our bodies ourselves.” Elisabeth Grosz already suggested over a decade ago, that the “male (or female) body can no longer be regarded as a fixed, concrete substance, a pre-cultural given. It has a determinate form only by being socially inscribed.”\textsuperscript{18} As a socio-historical ‘object’, she continues:

the body can no longer be confined to biological determinants, to an immanent ‘factitious’, or unchanging social status. It is a political object par excellence; its forms, capacities, behaviours, gestures, movements, potential are

primary objects of political contestation. As a political object, the body is not inert or fixed. It is pliable and plastic material, which is capable of being formed and organized.\(^\text{19}\)

Thus, as an “inscribed surface of events,”\(^\text{20}\) the body as both palimpsest and apparatus becomes malleable and alterable, its surface inscribed with racialized and gendered meanings, appropriate behaviors, expectations, and standards or norms, for example, of femininity, ethnicity, and “race.” The “body politic,” then, as a site of politics, is not only about “who gets what, when, where, and how” (politics as distribution) but also that the “what, when, where, and how” are inscribed – written on, embodied in – our very bodies (politics as inscription).

The example of Latin and ballroom dancing is another illustration of what I understand by the “body.” Dancers know that the dance floor, and I would say, the ceiling, are constitutive elements of the dance, along with the beat of the music (to which most dance) and the melody of the music (to which the best of the best dance). Latin dancing, and its characteristic “Cuban motion” is achieved by one pressing from the waist down into the floor – actually, one of the reasons for the sensuous, earthy intensities of Latin movement. In contrast, the gliding, soaring, almost ethereal, movement of the ballroom waltz or foxtrot, is accomplished, in part, by stretching one’s body toward the ceiling. Both floor and ceiling are, in this sense, constitutive of the dance, in the same manner that heaven and earth are constitutive of human life. To put the matter rather starkly, ceiling and floor are part of the dancers’ bodies.

In the third place, feminist and womanist struggles to recover the place of the body in political life involve different forms of “consciousness” (subjectivity), not only acknowledging that consciousness arises out of concrete and sensuous reality, but also that subjectivity itself is performative (i.e., it exists only when it is exercised or put into action – hence, its relational character; and that spirituality (or matters of spirit) are always and already embodied experience. If it is true that human beings are more than logos, but also eros, pathos, and the daimon, then consciousness, and the structure of subjectivity that accompanies it, would have to include touching, feeling, smelling, tasting, eating. Theoretically put, consciousness, subjectivity, and, spirituality, refuse, on the one hand, the temptation of a disembodied transcendence, and, on the other hand, reject their articulation as a totalized immanence. To say that “spirituality” is about “touching, feeling, smelling, tasting, eating” is to acknowledge, not only the inadequacies of the received traditions of “spirituality,” but to affirm that this “spirituality” is about a peoples’ concrete and sensuous experience of self, other, and, for the religiously inclined, of God. “Babette’s Feast” may very well be the metaphor for such spirituality.\(^\text{21}\)

In the fourth place, feminist and womanist struggles to recover the place of the body in political life involve different empowering practices (politics), recognizing not only the importance of self-definition and self-valuation, or of the significance of self-reliance and autonomy, but also the necessity of transformation and transgression, and of finding shared safe places and clear voices in the midst of difference, particularly where the asymmetries of power are mediated through structures and processes that legitimize or naturalize some differences and not others.\(^\text{22}\)

In fact, what contemporary feminist and womanist struggles have contributed to our understanding of the “body politic” is a mode of discourse that interprets, describes, and evaluates the complex and

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\(^{19}\) Grosz, *Volatile Bodies*, Ibid.
interdependent relationships among theory, history, and struggle, focusing on the intricate and intimate connections between systemic and personal relationships, and, the directionalities of power. In developing her political analytic, for example, Dorothy Smith introduces the concept of “relations of ruling” where forms of knowledge and organized practices and institutions, as well as questions of consciousness, experience, and agency, are continuously foregrounded. Rather than positing a simple relation, say between colonizer and colonized, capitalist and worker, male and female, this perspective posits “multiple intersections of structures of power and emphasizes the process or form of ruling, not the frozen embodiment of it.”

Feminist and womanist struggles, in their insistence on a thoroughly relational and intersectional understanding of knowledge, being, subjectivity, and politics have demonstrated that such notions as “race,” gender, class, nationality, and sexuality – formative elements of the “body politic” – are not only “simultaneously subjective, structural and about social positioning and everyday practices,” but are re-inscriptions of the very meaning and substance of the “body politic” itself. Thus, it may be desirable, if not wise, not only to insist on but to follow, the migrations of “race” and power from their origins hinted above into their intersections with other elements in order to arrive at a more adequate understanding of their effects.

Re-Orienting the Practices of “Race” and Power

Diaspora and estrangement: contexts for the practices of “race” and power
The practices of “race” and power have not always been associated with the realities of (racialized and gendered) Diaspora. However, with the exponential growth of processes of profound structural transformation that have gained some level of autonomy at the global level and which sustain – often with displacement and dislocating effects – the movements and flows of capital, people, goods, information, and ideas and images, the concept of Diaspora, Avta Brah and Ann Phoenix observed, has been “increasingly used in analyzing the mobility of peoples, commodities, capital and cultures in the context of globalization and transnationalism.” In fact, Brah’s Cartographies of Diaspora, explored at great length and with care as early as 1996 the intersectionalities of “race,” gender, class, sexuality, ethnicity, generation, and nationalism including both productive and coercive forms of power across multiple spatial and temporal locations and positionalities.

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23 Chandra Talpade Mohanty, “Cartographies of Struggle: Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism,” in Chandra T. Mohanty, Ann Russo, and Lourdes Torres, eds., Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1991), 14. Mohanty writes, “… third world women’s writings on feminism have consistently focused on (1) the idea of the simultaneity of oppressions as fundamental to the experience of social and political marginality and the grounding of feminist politics in the histories of racism and imperialism; (2) the crucial role of a hegemonic state in circumscribing their/our daily lives and survival struggles; (3) the significance of memory and writing in the creation of oppositional agency; and (4) the differences, conflicts, and contradictions internal to third world women’s organizations and communities. In addition, they have insisted on the complex interrelationships between feminist, antiracist, and nationalist struggles… “Cartographies of Struggle,” 10. See also, Avta Brah and Ann Phoenix, “Ain’t I a Woman? Revisiting Intersectionality” Journal of International Women’s Studies 5:3 (2004): 75-86.


25 Brah and Phoenix, 83.

26 “We regard the concept of ‘intersectionality’, ” Brah and Phoenix write, “as signifying the complex, irreducible, varied, and variable effects which ensue when multiple axis [sic] of differentiation – economic, political, cultural, psychic, subjective and experiential – intersect in historically specific contexts,” 76.
While deeply appreciative of Brah’s and Phoenix’s epistemic and strategic challenge to the more conventional analytics of globalization and transnationalism, and while I recognize the necessity for an intersectional (some would say “interstitial”) approach to socio-political interpretation, description, and evaluation, I take an additional, though certainly not incompatible, methodological step, one which Brah and Phoenix may not wish to take. Not unlike the notion of the “body politic,” (racialized and gendered) Diaspora is not only an epistemic paradigm; it is also a particular “way of being” – a set of (religio-moral) practices, which has consequences both for the analysis of “race” and power, and for its transformation. As I will suggest in this essay, a full appreciation of intersectionality – including an insistence on the importance of concrete, sensuous essentially “strategic bodies” – embodied in the Stranger(s) which (racialized and gendered) Diaspora, global capital, or empire produce and reproduce, provides both a context and condition for the possible transformation of the practices of “race” and power.


The “logic” of this racialized and gendered power, following William Connolly, may be stated thus: the “West” at its imperial best, the US being a clear example, arrogates to itself the power and privilege of the interrogator, consistently negating or demeaning the role of other peoples in civilizational, socio-cultural, political and economic history, while claiming this history as an exclusively Western possession. At the same time the “West” is very quick to hyperbolize and render pathological the imperial powers, practices and ambitions of others: All that is good, it is argued, is of Western origin and all that is wrong is part of the larger tragic human condition which is external to the West. See, Charles Amjad Ali and Lester Edwin J. Ruiz, “Betrayed by a Kiss: Evangelicals and US Empire,” in Bruce Ellis Benson and Peter Goodwin Heltzel, eds., Evangelicals and Empire: Christian Alternatives to the Political Status Quo (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2008), 54-66.

It is also interesting to note that the direction, say of migrant labor – whether documented or undocumented – moves from “the global south” to the “global north,” and that the “victims” of global capital (not to mention the Indo-China War and the three Gulf Wars) are largely peoples of color are enough to illustrate the racialized and gendered character of global capital and empire. See footnotes 27 and 28. Moreover, Richard Slotkin has documented the mythology of “moral regeneration through violence” that runs through US history. See Richard Slotkin, Regeneration through Violence: The Mythology of the American Frontier, 1600-1860 (Tulsa, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 2000).
In his analysis of modern international politics and global capitalism, Michael Dillon notes:

Our age is one in which…the very activities of their own states – combined regimes of sovereignty and governmentality – together with the global capitalism of states and the environmental degradation of many populous regions of the planet have made many millions of people radically endangered strangers in their own homes as well as criminalized or anathemized strangers in the places to which they have been forced to flee. The modern age’s response to the strangeness of others, indeed, the scale of its politically instrumental, deliberate, juridical, and governmental manufacture of estrangement, necessarily calls into question, therefore, its very ethical and political foundations and accomplishments – particularly those of the state and of the international state system.28 [Emphasis mine]

In the Philippine context, for example, this estrangement is clearly demonstrated by the migration of Filipinos, today approaching over ten million, to other parts of the planet – a condition shared by many peoples in almost every region of the world.29 Such estrangement, however, is not limited to those “outside” the homeland. The experience of (racialized and gendered) Diaspora reverberates from both “above” and “below” the conventionally-drawn geopolitical, geo-strategic, and territorial boundaries of individuals, peoples, nations, states, and regions. The reasons for migration (and immigration), the forms that they take, and the conditions under which they occur, are many.30 Yet, such movements of peoples are generally characterized by dispersal, displacement, and dislocation from particular origins and locations. Perhaps, the most innovative metaphor deployed to comprehend the reality of estrangement has been that of turbulence, suggesting by its use not mere motion, activity, or movement, but disruptive, unpredictable, volatile speed.31

To speak of (racialized and gendered) Diaspora today is to speak of a specific human condition that is producing new forms of belonging and identity not to mention novel understandings of contemporary politics and culture. Diaspora evokes and provokes images of “borderlands,” “border crossings,” invasions, and estrangements; of co-optations, negotiated settlements, and uncompromising refusals; of logocentrisms

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and hybridities. It reveals global de-territorializing trajectories as well as local re-territorializing surges or insurgencies, especially under the conditions of an imploding transnational capital. Diaspora underscores existing political, economic, cultural and psychological/psychic contradictions and antagonisms, at the same time that it intensifies their racialized and gendered uneven and asymmetrical structures and processes.

The other side of (racialized and gendered) Diaspora, which arguably has been largely under-theorized, is its “subjective” effects on individuals, peoples and institutions: the normalization of the ideology of unlimited “permanent” change, the cultivation of cultures of mobility and improvisation, the re-inscription of codes and symbols of dispersal, displacement, and dislocation (e.g., money, maps, information technologies, on-line and distance education), on peoples’ hearts, minds, and bodies, and, the seemingly endless invention and re-invention of unfulfilled desires for “home” – multiple homes, to be sure, but homes, nonetheless – often accompanied by the inevitable yearnings for the innocent safety, security, and rest, of an idyllic Garden of Eden.

Brah and Phoenix capture the complex terrain of the experience of (racialized and gendered) Diaspora when they deploy the term “diaspora space,” by which they mean:

The intersection of these three terms [referring to the concept of “diaspora” alongside Gloria Anzaldúa’s “border” and the feminist concept of “politics of home”] is understood through the concept of ‘diaspora space’ which covers the entanglements of genealogies of dispersal with those of ‘staying put’. The term ‘homing desire’ is used to think through the question of home and belonging; and, both power and time are viewed as multidimensional processes. Importantly, the concept of ‘diaspora space’ embraces the intersection of ‘difference’ in its variable forms, placing emphasis upon emotional and psychic dynamics as much as socio-economic, political and cultural differences. Difference is thus conceptualised as social relation; experience; subjectivity; and, identity...the analytical focus is upon varying and variable subjectivities, identities, and the specific meanings attached to ‘differences.’

What might (racialized and gendered) Diaspora as the context for the question of “race” and power mean for their interpretation, description, and evaluation?

First, it raises a critical question about the nature of the social totality of which we are a part. Not unlike the metaphor of the “body politic,” (racialized and gendered) Diaspora not only has forced the negotiation and re-negotiation of political, epistemological, and academic/disciplinary boundaries especially in terms of their long held correspondence among nation, culture, identity and place, but in the re-articulation and re-conceptualization of the notions of space, time, and place that emerges as a result of dispersal, displacement and dislocation, it has also enabled us to uncover their racialized and gendered character. Thus, Richard Thompson Ford has persuasively argued, for example, that “racial segregation” in the US is created and perpetuated by “racially identified space” and that the latter “results from public policy and

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35 Brah and Phoenix, “Ain’t I a Woman?”, 83.

legal sanctions...rather than from the unfortunate...consequences of purely private or individual choices."

In a different though not unrelated context, Foucault may be interpreted as underscoring the racialization of space – or, the spatialization of “race” when he observes that:

A whole history remains to be written of spaces – which would at the same time be the history of powers (both these terms are in the plural) – from the great strategies of geo-politics to the little tactics of the habitat...passing via economic and political installations.

Second, (racialized and gendered) Diaspora also raises a question not only about subjecthood, but also about subjectivity. This is the question of “the Subject”: not only who the subject is, but also what being a subject entails, and how it is simultaneously constructed or constituted by the discourses in which it is embedded. Both the plurality and contingency of subjects and subjectivities pre-supposed by a “Diaspora” fundamentally challenge all ahistoric or essentialist construals of “the Subject” and directs us not only to the question “What is to be done?” but also to the questions of “who we are, what we hope for, and where we go?” – in short, “What does it mean to be a people under the conditions of (racialized and gendered) Diaspora?” And while the questions of the subject and of subjectivities remind us of the importance of agency and human action, they are now (re)set, or “re-installed” within a much deeper, broader, and wider intersectionality and relationality. In this context, both “race” and power are not only the effects of human action, they are also entanglements of structure, process, and agency.

Third, the reality of (racialized and gendered) “Diaspora” provides an organizing metaphor for situating the practices of “race” and power at the intersections of self, other, and world. Of no small methodological significance, locating these practices within the interstices of a peoples’ cultural practices – defined broadly as those concrete, sensuous realities embodied in rhetorical forms, gestures, procedures, modes, shapes, genres of everyday life: discursive formations and/or strategies, if you will, which are radically contingent arenas of imagination, strategy, and creative maneuver – not only challenges the narrow confines of conventional understandings of “race” and power but also locates and positions “concrete” human beings within a peoples’ pluralistic, and therefore, always and already contradictory, antagonistic and agonistic histories, allowing, thereby for an appreciation of their stories, songs, poetry, arts; their personal and political struggles; and their economic and cultural institutions. Another way of stating the point is to suggest that (racialized and gendered) Diaspora ruptures the pretensions of modernity’s voracious appetite for an intellectual idealism articulated alongside a possessive individualism as the foundation for human thought and action, and (re)positions them in their appropriate historical “places.” It recuperates both

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human beings and human action, and affirms not only their generative positions in the ecology of life: as creatures of the past who transform their present in the name of the future, but also locates them in the wider context of what Friedrich Nietzsche called the “grammatical fictions” created by discursive formations and strategies.\(^{42}\)

(Racialized and gendered) Diaspora as both an epistemic paradigm and an organizing practice is always accompanied by estrangement. That is to say, dispersal, displacement, and dislocation almost always creates the Stranger – the Other – which/who in my view poses essentially a religio-moral challenge.\(^{43}\) In fact, the event of Diaspora announces the existence of the racialized and gendered Other who invites a religio-moral response, namely, hospitality. As a creature of both modernity postmodernity,\(^{44}\) (racialized and gendered) Diaspora radicalizes the experience of the Stranger or of Otherness in our time; and the existence of the Stranger in our midst raises for us the problems, prospects, and possibilities of fundamentally new and better forms of knowledge and being. Strangeness, not to mention marginalization, it seems, is the condition of possibility for community. It is its constitutive outside. At the same time, if the Stranger is the constitutive outside, then, its constitutive inside is hospitality, by which I mean, the inclusion of the Stranger into a community not originally his or her own, and which “arrives at the borders, in the initial surprise of contact with an other, a stranger, a foreigner.”\(^{45}\) Indeed, in the Biblical tradition, the existence of the Stranger is always accompanied by the challenge of hospitality towards the Stranger. Who the Stranger is, is the socio-analytical question occasioned by the stranger’s existence; how we treat the stranger in our midst [hospitality] is the ethical demand which is not caused by the Stranger, only motivated by the encounter.

To be sure there are temptations of repetition that lie at the heart of hospitality. In fact, both the Stranger and the giver of hospitality are not immune to the desire or temptation for “sameness” or uniformity, even as the long experience of the condition of strangeness and hospitality often breeds certain fetishes for such strangeness and hospitality, not to mention desires for the exotic. Moreover, hospitality does not always aspire towards genuine compassion, i.e., unconditional plenitude or regard. In other words, hospitality itself, when implicated in the perpetuation of power and privilege always casts its long shadow on the

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\(^{44}\) The modern-postmodern divide is a profoundly contested one. By placing them in proximity, as I do in this presentation, I want to suggest that these structures of meaning are best understood in both their continuities and discontinuities of method, cultural form, and political practice. Thus, I understand modernity and postmodernity less as periodizations and more as “conditions,” “sensibilities,” and “practices.” My own orientation, sensibility, and location are probably more congenial with the theory and practice of postcoloniality than with modernity or postmodernity. See, for example, Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin, eds., *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader* (New York, NY: Routledge, 1995). See also, Anthony Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1991). Jean Francois Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1984).

struggle for a “genuine” hospitality that seeks to offer both the Stranger and the giver of hospitality the opportunity to live well together in the context of their shared differences. Indeed, the very structure of hospitality often must posit the existence of strangers “in need of hospitality” dictating, therefore the legitimation of structures and processes that exclude before they include. Such exclusionary logics of, for example, “race,” gender, class, migrate on to the structures of “hospitality” without being overcome or transformed. Put differently, one must be open to the possibility that strangeness and hospitality [i.e., “Diaspora”] are necessary though insufficient conditions for the creation and nurture of radically-inclusive communities that are often hoped for by those who are in Diaspora.

When “Race” and Power Migrate: An Asian and Asian-North American Example

The burden of this entire essay has been to insist that “we should stop thinking of race ‘as an essence, as something fixed, concrete and objective...’ [and] instead think of ‘race as an unstable and ‘decentered’ complex of social meanings constantly being transformed [through their inscription and re-inscription on the ‘body politic’] by political struggle...’” (fn. 11). Such a burden requires a move from “race” to “racialization,” and therefore, refusing the temptation to construe power as some kind of capacity external to the latter, insisting, instead, that it is always and already an inextricable-part of the “racial assemblage” as both productive (i.e., it produces an effect) and coercive (i.e., it is incarcerative). Interpreting, describing, and evaluating the signify ing practices of “race” and power, then, must yield to strategies informed by the realities of diversity and the normative/aspirational demands of radical inclusion.

While my desire is to attempt some kind of articulation of what these strategies might be, that will have to be undertaken another day. Instead, I wish to conclude this essay with an example of what can happen to one’s interpretation, description, and evaluation when “race” and power migrate in the context of Asian and Asian-North American accredited graduate theological education.

What’s in a name? – Dilemmas and aporias

Among the many dilemmas and aporias raised in the vast literature of Asian and Asian-North American communities, theologies, and leaderships, one in particular, invites attention because around it clusters several key issues with which I am concerned in this essay.

46 Here I understand power in the way Foucault understood the notion of “governmentality,” by which he meant, “the ensemble formed by the institutions, procedures, analyses and reflections, the calculations and tactics that allow the exercise of this very specific albeit complex form of power, which has as its target population, as its principal form of knowledge political economy, and as its essential technical means apparatuses of security... the tendency which, over a long period and throughout the West, has steadily led towards the pre-eminence over all other forms (sovereignty, discipline, etc) of this type of power which may be termed government, resulting, on the one hand, in formation of a whole series of specific governmental apparatuses, and, on the other, in the development of a whole complex of savoirs...” [the structural similarities between “racialization” and “power-as-governmentality” should be obvious here]. Michel Foucault, “On Governmentality” in Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon, and Peter Miller, eds., The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 102-103.

47 This final section of the essay is adapted from a previously published essay, “What Do We Do with the Diversity that We Already Are? The Asian and Asian North American in Accredited Graduate Theological Education” by Lester Edwin J. Ruiz and Eleazar S. Fernandez in Theological Education 45: 1 (2009): 41-58.

48 As David Campbell notes, “An aporia is an undecidable and ungrounded political space, were no path is ‘clear and given’ where no ‘certain knowledge opens up the way in advance,’ where no ‘decision is already made.’” See, “The deterritorialization of responsibility: Levinas, Derrida, and ethics after the end of philosophy,” Alternatives: Social Transformation and Humane Governance 19:4 (1994): 475. It’s what we might find at the center of our historic biblical faith.

49 Partly, in the interest of brevity, and largely because of our limited capacity to be exhaustive, this section is intended primarily to be illustrative of what we consider productive guideposts for understanding and negotiating the rituals of
Timothy Tseng observes that the terms “Asian American” or “Asian and Pacific Islander American” are used to identify “East Asians,” “Central Asians,” “Southeast Asians,” and “Pacific Islander peoples.” In fact, these names are ciphers for communities with vast and complex diversities of distinct, though interrelated, cultural, political, and economic realities that are often contested, competitive, and incommensurable — and implicated in the capitalist, racialized, and gendered circuits of power, capital, labor, and knowledge. And while these linguistic devices have become part of the identities of the Asian and Asian-North American in their struggles for racial justice since at least the 1960s, still they are creatures of colonialism and neo-colonialism against which their liberative and transformative potentials have often been interpreted and negotiated. These linguistic devices are part of larger discursive and strategic formations that embody actual “relations of ruling.” The point, of course, is not only that language is not innocent, nor that who speaks and whose language is spoken shapes the political agenda, but rather, that language is simultaneously productive, performative, and coercive.

The weight of these linguistic devices cannot be underestimated. They are, for example associated with the sexualized racial and gendered stereotypes like “the model minority,” or the “middle minority,” or the “forever foreigner,” or the “honorary white” that have historically shaped Asian and Asian North American communities in perverse ways. At the same time these very devices have set the stage for developing new and culturally appropriate identities and strategies for transformation. Taken as a “social totality,” they are what Rita Nakashima Brock calls a “palimpsest with multiple traces written over a single surface.” The final report of the ATS-Wabash Center-sponsored project, “Developing Teaching Materials and Instructional Strategies for Teaching Asian and Asian American/Canadian Women’s Theologies in North America” completed in 1999 by a group of Asian and Asian American women scholars, is illustrative of Brock’s methodological insight. In its self-organized, self-directed structure and process the report addressed “as a single surface” the problems of teaching and learning in accredited graduate theological education, giving full play to the multiple locations and positionalities of the project team, while offering a set of shared recommendations on how to overcome the problems they identified.

Happily, these (stereotypical) names are not only “limit situations” that regulate Asian and Asian-North American identities and practice; they provide clues to their wider diversities. In the context of the implicit challenges posed by the demographics noted elsewhere in this essay, it is helpful to be reminded, as Jonathan Tan does, that the multi-stranded character of Asian American theologies has a generational element. “The first-generation Asian American theologians,” he points out, “grounded their theologies on the issues of social justice and liberation from all forms of institutional and structural racism and discrimination” (p. 93). Issues of assimilation, integration, and autonomy loomed large, as well as concerns for “Asian Christian identity” in relation to both sides of the Pacific within a largely church-based and mediated movement arising mainly out of Chinese, Japanese, and Korean contexts in the 1960s and 1970s.

The second generation Asian American theologians include among its ranks a much wider, more diverse group of Asians and Asian North Americans reaching into multiple and overlapping constituencies, disciplinary fields, ecclesial families, and political and religio-moral commitments. Influenced, to some extent, by the rise of the cultural studies movement of the 1980s and 1990s, it is not surprising that

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52 Political and intellectual movements in the 1980s and 1990s are complex, often contradictory. Still the legacies of critical theory and hermeneutics, as well as feminist, womanist, and queer theory, and their myriad delineations along post-structuralist, post-positivist, postmodern, and post-colonial lines have shaped, for good or ill, the work of Asian American scholars, academics, and public intellectuals.
second generation Asian American theologians are more intentionally interdisciplinary in their approaches; and focus, in addition to issues of reconciliation and community transformation, on the relations between faith, the bible, and evangelism, on the one hand, and ethnicity, culture, and economy, as well as interfaith/inter-religious dialogue, on the other hand. Moreover, while not oblivious to the call to engage with the claims of a Pacific and global world, second generation Asian Americans have a clear substantive, methodological, and political/institutional commitment to their particular locations and positionalities that sees the “local” and the “global” as co-constitutive.

This commitment is shaped by the subtle interplay between a post-Newtonian, post-Kantian understanding of space, time and place characteristic of postmodern postcolonial thought, and the deep experiential rootedness in ancestral traditions and counter-traditions tied to land, body, even food. It is not surprising that one of the dilemmas running through Asian and Asian-North American academic and intellectual discourses on identity and practice is how one positions one’s self vis-à-vis the temptation not only of essentializing and homogenizing what it means to be “Asian”, but of locating one’s self in the certainty of claims made by the so-called “native informant.”

This temptation is rendered more complex by the geopolitical and geostrategic legacy of colonialism that limits “Asian” mainly to its Pacific and Indian Ocean Rim, despite the historical reality that Asia runs through southern Russia to the Caspian Sea. Thus, it is methodologically and spiritually refreshing to be reminded not only that “Asian American” is a polymorphic, multivalent palimpsest, but also that it is a “socio-historical object” whose forms, capacities, behaviors, gestures, movements, and potentials ought not to be limited to biological determinants or unchanging social statuses.

Where is home?

The dilemma about one’s name, associated with one’s generational and methodological location, is also a question about one’s “home” within the larger ecology of the social totality that is constantly being (re)interpreted. In fact, Asian and Asian-North American communities, theologies, and leaderships are deeply rooted in religio-moral communities shaped not only by specific generational and disciplinary interests, but also by ecclesial commitments. Of the three ecclesial families within the Association of Theological Schools (Evangelical, Mainline, and Roman Catholic/Orthodox), the fastest growing is the evangelical community, followed by the mainline community, with the Roman Catholic/Orthodox community weighing in as a small third.

With the majority of Asian and Asian-North American students being shaped by their evangelical heritage, and being taught by faculty who largely self-identify with a largely “liberal” (some would say postmodern, postcolonial) Asian Christianity, but who are embedded in communities and institutions that may have to address a less than hospitable cultural ethos, the challenge of finding religious, intellectual, and spiritual homes (read “identities”) that are responsive and accountable to a multicultural society looms large. For most Asian American theologians serving under the flag of evangelicalism (however understood), the main task is to discover what it means to be “resolutely and vigorously” Asian, American, and Evangelical all at once. For Amos Yong, this means building one’s identity and practice on the historically-mediated tenets of evangelicalism as they are appropriated within particular Asian American contexts.

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54 If “Asian” were to be fully “extended” methodologically and spiritually to correspond with this wider geography of “Asia,” then, a (re)articulation would be required in our understanding of who Asian Americans are. This will mean, for example, that Islam will become a much larger part of Asian and Asian-North American self-understanding and practice – a sea-change of huge proportions.
The institutional side of finding a home is equally important. This is the question of the future of Asian and Asian-American Christianity which itself is changing. The dilemma may be put polemically in this way: one could conceivably argue that Asian and Asian North American Christianity cannot be extricated from its historical, and therefore colonial past; that Christian identities in the US and Canada, despite the long century between the time the first missionaries “Christianized” Asians in their homelands to the time Asian American Christianity planted itself in North America, still holds sway, and that the many waves of Asian migrations and immigrations to the US, in particular, is nothing more than the return of the colonized to their homeland. Indeed, one may observe that an Asian’s inherited Christian identity was often aligned with whichever missionary group had occupied one’s homeland.

The point is not to return to the old contestation about the American imperial and colonial project. That is a discussion for another day. The point is a slightly different one, namely, given one’s Christian inheritance, what are the conditions under which an authentically transformative Christianity or religious identity and practice can be articulated, and what is the role of accredited graduate theological education in this articulation especially given its tendency to be disconnected from the historic communities (e.g., the churches) that give rise to the need for accredited graduate theological education in the first place? And should the question be answered however provisionally that it is to the churches that accredited graduate theological education needs to be attentive, if not accountable, then, one will also have to ask what in the current practice of our learning, teaching, and research needs to be revisited, at the very least, in order to begin to address the larger questions of what Asian American Christianity ought to look like at mid-century’s end.

The challenge of these multi-stranded diversities is at least three-fold: how one understands such diverse locations and practices, whether or not one can or ought to link these diversities, and, how one negotiates the linkages especially since what is at stake is not only their plurality but their inextricable, mutually-challenging and enhancing relations, under conditions not only of change, but of uneven, asymmetrical change. In accredited graduate theological education today, such asymmetries particularly in institutional resources that affect learning, teaching, and research, as well as access to power and privilege can no longer be addressed as if they are external to Asian and Asian-North American communities, theologies, and leaderships.

Bibliography


Chinese and Korean Christianity with the exponential growth they have experienced in the past ten to 20 years.


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**Part I: Theological Education in Global Context: Issues and Themes**


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*Part I: Theological Education in Global Context: Issues and Themes*
(6) **ECUMENICAL PERSPECTIVES IN THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION**

**ECUMENICAL FORMATION IN THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION: HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES**

**Dietrich Werner**

The basis of the WCC affirms: “The World Council of Churches is a fellowship of churches which confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the scriptures and therefore seek to fulfil together their common calling to the glory of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.” In the constitution of WCC the concern for ecumenical theological education therefore receives a high priority.\(^1\) It is defined as one of the primary purposes and functions of the WCC to “nurture the growth of an ecumenical consciousness through processes of education and a vision of life in community rooted in each particular cultural context” (WCC constitution par III). The ecumenical movement from its very beginning and even before the founding of the WCC 1948 (comp. history of World Council of Christian Education) had a profound impact on the understanding of Christian education in general and ministerial formation for future ministers and priests in particular.

Seen as an implicit dimension in the very essence of what it means to be the Christian church universal ecumenical formation in theological education is not a new element or additional discovery, but an essential dimension in theological education relating to the universal nature of the church. Historically though key terms like “ecumenical formation”, “ecumenical learning” or “ecumenical perspectives” of theological education emerged only in the particular historical context of the reorientation of education in the West in the period of the 1960s and 1970s after the Second World War. “Ecumenical formation” or “ecumenical learning” was formulated as a key concept of learning in the ecumenical movement in exactly the historical transition period in which the gravity centre of Christianity finally and definitely shifted to the South and Christianity of the West lost its traditional dominant position. If “contextualization of theological education” was the catch word for many churches of the South in the period of decolonialization and liberation and an answer to the missionary spread of Christianity to the South, “ecumenical learning and formation” became and still is a catch word for the redefinition of education in the period of pluralization, shifting landscape of Christianity and a new sense of Christian responsibilities for the whole world and two thirds world development in many churches of the North which at the same time had to adapt to new settings and the consequences of globalization, massive migration and religious and cultural pluralization in their own context.

While the term “ecumenical” sometimes is used only superficially in terms of referring to any personal intercultural encounter or interdenominational cooperation it is important to be aware of the specific history behind the concept of “ecumenical learning” which goes back to the 1960s and is related to some key documents which should be remembered.

The development of the concept of “ecumenical learning” cannot be explained without mentioning two pioneers of Christian education who both have served as executive staff in the WCC “Division on ecumenical action” in the late 1960s and early 1970s, namely Ernst Lange and Werner Simpfendörfer. Ernst Lange was always concerned that developing an “ecumenical consciousness” of the worldwide church could remain a privilege of only a few ecumenical insiders separated from the masses of ordinary

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\(^1\) See: Magna Charta on Ecumenical Formation in Theological Education, in: Ministerial Formation No 110, April 2008, 82ff.
believers. He strongly believed that there is no future for the Christian church without an ecumenical, i.e. word-wide orientation. What is at stake in “ecumenical learning” for him was the overcoming of “parochialism”, the narrow minded tendency to view only one’s own limited church tradition as the only church tradition legitimate and existing, overcoming its isolation from dialogue with the world, which is due to missionary incompetence and spiritual stagnation of a church not really engaging with a world which has come of age. As the mental structures of ‘parochialism’ – the older term used to describe what we could call also fundamentalism today – seem to be prepared and laid foundation for already very early in childhood, for Ernst Lange there need to be radical changes in religious education from the earliest days of peoples living. The church can live out its full potential only if it is experienced and shaped actively as an ecumenical reality in all the age groups forming the church. Therefore, Ernst Lange untiringly has asked questions like:

- how can the people of God and local communities participate in the ecumenical experience?
- how can people while remaining rooted in a specific denominational and cultural background become ecumenically committed and share the experience of others and the worldwide church?
- how can we become both global and local in our thinking and acting as only in this dual existence the true nature of the church being both local and universal is sufficiently reflected?
- what are obstacles towards engagement in ecumenical learning, what are the reasons for structural parochialism, the preoccupation of churches just with themselves and their limited own context today?

Questions like these were linked with the heritage of the WCC Laity Department which goes back to the Evanston Assembly of the WCC 1954 (“The Laity: The Christian in his Vocation”). The Laity department served as one of the most pushing promoters of church involvement with the world and an “ecumenical” understanding of its mission. It was the Laity department which was responsible for a first series of discussions on “ecumenical education” between 1955 and 1957. These led to a statement adopted by the Central Committee 1957 in which it was emphasized that ecumenical education could no longer be limited to “teaching programmes about the history of attempts to reunite churches or the growth of ecumenical organizations. Ecumenical education essentially means fostering understanding of, commitment to and informed participation in this whole ecumenical process”2. It was obvious at this stage that the notion ‘ecumenical education’ had the inbuilt strategic interest not to create another separate discipline of accumulated knowledge and specialized information, but was understood as a qualitative dimension of all theological education, i.e. that all theological disciplines should enable students to become active participants in the ecumenical movement. Ecumenical education thus in these early studies was already understood as essential to the mission of the church and indispensable for the church being truly the church.

Two poles in the understanding of education were always seen to be in tension and need to be balanced – a tendency which can be observed in many later documents on ecumenical learning in WCC as well.

One tendency is describing learning in terms of a more church-related educational process by which people are introduced into the traditions and norms, the apostolic heritage and the theological standards of a given community (a certainly valid dimension as well).

Another tendency describes learning more in terms of being equipped for the mission of the church in the world, thus emphasizing the ecumenical agenda as the world’s agenda in which God’s mission needs to take place – thereby placing all different major issues of peace, justice, integrity of creation and global ecological problems on the educational agenda as well.

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The tension between the two poles or dimensions probably is unavoidable because it is reflecting an inner tension in the notion of ‘oikumene’ as such. Because this Greek word for long centuries used to pertain both

- to the ecumenical nature of the church in referring to all that was confessed, believed and forwarded as apostolic tradition to the next generations for centuries (‘sensus ecclesiae’: what each and always and everywhere was confirmed to belonging to the core of the apostolic tradition)
- to the ecumenical arena of the mission of the church, the whole inhabited earth – also then leading to the world’s agenda and its most burning problems and social challenges.

Thereby the tension within the concept of ecumenical learning reflects an ecclesiological tension which belongs to the very essence of the church in each of our denominational ecclesiologies because for every Christian tradition it is affirmed that the church is both one and catholic – in unity in diversity – and also a missionary church related to the whole inhabited earth, i.e. an apostolic church, a sent church.

There is a long debate on the concept of ecumenical learning in religious education science in Germany and in other countries, the EKD churches in Germany have issued a major study on the concept of ‘ecumenical learning’ 1985 and people like Werner Simpfendörfer have deepened the understanding of the interrelatedness between ecumenical and ecological learning which still is valid for many contexts today.³

Two of the best definitions of ecumenical learning from the 80s are found in two major reference documents which can serve as key text-resources for any course or class in theological education to develop a proper understanding of theological education in ecumenical orientation today.

One key text is from Vancouver assembly 1983 during which Philip Potter in his famous major address as General Secretary described the “church as a learning community” in taking up the image of the church as a house (oikos) with different living stones (1. Petr. 2). “The ecumenical movement is the means by which the churches which constitute the house (oikos) of God, try to truly live and give witness before all peoples in a way, by which the transformation of the whole oikumene into the household (oikos) of God through the crucified and resurrected Christ and the life-giving Spirit of God can become a reality.”⁴

The Vancouver Assembly has described ecumenical learning thus as a “constitutive dimension for the church as church” and has enumerated several characteristic marks of ecumenical learning

1. it transcends barriers – of origin and biography, individual as well as community limitations, because it responds to the exhortation of the word of God and the far-reaching horizons of God’s promise
2. it is action-oriented, not satisfied with information but seeking to enable Christians to act in order to learn, to be right with God and with one an other, in word and deed
3. it is done in community, in which people are asked to establish relationships with one another and also with those who are far away and with what is unfamiliar
4. it means learning together, detecting the global in the local, the unfamiliar in the context of one’s own environment, in order to become aware of one’s own limited horizons and implications
5. it is inter-cultural, promoting the encounter of different cultures, traditions and forms of life because only a widening of perspectives will bring about experiences of the riches in creation in nature, in history and culture
6. it is a total process, social and religious learning are not separated from each other but constitute a unity”.

The programme guidelines committee of Vancouver already identified ecumenical learning as crucial for the coming years and as a priority for all WCC programmes.\footnote{Gathered for Life, Report of Vancouver Assembly, WCC 1983, 256.}

The other key document to be recommended as a key text for deepening the understanding and concept of ecumenical formation is the famous (but often forgotten) joint study document on “Ecumenical Formation” of the Joint Working Group between the Roman Catholic Church and the WCC from the year 1993.

This statement and study documents begins with the remarkable confession of failures and shortcomings in terms of ecumenical formation on all sides:

That for long periods we have been disobedient to the ecumenical imperative is a reminder that the spirit of ecumenism needs nurturing. Ecumenical Formation is an ongoing process of learning within the various local churches and world communions, aimed at informing and guiding people in the movement which – inspired by the Holy Spirit – seeks the visible unity of Christians.

This pilgrimage towards unity enables mutual sharing and mutual critique through which we grow. Such an approach to unity thus involves at one and the same time, rootedness in Christ and in one’s tradition, while endeavoring to discover and participate in the richness of other Christian and human traditions.\footnote{Par. 9, Joint Working Group Document on Ecumenical Formation 1993; the document is published: The Ecumenical Review 45, 4, October 1993, 490-494.}

It is obvious in this document that the emphasis is put on the unity aspect of ecumenical learning and that consequently the attention is directed to issues like the promotion of an ecumenical spirituality in theological education, even to the point that repentance and conversion is demanded for from each church participating in ecumenical formation programs:

Having ecumenical spirituality in common prayer and other forms as the underpinning of ecumenical formation invites all to conversion and change of heart which is the very soul of the work for restoring unity.\footnote{Comp. recently: Impulse zur konzeptionellen Weiterentwicklung ökumenischen Lernens, Comenius Institut, Münster, August 2008.} (par. 15)

This can be understood as a counter-balance in the understanding of ecumenical formation which focuses more on the other pole of ecumenical learning, namely contextualization for the mission of the church in the world and its dialogue with the pressing demands of its social contexts. Both aspects are an intrinsic component of a holistic understanding of theological education. This needs to be reflected in each church context of theological education in which a balance is maintained between the two poles in the understanding of ecumenical learning.

There has been an intensive debate on the concept of “ecumenical learning” both in academic theological education, in Christian adult education and in religious education in schools in the past two decades which has tried to unfold the implications of this concept both in practical and theoretical terms.\footnote{Comp. recently: Impulse zur konzeptionellen Weiterentwicklung ökumenischen Lernens, Comenius Institut, Münster, August 2008.} The concept of “ecumenical learning” which has a clear rooting in the department of education of the WCC thereby has opened itself and partly also absorbed other concepts which were derived from secular academic discourses on “intercultural learning”, “global learning” and “interfaith learning”. All of these reflect an invitation and an impelling imperative for churches and educational institutions facing growing globalization and pluralization today to deliberately relate contents and methodologies of education to a genuine encounter with the “otherness” of different religious, cultural and social identities which global migration has brought right in the midst of any learning situation of churches in today’s world.
It is a key conviction of this article that theological education is the seedbed for the renewal of churches, their ministries and mission and their commitment to church unity in today’s world. If theological education is neglected or not given their due prominence in church leadership, in theological reflection and in funding, consequences might not be visible immediately, but quite certainly will become manifest after one or two decades in terms of theological competence of church leadership, holistic nature of the churches mission, capacities for ecumenical and interfaith dialogue and for dialogue between churches and society. Although the transmission of the ecumenical memory and vision to future generations of pastors and church workers is a priority need in many Christian churches, its continuation is far from being secured. Therefore deliberate efforts need to be undertaken to properly place and emphasize ecumenical formation in theological education and to strengthen interdenominational cooperation both within certain theological courses as well as between institutions of theological education – as stated in the common statement of the Joint Working Group on Ecumenical Formation in Theological Learning” from 1996.8

In the same year the last world conference on theological education, organized by ETE/WCC in Oslo in 1996 argued in its message:

There is a need to keep before the churches and the younger generation a concern for the visible unity which links sharing in God’s mission and the pursuit together of justice and peace with the need to heal divisions between the churches through mutual dialogue, mutual recognition and reconciliation. Those involved in theological education and ministerial formation have a vital part to play, not only through giving an ecumenical dimension to all parts of their curriculum, but by embodying ecumenical principles through the sharing of resources, the establishment of ecumenical colleges, institutions, courses and federations, and the interchange of faculty and students of different traditions. A genuine ecumenical institution will not only acknowledge the differences between churches, but will work towards their reconciliation. Faced by the challenges of the world, the prophetic voice calls out to the churches to respond to them together across cultural and geographical boundaries and not to reinforce divisions and hostilities between people. Those engaged in ecumenical theological education and ministerial formation can respond to that call as they digest and reflect on significant ecumenical documents and live out new possibilities for common actions.9

A similar call comes from the Charta Oecumenica of 2001 which was prepared jointly by CEC and the CCEE and declares in section 3 “Moving towards one another”: “It is important to acknowledge the spiritual riches of the different Christian traditions, to learn from one another and so to receive these gifts. For the ecumenical movement to flourish it is particularly necessary to integrate the experiences and expectations of young people and actively encourage their participation.” The Charta then adds the following commitment:

- “to overcome the feeling of self-sufficiency within each church, and to eliminate prejudices; to seek mutual encounters and to be available to help one another;
- to promote ecumenical openness and co-operation in Christian education, and in theological training, continuing education and research.”

These commitments find an echo in the third recommendation of the final message of the Third European Ecumenical Assembly at Sibiu in 2007 which says: “We recommend finding ways of experiencing the activities which can unite us: prayer for each other and for unity, ecumenical pilgrimages, theological formation and study in common, social and diaconal initiatives, cultural projects, supporting society life based on Christian values.”10

9 John Pobee, Towards Viable theological education, 2f (no 7).
The key challenge for ecumenical learning is not just the addition of some elements of ecumenical theology into the existing curricula of theological schools and seminaries. The question rather is whether and to what extent the basic orientation of theological education reflects the fundamental relational nature of being the church, its vocation to live as a true *koinonia* in relationship with God, with other Christian communities and with the wider human community and the world as God’s creation.

The final report of the PTE/WCC consultation in Herrnhut in 1980 on “Theological Education in Europe” stated in its report convincingly: “We understand ecumenical learning not as a separate part or sub-division of theology, even if for the time being attention may need to be drawn to it in specific ways if it is not to suffer neglect. It is a dimension of all theology and theological education. It has to do with the readiness to experience and take account of other confessions of Christian faith, other religious traditions, and other social and cultural realities, in order to see things whole. It has to do with local and concrete issues, not parochially but in the awareness of the whole inhabited earth and in the perspective of unity in Christ.”¹¹ The same Herrnhut report then goes on to underline that theology should be understood as an activity of all God’s people “in the light of God’s revelation and in active obedience, which constitutes the mission of the church in the world….Theology is the corporate work of a community in which a certain style of relationships becomes extremely important…The corporate nature of theology is but one reflection of the corporate nature of the church’s ministry. Therefore, theological education must be made available for and engage all the people of God.”¹²

The Herrnhut report concludes with a number of recommendations specifically concerning the ecumenical perspective in theological education. These recommendations remain valid even almost 30 years later and might serve as an indication of practical steps to begin responding to the challenge of ecumenical learning.

- “We recommend that institutions of theological education consider the appointment of persons who will not only offer courses in ecumenics but work with the whole educational community to ensure global, interfaith, and inter-confessional perspectives in all courses and programmes.
- We recommend that information about other churches and their traditions be given an important place in theological education and that wherever possible this information be presented in person by representatives of those churches and traditions.
- We recommend that wherever possible firsthand experience of the liturgical and spiritual life of other Christian traditions be provided.
- We recommend that, as a means to ecumenical awareness, students and teachers be encouraged to learn other living languages and to engage in dialogue with persons of other cultures.
- We recommend that opportunities be sought to enrich the learning resources of institutions by exchange of faculty members and students from different traditions and educational centers within Europe and beyond.”¹³

These recommendations (which can be easily contextualized in many local contexts) have not lost their relevance until today.

It remains vital to renew a commitment to ecumenical perspectives in theological education like spelled out in the key reference text “Magna Charta on ecumenical formation in theological education” from WCC in 2008:

If the ecumenical movement as a whole is about strengthening common witness and promoting new forms of the visible unity between churches of different denominational and confessional traditions then the scandal of churches remaining in disunity and using distorted images of sister churches in one’s own educational materials

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¹² Ibid. 13f.
¹³ Ibid. 16.
and publications needs to be overcome with foremost priority in the area of theological education and ministerial formation. The strengthening and pursuit of church unity in theological education is a gospel imperative for any church joining in the affirmation of the church as being “one, holy, catholic and apostolic” in its essence (The Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed [381]). The emergence of interdenominational institutions of theological education in the 50s and 60s which was intentionally supported by the Theological Education Fund (TEF) of the IMC as well as the introduction of distinct courses and curriculum models on ecumenism and the ecumenical movement was a consequence of this ecclesiological insight. The emphasize on interdenominational cooperation in theological education as well as the development of proper teaching materials on ecumenism remains an indispensable and in many places still lacking component of the theological education of pastors and ministers. There is no future for the ecumenical movement as a whole if there is no commitment to ecumenical formation processes in formal and non-formal theological education programmes of WCC member churches. If theological education fails to be guided by an ecumenical vision of a church renewed in mission and service to the whole of humankind there will be a serious shortage in terms of a new generation of Christian leaders, pastors and theological teachers carrying on the ecumenical vision and commitment into the 21st century and a widening gap and estrangement between the majority clergy and ever fewer experts on the ecumenical movement and ecumenical theological discourse which can already be observed in a number of member churches.14

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ECUMENICAL FORMATION IN THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION: AFRICAN PERSPECTIVES

James Amanze

Introduction

In this section of the chapter we shall focus on ecumenical perspectives in theological education in Africa. We wish to state from the outset that the church in Africa is what it is today because theological education has played a very important role both in preparing those who have been called by God for ordained church ministry and those who provide lay ministry in the day to day life of the church. Traditionally theological education in Africa has been along denominational lines whereby those who have responded to the call of God for church ministry are indoctrinated with the doctrines of their own churches. There is still a great deal of suspicion when it comes to the question of ecumenical theological education as a result of lack of trust and faith in other churches. However, there are a number of instances when ecumenical theological education has been considered as the best option for providing theological education to people in the church. In this section of the chapter we shall first discuss ecumenical theology as it is perceived in the ecumenical community and then we shall examine a number of African initiatives in ecumenical theological education in the past hundred years which have helped the churches to advance God’s Kingdom in Africa.

Ecumenical Theological Education for the Furtherance of the Kingdom of God in Africa

Theology which is simply “faith seeking understanding”¹ has always been perceived by the church in Africa as a gateway to a firm establishment of Christianity on the African continent. It is this, among other reasons, which motivated the churches in Africa to establish theological institutions either in the form of Bible colleges or full-fledged seminaries. It is commonly believed that theology is essentially a quest for knowledge regarding the essential nature of God and how he is related to human beings and to the rest of the created universe. Theological education is a systematic way of acquiring such knowledge and its purpose is to discern the wisdom and purpose of God in creation. In the context of the church, theology is a necessary tool to equip the people of God with the knowledge that can help them to understand their faith better in the clearest language they can understand.

Judo Poerwowidagdo in his paper titled “Towards the 21st Century: Challenges and opportunities for theological education” has indicated that theological education is part of the educational mission of the church. Doing theology is the task of every believing Christian. Theological education is for the whole people of God. Ross Kinsler, cited by Poerwowidagdo, has intimated that the mandate of theological education is to motivate, equip and enable the people of God to develop their gifts and give their lives in meaningful service to God.² According to Poerwowidagdo, the task of theological institutions is to enable the enablers for the work of ministry for the building up of the church, the Body of Christ until all the

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people of God attain the unity of the faith and fullness of grace in Christ in accordance with the scriptures.\textsuperscript{3} Nyambura Njoroge has reminded us that the church as an institution is a witnessing, healing and caring community in a broken world. However, the church cannot carry out this task effectively unless she has the right tools to use.\textsuperscript{4} Njoroge has postulated that ecumenical theological education helps the people of God to understand how to travel with God their Creator and source of life in a church and world which is full of strife and tensions.\textsuperscript{5}

From a Biblical perspective, ecumenical theological education entails the breaking down of the walls that divide Christians along denominational lines. It is that type of theological education which breaks down the walls of division that separates one denomination from another and creates a new humanity grounded in love, trust and mutual understanding. Ecumenical theology promotes, fosters and enhances the process of reconciliation among the people of God and molds them into a holy nation, a consecrated priesthood, God's own people, called into being by God to be heirs with Christ of God's eternal kingdom.\textsuperscript{(1 Peter 3:9)}.

Njoroge has provided us with the rationale for ecumenical theological education. According to Njoroge, there is a need to equip every Christian with basic Christian knowledge. The people of God need to understand what they believe in and that it is important to be properly rooted and grounded in God who is love before one can witness to the Good News of Christ. There is a need for a profound knowledge of the Christian faith. Njoroge has noted that when Christians engage in ecumenical theological education they are seeking to understand and know the core of their faith, the true God and Jesus Christ. They are searching for the truth about things they have heard and experienced in life individually or collectively in their relationship with God. In a sense, they are seeking for ways of living a faithful calling as the worshiping, healing, witnessing, and serving church through the ministry of all believers. This, therefore, demands that every Christian must be equipped for the work of ministry, for building up one another in the Body of Christ until all Christians come to the unity of the faith and knowledge of God. Njoroge has argued convincingly that since the treasure of Christ is unfathomable, immensurable and boundless, the only effective way of digging out is by means of ecumenical efforts whereby churches work together as they search for truth.\textsuperscript{6} Peter Penner in his book *Theological education as mission* has described the goal of ecumenical theology in the following words:

> Ecumenical theological education and ministerial formation is not an end in itself but is a means of systematically and intentionally enlightening and educating those called to ministry in its various manifestations for lay and ordained persons. The process of training women and men to interpret scripture and understand the faith of the church so that they can follow Jesus in God's mission in preaching, teaching, healing and feeding is inevitable. Because of the many evil challenges we face in society, every generation of theological educators must discern how best to equip those who receive the call to ministry so that in due course they can return to the churches and society to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ (Eph.4:12-14).\textsuperscript{7}

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\textsuperscript{5} Njoroge, “Ecumenical Theological Education”, 64.

\textsuperscript{6} Njoroge, “Ecumenical Theological Education”, 67.

\textsuperscript{7} Peter F. Penner (ed.), *Theological education as mission*, Prague: IBTS, 2005, 58.
Penner has pointed out that ecumenical learning can be said to have five characteristics namely, (1) transcending barriers, (2) orientation towards action, (3) learning in community, (4) learning together and (5) intercultural learning. According to Penner, ecumenical learning should be a total and holistic process which integrates these elements and characteristics. It should engender enthusiasm and passion. It should arouse the passions of those who respond to the call of God in Christ, transcending the divisions and partiality of our institutions and articulations of faith, who believe that a new world is promised in Jesus’ vision of the Kingdom. Njoroge, cited by Penner, has identified two significant aspects of the art of teaching ecumenically. They are that “…theological educators need to have a deep understanding of the call to unity in faith in Jesus Christ as a fundamental requirement in ministerial formation and the skills to help students identify the root causes of the divisions…theological educators and students should develop a clear understanding of reconciliation and how to bring opposite sides at the table for dialogue, reflection and conversion into the Body of Christ. Such a process of learning requires particular skills in the art of teaching, with an ambiguous intention of building a community where each person is taken seriously and listened to.

African Initiatives in Ecumenical Theological Education

Having discussed the theoretical aspects of ecumenical theological education as expounded by people such as Njoroge, Penner and others, we shall turn our attention to examine how the African people have put into practice the theoretical assumptions that have been discussed above. The maxim “the proof of the pudding is in the eating” sounds true in Africa. The African peoples are very pragmatic. They are not satisfied with theories for the sake of theorizing. They are happy only when theories work in real life situations. The African peoples are by nature ecumenical for as long as the other parties are prepared to listen to their side of the story. Foremost in their mind is the issue of personal identity and human dignity. Any form of dialogue, that can safeguard these human values, has found little resistance among the African people. A great deal of resistance on ecumenical theological education has always stemmed from the mother churches in Europe and America and translated on the African soil as a matter of fact.

Close examination of the history of Christianity in Africa seems to show that the African churches have acted very decisively both as originators and catalysts of the ecumenical processes in the world generally and Africa in particular. For in Africa the ecumenical process pre-dates the 1910 Edinburgh Conference and the creation of the International Missionary Council which in later years worked as a catalyst of ecumenical theological education. Initiatives to break down the barriers of divisions that have been endemic in Africa since the inception of Christianity are evident everywhere in the annals of the history of Christianity in Africa. This applies to the issue of ecumenical theological education which according to Penner, “should be a place where we are able to explore together the meaning and implications of common witness, to be equipped together for this and to form the relationships that will give us confidence to work together”.

Ecumenical theological education in Africa dates back to the 1930s. While prior to this date a great deal of emphasis was placed on general and religious education, in the 1930s there was a general desire to launch an investigation concerning theological education so much needed in the life of the church in Africa. It was observed, for example, that Africa lacked adequately trained ministers and this constituted a serious obstacle in the growth and development of the church continent-wide. It was noted that lack of theological institutions and theologically trained ministers was a serious handicap to the African churches.

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8 Penner (ed.), Theological education, 59-60.
9 Penner (ed.), Theological education, 61.
10 Penner (ed.), Theological education, 61.

Part I: Theological Education in Global Context: Issues and Themes
This awareness for the need of well trained ministers necessitated the ecumenical cooperation of different churches.\(^{11}\)

This need led to the establishment of a number of theological institutions designed along ecumenical lines. The establishment of such ecumenical institutions was a pointer to yet good things to come in theological education. It is true that great difficulties were still on the way but a seed had been sown for further ecumenical engagement among the young churches in Africa. John Roxborough has indicated that “structured and intentional theological education in Africa arose out of the need for training local church leaders and the desire to equip the whole people of God in terms of their gifts and calling. It continues to be shaped by the particularity of Christian traditions, including different theologies of ministry and the value placed on ecumenical cooperation, local theologizing and culturally appropriate patterns of leadership”.\(^{12}\)

It would be fallacious to assume that the African churches would have ventured into ecumenical theological education single-handedly without the moral and financial support from the mother churches overseas. In all aspects, the 1910 Edinburgh Conference and the creation of the International Missionary Council was a blessing to the churches in Africa in the area of theological education. Of special interest in this discussion is the IMC because of its direct impact of ecumenical theological education in Africa. The IMC was established in 1921 as a direct result of the World Missionary Conference held in Edinburgh in 1910. It joined the World Council of Churches in 1961 in Delhi, India. It became the Division (later Commission on) World Mission and Evangelism of the WCC. Penner has indicated that the IMC had a long standing concern for the training of ministers drawn from the local populations where churches had been established.

The need to strengthen theological education as part of the mission of the church was first expressed at their meeting in 1938 at Tambaram, India, where it was observed that theological education was the weakest element in Christian mission. This led to the formation of the Fund for Theological Education in Accra, Ghana in 1958 which in 1977 became Programme for Theological Education and now Ecumenical Theological Education. It had the purpose of promoting theological excellence and developing indigenous theological education.\(^{13}\) At the formation of the Theological Education Fund, the Committee on the Ministry recommended that there was a pressing need for a more adequately trained and effective ministry in Asia, Africa, Latin America, Oceania and other areas.\(^{14}\) As it turned out, the IMC Theological Education Fund which was established out of this recommendation played a strategic role in the strengthening and renewal of theological education in the Third World.\(^{15}\)

Having noted the role played by the IMC’s Theological Education Fund, we shall turn out attention to examine how the African churches responded to the whole issue of ecumenical theological education. One of the finest examples in this regard is St. Paul’s United Theological College in Kenya, which started as St. Paul’s Divinity School. It was founded in 1903 by the Church Missionary Society (CMS) in Freetown. The school moved to Limuru in 1930 and changed its name to St. Paul’s United Theological College in 1955 when three churches, namely, the Anglican Church of Kenya, the Presbyterian Church of East Africa and the Methodist Church of Kenya, decided to form a partnership in church ministerial training. The Reformed Church of East Africa joined the partnership in 1973 and the National Council of Churches of


\(^{13}\) Penner (ed.), *Theological education*, 57.


*Handbook of Theological Education in World Christianity*
Kenya in 1995. From these early beginnings the College offers today first degrees, Bachelor of Divinity and Bachelor of Business Administration. It also runs a Diploma in Theology Programme at various affiliated colleges. Further programmes such as MTh, Master’s in Christian Response to HIV and AIDS, Islam and Christian Muslim Relations and others are being developed from an ecumenical perspective. The mission of the college is to prepare men and women for able and faithful ministry in the Christian church and present day society.16

Another interesting story is that of Trinity Theological Seminary which was founded in 1942 as an ecumenical effort in ministerial training by three original sponsoring churches, namely, the Methodist Church, Ghana; Presbyterian Church of Ghana and the Evangelical Presbyterian Church. They were joined by the joint Anglican Diocesan Council of Ghana, now the Accra Diocese in 1967. This ecumenical venture was later joined by the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church. Today, in their bid to extend theological training to all, the college has non-sponsoring churches that have their clergy trained there. These include, among others, the African Methodist Church, the Mennonite Church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church, African Independent Churches and Charismatic and Pentecostal Churches. They also have foreign students from around the world coming to join their community. The college perceives its mission as that of training men and women for the ordained ministry and for other forms of ministry both within and outside the church.17 This is indeed an ecumenical venture at its best. What is interesting is that the above ecumenical institutions came into existence even long before the Theological Education Fund was created in 1958. The fact that the African churches took a leading role to make ecumenical relations a reality will remain in the annals of history as a fist of great valor in a period when religious conflicts were still ripe among church denominations sometimes turning into an open conflict.

The need for cooperation in theological education led to a string of other ecumenical theological colleges across Africa. One of the best examples of these can be drawn from Northern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) where the Methodist Church established a theological college in Epworth Mission Farm in 1954 and came to be known as Epworth College. It became an Ecumenical Protestant Seminary in 1955 when the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe, the Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa, and the United Congregational Church of South Africa resolved to cooperate in sponsoring the college for the training of pastors and other church workers. In 1976 the name was changed to United Theological College. By most accounts, the College is reckoned to be the largest ecumenical theological training school in Zimbabwe run by seven participating churches, namely, the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe, United Methodist Church, United Church of Christ in Zimbabwe, Evangelical Lutheran in Zimbabwe, United Congregational Church in Southern Africa, Uniting Presbyterian Church of Africa and African Methodist Episcopal Church. As an interdenominational college, UTC’s primary purpose is to train quality pastors and teachers of the Christian gospel for churches in Zimbabwe and the region.18

The College claims today to be the only existing ecumenical college of repute in the Southern African region for the teaching of theological studies. Graduates pastors and teachers of the College have a great deal of impact in many institutions throughout southern Africa. It is held that the College has produced well trained ministers who are serving in local congregations, parishes, schools, hospitals, the Africa University and Dindura University of Science and Technology. Some graduates have become leaders of member churches as Presidents, Moderators, Bishops, and General Secretaries. The impact of the College is said to be huge.19

Ecumenical theological activities have also been high on the agenda on some of the churches in Angola where the Methodist and the Council of Churches of Central Luanda, the country’s largest Protestant Denomination, opened the Emmanuel Seminary, a united theological school in Dondi in 1957. Since its formation it has been catering for the theological needs of the churches involved from an ecumenical perspective. It is claimed that the number of students has been increasing steadily after Angola gained its independence in 1974. The college trains both men and women as pastors. It has been observed that there is a strong movement towards unity and ecumenical cooperation. In a declaration made at its annual conference in 1974 the United Methodist Church of Angola, having in mind its objective for unification with the other evangelical churches, stated as follows:

We suggest that the contact between the churches in the person of their leaders should begin now…so that the church in its entirety may be capable of serving a free and independent Angola. The relations with the Roman Catholic Church should be maintained progressively within the fraternal spirit of the World Council of Churches and Vatican II.20

This has been interpreted as a pointer towards a more comprehensive ecumenical arrangement which could lead to the formation of a United Church of Angola.21

In Mozambique efforts to promote ecumenical relations resulted in the formation of the United Seminary of Ricatla in Maputo, Mozambique’s Capital. It was founded in 1958 by a group of Protestant churches which were committed to the idea of creating a school where ministers can receive cross-denominational training in an ecumenical setting. Since its inception, the United Seminary of Ricatla has graduated hundreds of ministers both men and women who have gone to work in a variety of churches throughout the country. It has been intimated that the seminary’s ecumenical mission has been demonstrated through its practice of requiring students to complete their practical training in three denominations beside their own. Interestingly enough, this is in line with the recommendation of the Theological Advisory Group of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland cited by Peter Penner which suggests that in theological education:

It may be possible to get beyond “inclusivist” and “exclusivist” intellectual positions and begin to make sense of living among people of other faiths and none. Making visits to places of worship belonging to people of other faiths and understanding their religious custom, observance and practice, can help contextualize mere intellectual knowledge and make sense of the lived life of the other faith community. Further, as with ‘placement’ being among people of other faiths in their places of worship can challenge any sense we may have of “rightness” and “superiority” and ask what mission really means when the territory is not our own.22

It will be seen from the above text that ecumenical theological education in Africa has, to a certain extent, aligned itself with the recommendations made by other ecumenical bodies for the sake of promoting and enhancing the ecumenical spirit. In this context, because of its ecumenical stance, it is claimed, the United Seminary of Ricatla is respected not only for its quality of theological training and leadership but also for its spirit of unity and understanding its graduates provide both among churches and in the communities in Mozambique.23

In South Africa the wind of change in favor of ecumenical relations has been characteristic of missionary work since the beginning of the 20th century which culminated in the establishment of the Federal Theological Seminary of Southern Africa (FEDSEM) in 1963 but which for various reasons was

closed in 1993. It was situated in Alice, Eastern Cape, in response to a combination of factors prevalent in the South African scene. In the first instance, its establishment is said to have been a response to various pieces of legislation introduced by the Nationalist government which was elected to power in 1948. These included, among others, the Group Areas Act, the Bantu Education Act, the Extension of Universities Act and the Fort Hare Transfer Act. These acts affected a number of churches which had up to then established theological colleges in areas that were declared for “Whites only”. But apart from these laws of segregation, FEDSEM was established as a result of an ecumenical spirit which began to gather momentum after the creation of the World Council of Churches in 1948. As a matter of fact, the original urge for ecumenical relations goes back to 1904 when the first General Missionary Conference was held in Johannesburg followed by many others whose primary objective was greater cooperation among the churches. The ecumenical spirit, which was generated at this time, was caught up with the international ecumenical spirit that was generated at the 1910 Edinburgh Conference and which led to the formation of the International Missionary Council and ultimately the World Council of Churches.

It is not our intention here to recount the entire history of FEDSEM suffices it to say that its roots are traced back to 1957 when a united seminary was envisioned by the churches for the first time. With the backing of the Theological Education Fund of the IMC which was established to assist in the training of ministers in Africa and elsewhere, a strong desire emerged to form the Federal Theological Seminary of Southern Africa in 1963. G. A. Duncan has indicated that the constituent churches, namely, the Church of the Province of South Africa (Anglican), the Methodist Church of South Africa, the Bantu Presbyterian Church in South Africa, the Presbyterian Church of South Africa, the Congregational Union of Southern Africa, the London Missionary Society and the American Board Mission (Bantu Congregational Church) adopted the tradition inaugurated at Lovedale Missionary Institution and other well known institutions of a non-racial, ecumenical ministerial formation with a strong emphasis on academic excellence and practical training pursued with integrity. John de Gruchy (1996) cited by Duncan has observed that this was, in many respects, the crowning achievement of a century of missionary based theological education, and a bold attempt at ecumenical theological formation. J. S. Madise (2000) again cited by Duncan has noted that the creation of FEDSEM was a creative ecumenical response to the demise of the denominational theological colleges which encouraged the churches to face the future with nothing less than full, mutual trust and solidarity. This discussion on ecumenical theological education would be incomplete without making reference to Malawi where efforts at strengthening ecumenical relations led to the establishment of Zomba Theological College in 1977. This ecumenical venture involved the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP) comprising five synods namely, Blantyre, Livingstone, Nkhoma, Harare and Zambia on the one hand and the Anglican Church on the other. Although the Anglicans pulled out of this arrangement later to form their own theological college, the CCAP and the Churches of Christ are working together providing ecumenical training to their people. The college offers a Bachelor of Divinity, Diploma in Theology and licentiate in theology. It has also a women’s ministry program catering for the needs of the students’ wives who come to the college with different academic standards.

Reference should also be made here of Theological Education by Extension which has become a common feature in most African countries. It is common knowledge that Theological Education by Extension began in 1963 at the Evangelical Presbyterian Seminary of Guatemala, South America. It is

26 Duncan, “Notes on the foundation”, 838.
27 Duncan, “Notes on the foundation”, 838.
28 Duncan, “Notes on the foundation”, 838.
based on the concept of decentralizing the training of ministers. The concept spread initially to the Caribbean (Honduras and West Indies) and then to Latin America (Columbia, Bolivia and Brazil). It eventually spread to Africa. Today TEE programmes are found in Ethiopia, Nigeria, Kenya, Zaire, Zambia, Malawi, Botswana and Southern Africa. By and large, TEE programmes are organized to provide ecumenical theological education to mainline and independent church ministers across Africa.\(^{30}\)

**Concluding Remarks**

In this section of the chapter we have discussed ecumenical theological education from an African perspective. Different views on theology education and ecumenical theological education have been discussed. It has been noted that the need for formal theological education in Africa dates back to the 1930s. This need grew stronger and stronger as the church spread in Africa. The creation of the International Missionary Council in 1921 and the creation of the Theological Education Fund in Accra, Ghana in 1958 gave a great boost to the efforts of the African churches in the area of theological education. The African people’s awareness of the need for ecumenical theological education has been discussed with examples from many parts of the African continent from north to south and east to west. Though such ecumenical institutions are few and far in between it can be concluded that this is the right path to follow.

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What in our understanding is the vision of theological education? Is it equipping a select group of people or all of God’s people for ministry or mission? What is our understanding of this ministry or mission for which we want to equip people through theological education? Is it to conquer the world for Christ, as envisioned by the early missionaries who came along with the colonial masters? Or is it to participate in God’s mission of sharing and realizing the fullness of life for all?

There are two ways of thinking about “theological education.” One way is to think of it as formal seminary education, which is for those entering into a specific profession, i.e. the Christian ministry. Another way is to think of it as the common task of religious communities in the formation of religious identity and character. When we think of these two ways, we can immediately say that theological education is what happens at the seminaries, local churches, and in the wider community. However, this short paper will focus on ecumenical theological education in relation to theological education institutions in Asia.

So how ecumenical is the theological education that happens in the seminaries? What makes theological education ecumenical?

In my visits to various theological education institutions in Asia, I have sensed the following understanding of what makes theological education ecumenical. One is, when seminaries have students coming from various denominations and ethnic communities, they affirm that they are ecumenical. Another is, when seminaries have faculty members who come from various denominations, they affirm that they are ecumenical. Still another way is, when seminaries teach ecumenism as a subject (usually an elective or taught once throughout the course work), then they affirm that they are ecumenical.

But another way is, when seminaries do not only teach ecumenism as a required subject but also as the overall ethos of the seminary – then they are really doing ecumenical theological education. This fourth way of doing ecumenical education, however, is still quite rare – for many theological education institutions, especially those founded by their respective denominations, are mandated to promote their denominational vision, history and thrusts. Consequently, their theological education curricula tend to emphasize self-preservation and self-propagation, through such subjects as evangelism, church planting and church growth.

But what is the Christian Conference of Asia’s (CCA) understanding of being ecumenical? As the Regional Ecumenical Organization (REO) in Asia, CCA has its own affirmation and assumption of what makes one truly ecumenical. This goes back to why or how the CCA came to be.

As an REO, the East Asia Christian Conference (EACC, renamed Christian Conference of Asia in 1973) was conceived in 1957 by a group of ecumenical pioneers in Asia at a time when many countries in the region had just become independent of their colonial masters. The task of nation-building was the top-most priority and these ecumenical pioneers were also involved in this process of nation-building. Thus, the spirit of ecumenism – as expressed through the national ecumenical councils (the National Council of Churches or National Christian Councils in various countries of Asia) – has always been tied with active involvement in the life of the nations, in nation-building and social transformation.

It has been said that the ecumenical movement in Asia grew out of the nationalistic struggles of many Asian countries and of the growing Asian consciousness. Since many of CCA’s constituencies are products of Western mission, the nationalistic fervour challenged the churches to also critically look into themselves. The awareness, therefore, dawned that while Christianity was actually born in Asian soil it
came back to Asia on the wings of Western colonization. Thus, part of the struggle of the ecumenical movement in Asia has been to break the pot in which the “potted plant” of Christianity had come so that the plant can take root in the soil of Asia once again. Part of this struggle is to be able to conceive of the Christ Jesus as an Asian himself!

Moreover, the ecumenical movement in Asia has to reckon with the glaring reality of plurality in the region – in terms of ethnicity, culture, religion and spirituality. The traditional missionary motto “to conquer the world for Christ” is now critically seen not only as full of arrogance but also with imperialistic claims.

Thus, CCA has tried to keep to its commitment of equipping its member churches and national Christian councils for the wider ecumenism. The term “wider” is to qualify or correct the earlier notion of ecumenism that focused on the movement towards church or Christian unity, particularly certain Protestant churches only – i.e. the so-called mainline Protestant churches. In Asia, such a movement is not enough – for how do we account for the fact that there are many other living faiths around us? Or that there are many other Christian groups – some non-denominational or even post-denominational?

As the REO in Asia, CCA has tried to work closely with theological education institutions in order to equip theologians and educators with the wider ecumenical vision. Many programmes of CCA engage theologians and theological educators in re-thinking their theologies in view of their plural context in Asia and its many challenging realities. Some such programs are the Congress of Asian Theologians; Mission and Evangelism with an Ecumenical Vision; Re-Routing Mission; Holistic Mission in the Context of Asian Plurality; Churches and Seminaries’ Consultations; Ecumenical Enablers’ Training.

Other programs of CCA engage theological students, younger staff of national ecumenical organizations and churches, and younger leaders of churches for the broadening of their ecumenical vision. These programs include the Asian Ecumenical Course (AEC); Reading the Bible with New Eyes; Asia Conference of Theology Students (ACTS); Ecumenical Lecture Series.

The vision of wider ecumenism that is being promoted by CCA can be described in the four shifts needed for today’s ecumenical thinking and practice.

First is from competition to cooperation among churches and Christian denominations. While the competition of churches was so real and triggered the need for the ecumenical movement, it remains a major concern even today. There is a resurgence of denominationalism, even though several groups that have recently sprouted claim to be non-denominational or inter-denominational in their nature and approach. This resurgence in denominationalism is reviving the spirit of competition and rivalry between and among churches. In places like Cambodia and Nepal, places where Christianity entered the country not through the recognized mainstream denominations, the spirit of denominationalism has already crept in. Added to this is the anti-ecumenism propaganda in many parts of the region, some of which is being promoted by certain churches themselves. There are many kinds of church or Christian communities that are outside the mainstream or mainline traditions and definitely outside the ecumenical circle. Whether one likes it or not, whatever they do in the name of Christianity, affects all who bear the name Christian. Thus, intra-faith dialogue among the various Christian denominations remains a great need. The wider ecumenism should continue with the struggle for intra-faith dialogue and understanding.

Second is from condemnation to dialogue with diverse religions. Many of our churches and their respective seminaries have inherited and still hold on to the traditional belief that outside the church (and especially the Christ) there is no salvation. This unquestioned belief often makes inter-faith dialogue not only unacceptable but even unthinkable. There is the fear that interfaith dialogue can lead to syncretism and compromise. But many Asian theologians are affirming that, in fact, to be an Asian is to be inter-religious. We can no longer ignore the fact that Asia is a religiously and culturally plural region and people have been living together in spite of their diversity. If Asian Christians continue to hold their exclusive view of salvation, it will be difficult to live meaningfully together in the region. And since Christians are
generally a minority in Asia, with the exception of the Philippines and East Timor, the attitude of condemnation or condescension towards communities of other faiths will only disable them from making a meaningful witness to the rest of the region. Besides, there are so many problems and issues that Asian peoples need to address together. That is why, even inter-religious dialogue is not enough; what is needed is inter-religious cooperation. Therefore, from the perspective of ecumenical theological education, the wider ecumenism should include this aspect of inter-religious dialogue and cooperation. This implies religious literacy in Asia which calls for the first language of our own religion (i.e. Christian education for Christian communities) and also the second language of conversation with other faiths (i.e. religious education).

Third is from isolation to collaboration with civil society groups and people’s movements. Many of our churches in Asia have been influenced by the psychological warfare from the Cold War days. Political alliances in the past have severely affected the ideologies and governments in our countries. The division of Korea into the North and South is a sad witness to this political reality. There are countries where Socialism, Communism or Maoism are the prevailing ideologies – if not in some states (e.g. India), throughout the country (e.g. China, Myanmar, Laos, Vietnam, and Nepal). There is a struggling Communist party in the Philippines. Historically, in some places, the ideologies of Communism, Socialism, Maoism or Marxism have been generalized as godless and the psychological warfare that “it is better to have any religion than none at all” has been used to put down, not only movements linked to these ideologies, but even movements that have the spirit of activism for social transformation. Some examples are the “Communist scare”, name-calling and labeling of efforts for justice and human rights as Communist, or even terrorist. This has led to the killing of human rights workers and peace activists in the Philippines. The associations of some leaders of the National Council of Churches in Nepal (NCCN) with Maoist party leaders, in the years prior to the overthrow of the monarchy in the country, has been used against the NCCN and the ecumenical movement there by the more conservative churches that are mushrooming in Nepal. But the wider ecumenism cannot ignore the movements for justice and peace even though they do not wave the flag of religion as they carry out their risky work of bringing about change. This is why ecumenical theological education also cannot ignore the role of civil society and people’s movements.

Fourth is from disintegration to integrity of creation. We continue to experience disintegration, brokenness, alienation due to the domination of certain groups over others: a certain sex over others – sexism; a certain race (usually the dominant or majority race) over others – racism; a certain ethnicity over others – ethnocentrism; a certain class over others – classism; a certain caste over others – casteism; humanity over the rest of creation – anthropocentrism; a certain sexual orientation over others – heterosexism; the majority religion over others – religious chauvinism; and so on. In Asia, these are very glaring problems with the majority or the stronger groups exerting domination over the others. We need to help bring about healing in the whole household of God by transforming all the domination systems that are controlling the lives of people and the whole of creation. We need to affirm the inter-connectedness, inter-dependence and inter-relatedness of God’s creation. In view of the series of natural and human-made disasters that have wreaked havoc in many countries of Asia recently, it is high time for us to revisit our broken relationships. Thus, the wider ecumenism cannot but include this whole notion of the integrity of creation.

The wider ecumenism regards the whole of God’s creation as the very household of God. It includes the whole inhabited world and the relationships of all creatures therein, regardless of our differences and diversity. We are called to live together as members of this one household. We are called to be stewards of this household. Ecumenical theological education must, therefore, promote this very important concern.
Bibliography


Introduction

When Jose Miguez Bonino, a distinguished Latin American Theologian in the last century, was invited by the World Council of Churches (WCC) to give consultations to WCC’s self-evaluation on its ecumenical ministries in 1985, he proposed, after weeks of staying in the Ecumenical Center, that contemporary theology must be vital and coherent. His proposal put into today’s theological concern can be communicated by the concepts of “contextuality” and “inter-contextuality”.

Christian theology, derived from the mission history of churches, has been deeply entangled with particular cultures in its early period of history, at that time mainly Jewish and Greek-Roman cultures. This phenomenon was not only shaped by the fact that Christianity was formed and had been struggling to develop its particular character during its early period of history in leaning heavily on the Jewish tradition and Greek-Roman cultural and political influences, it was also due to the fact that the Christian Scriptures – the Bible – were written and edited in Hebrew and Greek languages and were concluded under the Roman Empire setting. This means that the main substances and contents of traditional Christian theology were organized with these cultural elements and expressions.

Contemporary Western Christian mission that reached out to the territory outside the Roman Empire, was accompanied by the overseas trade activities of Western marine power countries after the 16th century. The exploitative nature of the economic activities of these marine power countries inevitably had its impact on the Christian mission work carried out in the so-called non-Christian world. Christian theology thus was brought to the two-thirds world in the rigid form of a Western face. This alien face of Christian theology, however, was received by many non-Western people through the efforts and sacrifices of missionaries with their mission commitments. It has also invited challenges from outside and within the Christian communities in these countries. The advocacy for contextualization of Christian mission and contextual theologies were part of the responses that Christian communities in the two-thirds world have made to answer these challenges and to correct them.

Contextualization and Incarnation

Contextualization, according to Shoki Coe, a Taiwanese theologian who served as a director of the Theological Education Fund (TEF) of WCC in the early 1970s, is a way of incarnation. He stated:

Contextualizing theology takes the concrete local context seriously. It is rooted in a concrete, particular situation. Is there then a danger of losing the catholicity of the gospel? To this there is a counter question: Is there such a
theology which is not in loco and thus in vacuum? – a theologia sub specie aeternitatis, as it were – an utopian theology?1

He continued:

I believe, in fact, that the incarnation is the divine form of contextualization, and if this is so, the way we receive this gift is also through our following his way. That is what I mean by contextualization. As the catholicity of the gospel is given through the Word becoming flesh, so our task should be through our responsive contextualization, taking our own concrete, local contexts seriously.2

It was, therefore, Shoki Coe who professed his belief that contextualization is the authentic way towards catholicity. Dr. Coe’s advocacy for contextualization can be traced back to 1966 when he was invited to address the inaugural meeting of the Northeast Asia Association of Theological Schools; an address which he entitled as “Text and Context in Theological Education”. Subsequently, his key argument was put into the famous “Working Policy Statement” for the implementation of the Third Mandate of the Theological Education Fund, which he helped to formulate in 1972.3 With deep awareness of the fluid nature of contexts, he warned that there is no abiding place which is not subject to the changes of time. He argued:

Authentic theological reflection can only take place as the theologia in loco, discerning the contextuality within the concrete context. But it must also be aware that such authentic theological reflection is at best, but also at most, theologia viatorum; and therefore contextuality must be matched by the contextualization which is an ongoing process, fitting for the pilgrim people, moving from place to place and from time to time.4

Thus, he stated, the TEF does not speak about “contextual theology” nor “contextualized theology” but about “contextualizing theology”.5 For Shoki Coe, authentic contextualization must be open constantly to the painful process of de-contextualization, for the sake of re-contextualization.6

**Text in Context**

As mentioned above, his advocacy for contextualization was rooted in a theological argument of “Text and Context”, as, according to Shoki Coe, the significance and meaning of a text can only be perceived adequately and fruitfully through interactions with its contexts. Thus, the vitality of a text depends upon its dynamic relation with the contexts. Context, therefore, serves as an indispensable condition for the vitality of theology. Context is the locus of theological activities, which provides a faith community to live out the contemplations shaped by theological endeavours derived from its particular contexts. Thus, theologies that are critically engaged with contexts empower themselves as vital theologies.

Vital theology is a theology rooted in context, yet it risks constraining itself only to a local theology. This is why the emphasis on critical engagement is important. The context cannot be accepted uncritically as it is; it has to be approached and reflected upon with regard to the foundation of a common human well-being. Oppressive contexts deserve challenges and critiques, while constructive contexts need

2 Ibid., 23.
5 Ibid.
6 Ibid., 24.
encouragement and affirmation. And, therefore, whether it is in a positive or negative sense, contexts play
an indispensable role in theological endeavours.

The question of contextuality versus universality is yet another area of concern for theological
construction. Shoki Coe has already argued that real catholicity is derived from incarnation, thus also from
context. Contextual theology, therefore, cannot be distorted into just a local theology. However, since
contextual theology always is theology rooted in particular contexts, its theological significance may sound
worldwide and ecumenical, although their cultural appearances, contents and methods may be alien to
people in other contexts. Regardless of the forceful claim of some Western scholars, that traditional
theology is a universal theology, in the last analysis, all theologies are contextually developed. No
universal theology is possible unless it is politically asserted. Yet, for the sake of sharing, communication
and interchange, contextual theologies inevitably are confronted with the challenge and demands of
dialogue. This is particularly true in the area of theological education as it is geared towards international
and ecumenical exchange.

Contextuality and Inter-Contextuality

Christian overseas mission has transformed Christian religion from a nation-based religion, i.e., a Jewish
religious community, to a trans-national and global religion. This process was begun since Paul’s mission
to the “pagans” in early Christian history, which was followed by many waves of breakthroughs in
overseas missions in later history. The irruption of the two-thirds world into the Christian map has brought
a plurality of cultures and circumstances of people into the picture of the Christian world. The diversity of
people’s backgrounds and their contextual concerns demanded a new forum of dialogue to keep the unity
of the church and its mission. It is due to this development that many ecumenical organizations and
mechanisms were formed to accommodate the plurality within these organizations.

While these ecumenical organizations provided platforms for interchange and colloquy for the
Christians and churches from different parts of the world, particularly in relation to the issues regarding
church politics and mission cooperation, the challenges of this multi-cultural and multi-contextual make-up
of Christianity for ecumenical theological education have been intense and need urgent responses.

Academic work requires solid research and intellectual excellence, which also demand quality assurance
on a common basis. Theological study as part of scientific activities has its standard of excellence
academically and spiritually. With students and faculty members travelling globally and increased
international exchanges, the common criteria for the excellence of theological education becomes critical
and challenging. While contexts sustain the vitality of theology, it is also potentially a risk to exclude that
theology from people from other contexts. There are many cases occurring in the past, when some students
travelled abroad, in order to study in Western schools, had taken their indigenous cultural resources as
subjects of research, which were alien to their instructors, which then led to a situation in which the quality
of their output turned out to be questionable, even though the reputation of those institutions was highly
regarded.

This phenomenon has called the attention of some concerned educators. WOCATI launched a series of
studies on the subject of academic excellence of theological education and contextuality and catholicity in
theological education back in the early 1990s, which, although regretfully they did not fulfil their object to
reformulate ways of theological education in order to accommodate the plural contexts of theological
endeavors in our contemporary world, has alerted us of the problems and challenges facing us.

The proposal to consider the inter-contextual dimension of theology (and theological education), made
by some ecumenical leaders, particularly from the European area, may be regarded as an attempt to re-
direct the rising contextual theologies to a more co-related and integral way of theological education.
Dietrich Werner of ETE-WCC, for instance, argues after his observation of the recent developments of
theological education in the global South that inter-contextuality is one of the key imperatives for the reconfiguration of the ecumenical movement and a new challenge for ecumenical theological formation at the beginning of the 21st century:

It has become clear that contextualization alone will not answer sufficiently the new demands and challenges of theological education at the beginning of the 21st century while at the same time remaining a crucial and important component in many regions concerned. But at the same time the pressing needs for more inter-contextual exchange and the whole dimension of inter-contextuality in theological education is gaining a new importance.7

He explains further about this new method for theological education:

The question of inter-contextuality in theological education is one of allowing oneself to be exposed to more than just one realm of conceiving the world, God and theology. It becomes ever more important that theologians are bi-lingual – not only in the literal sense, but also bi-lingual in terms of their capacity to react and communicate in at least two different settings of world-view, cultural mentalities and different forms of spiritual and denominational traditions as well in order to give flesh to the understanding of a church and ministry which truly is multi-faceted and “Pentecostal” in the original sense of the word, that is guided by the spirit enabling the understanding of a totally different mindset in the spirit of Love and truth of Christ.

Dietrich’s argument for inter-contextuality is based upon his concern for “ecumenical theological education”, which is targeted to produce ecumenical leaders for the churches and Christian mission in the contemporary era. He thus proposes that a new global study process on theological education could well focus on the three key dimensions of contextuality, inter-contextuality and ecumenicity/catholicity of theological education for the mission of the church in the 21st century, so as to bring the different dimensions together in an integral concept which has an inseparable relation theologically and also historically, though in certain phases in the history of the ecumenical movement one pole might be more in the forefront than the other.8

Context Within Contexts

The advocacy of inter-contextuality as new way for doing theological education is valid and important if put into the context of the present age’s plural and diverse character of contextual theologies constructed from different geographical parts of the world, different confessions as well as different theological concerns. It remains a debatable question, however, whether contextual theology should or can be completely transformed into inter-contextual theology.

Theological education as a mechanism to spread theological knowledge is responsible for opening up the students’ sights towards different contextual theologies developed from all kinds of contexts. Therefore, theological education should commit itself to inter-contextual or even multi-contextual approaches of doing theological education. There is no doubt that the inter-contextual or multi-contextual approaches adopted by theological education in order to study particular contextual theologies may bear critical fruits of connectedness between these individual contextual theologies which enrich as well as

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7 Dietrich Werner, Ecumenical Learning in Global Theological Education – Legacy and unfinished tasks of Edinburgh 1910 Or: Contextuality, Inter-Contextuality and Ecumenicity as key mandates for ecumenical theological education in the 21st century 10 historical and systematic aspects, A paper originally presented as a lecture to the Graduate School of Ecumenical Studies at the Ecumenical Institute of Bossey on 9. November 2007.

8 Ibid.

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challenge a particular contextual theology. But this does not mean that contextual theologies should be dismissed or replaced by “inter-contextual theology”.

As mentioned earlier, contextuality is the essential element for the vitality of theology. Therefore, an inter-contextual approach in theological education can only be based upon vital contextual theologies constructed from different contextual concerns. In other words, an inter-contextual approach in theological education is possible only when contextual theologies are developed and strengthened. Theological education requires a methodological approach of inter-contextuality, yet theological construction can only be contextual.

It is beyond any doubt that every context inevitably implicates either positive or negative relations with other contexts i.e., a context is always within contexts. Therefore, to emphasize contextuality does not mean to isolate a single particular context or to neglect the inter-relations in which a context is involved with other contexts. Accordingly, a genuine contextual theology must be a theology that not only delves into the depth and nature of a given context, but that also explores its connectedness with other wider contexts. It is, however, in this process of theological construction that a particular context is not only the starting point of any contextual theological endeavour, but also remains the subject of the project as well as the object of all the concerns of that theology.

Theology Engaged Critically With Contexts

Theology in creation and theological education are two different areas of concern; they are carried out with a different mission and object. While the inter-contextual approach adopted by theological education is meant to produce church leaders or ecumenical leaders with an awareness of plural contextualities and a consciousness of the different struggles taking place in different parts of the world, this may also strengthen the scholars’ capacities of research through the enlightenment of theological methods embraced by different contexts. It is, however, this advantage of a wider perspective of different theological trends which is created through an inter-contextual approach in theological education. But if applied to theological construction arguing for a new creation of an inter-contextual theology, it may appease the yearning for a universality of theology, which traditional theology claimed before contextual theologies were recognized. And this will inevitably impair the vitality of theology and its commitment to the particular contexts of people.

With the arguments provided above, the issue of contextuality and inter-contextuality in theological education thus is evident; contextuality is not to be replaced by inter-contextuality in both tasks of theological construction and of theological education. However, in order to strengthen validity and authenticity, contextual theological endeavours should deepen their studies in a particular context towards realizing a wider contextuality and associations with other related contexts, and engage with them through critical reflections. When theological education, which is based on a different nature of mission, can include an emphasis on inter-contextual approaches to particular contextual theologies, it can enable theological students to gain a better understanding of ecumenical settings and broaden their minds from a global perspective.

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Education is Not the Filling of a Pail, but the Lighting of a Fire.

The above quote, often attributed to the Anglo-Irish poet, William Butler Yeats (1865-1939), is a good description of one of the most important tenets of contextual theological education. There are, of course, several principles that guide the contextual theological education enterprise, but a key principle is the idea that education can never be solely for the purpose of acquiring knowledge (filling a pail), but that knowledge can and must be used for the purpose of transformation (lighting a fire).

The aim of this article is to outline, from my own experience of theological education, some of the key issues which emerge in the theory and practice of contextual theological education. The experience that I wish to draw on is two-fold. The first is my decade-long experience as a theological educator, and the second is my experience of coordinating an international network of theological institutions which focused on contextual theological education as a common denominator across the 8 institutions which belonged to the network. The network was known by the acronym INATE, which stood for the International Network in Advanced Theological Education.

According to the vision of its founders in 1997, the vision of INATE is:

To contribute to a theological education and reflection which is globally oriented, cross-cultural and ecumenical, at the same time as it is attentive to the concrete needs and challenges that are presented to it by the local context.

To this end, theological institutions in Brazil, South Africa, India, China, Hungary, Norway, Costa Rica and Canada co-operate through the mutual exchange of faculty and students at an advanced level (Master’s and PhD), “through development of curricula for a globally oriented contextual theology, and through research and information exchange.” From the vision of INATE, it is clear that the term “contextual theology” was taken for granted. In other words, it assumed that contextual theology was being done in each of its member institutions, and that by exchanging staff and students across the network, the desire for a “globally oriented” contextual theology would be realised. While this was, and is, certainly a noble objective, the term “contextual theology” is not self-evident and, therefore, cannot be taken for granted, as I would argue below.

Is Not All Theology Contextual?

Stephen Bevans argues in the opening pages of his book, Models of Contextual Theology that:

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1 Its origins unfortunately cannot be verified even through the collected writings of Yeats. I stumbled upon it on a desk of a colleague in India – a true lesson in contextual education!
2 See the INATE website: www.inateonline.org/ (accessed 24/01/10).
3 www.inateonline.org/ (accessed 24/01/10).
There is no such thing as ‘theology’; there is only contextual theology: feminist theology, black theology, liberation theology, Filipino theology, Asian-American theology, African theology, and so forth.”

This begs the question, why the term contextual theology, and what is “un-contextual” theology? What all the contextual theologies, as Bevans names above, have in common, is that they all derive from the margins – in other words, they derive from contexts that are not privileged. While this difference is obvious, Bevans, nevertheless, argues that “there has never been a genuine theology that was articulated in an ivory tower with no referent to or dependence on the events, the thought forms, or the culture of its particular place and time.” Hence the assumption is that all, including so-called “ivory tower” theology, is contextual. Similarly, Itumeleng Mosala has argued:

…All theology is contextual theology. To claim to do theology contextually is therefore not to claim to do anything new. The real question is not whether theology is contextual, but what is the socio-political context out of which a particular theology emerges and which it serves. Is it a theology of the context of the oppressors or is it a theology of the context of the oppressed?”

While the point made by both Bevans and Mosala that all theology is contextual is true, it is, nevertheless, an obvious and almost flippant point. Of course, all theology is contextual theology, but contextual theology was and is obviously more than simply declaring “context” and then carrying on with “business as usual.” There are several theories as to how contextual theology came into being. It is well known by now that the term “contextualization” was introduced to the theological world by the Theological Education Fund of the World Council of Churches in 1972. Bevans draws a distinction between the terms contextualisation and indigenisation or inculturation. He points out that while the latter two terms focus purely on the “cultural dimension of human experience,” contextualisation “broadens the understanding of culture to include social, political, and economic questions.”

Mosala goes further to insist that not only must contextual theology be rooted in a broad understanding of social, political and economic questions, but one must also ask which context that particular theology serves?. In other words, as Gerald West would put it “Commitment to, rather than cognizance of, context is the real issue” in contextual theology discourses.

Given the points made above, it is clear that questioning the pertinence of contextual theology, on the basis that all theology is contextual theology, is unwise. In fact, from the above, we can conclude at least 3 important reasons for the existence and continued practice of contextual theology. In other words contextual theology is important because:

a) While theology has traditionally been done from a place of privilege and an illusion of universality of experience, contextualisation helps “signify a shift from abstract and supposedly universal theology to the insistence that the theology depends on praxis (concrete, partial, and historical) of which it is a part.”

5 Bevans, Models of Contextual Theology, 4.
7 Bevans, Models of Contextual Theology, 26.
8 Mosala, African Independent Churches, 104.
9 Gerald West. “Contextual Bible study – creating sacred and safe place for social transformation.” (Grace and Truth 1999), 51.
b) Contextual theology demonstrates that methods of theologising are reflective of the context from which it derives, and hence does not dismiss, but encourages and affirms more “intuitive” methods of theologising such as the narrative method. This form of narrative theologising is similar to narrative research in the social sciences and as Lieblich et al. explain, “differs significantly from its positivistic counterpart in its underlying assumptions that there is neither a single, absolute truth in human reality nor one correct reading or interpretation of a text.”

c) Contextual theology is concerned with social change. In other words it is not just concerned with itemising issues of context or theory, but it is concerned with critically engaging with ways that can transform contexts particularly those which are oppressive. And so contextual theology signifies an “activist-intellectual” endeavour. As Tinyiko Maluleke has argued: “Our theorising on gender, race, culture and empire cannot just be cerebral; it must be reflected in the structures of societies where the theorists operate.”

Some Critical Reflections on Contextual Theological Education

Having established the legitimacy of the contextual theological enterprise by highlighting its value and importance, it must be recognised that such theologising can only be passed on to the next generation of theological scholars through education. The question is, what does it mean to provide students of theology with a contextual theological education? In the following paragraphs I will share some critical reflections on what it means to be a contextual theological educator, and how I see contextual theological education being taken up on a practical level. I offer three areas of contextual theological education for consideration: content, methods and goals.

Content: Understanding Inter-Contextualities

A key principle of contextual theological education is obviously a commitment to taking context seriously. But what does it mean to take context seriously? After all, everybody does not share the same context, and context can easily become an excuse for “vulgar relativisms” i.e., where anything goes. Such can happen, for example, when a male student responds to a definition of patriarchy in a classroom with the terse statement, “But this is part of my culture!” As I have noted elsewhere “as a feminist teacher, I have often tried to negotiate between the tensile poles of advocating my own position too strongly – because this may end up leaving the student feeling oppressed; or simply allowing the student his voice – resulting in my experiencing a personal sense of oppression.” However, such a negotiation is crucial if we are to engage meaningfully in contextual theology, not just as an act of “window-dressing.” In other words, the only way to resist “vulgar relativism” is to build in a sense of criticality as opposed to paternalistically engaging all “contexts” or “cultures” as if they were inherently sacrosanct.

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This criticality requires a recognition that a number of levels of *inter-contextualities* exist in any particular given context. South Africa, for example, while it is part of Africa, is hardly as poor a country as its neighbour Zimbabwe or Zambia.

As Desmond Van Der Water points out:

The oft-repeated phrase “option for the poor,” can hardly be used today as if its meaning is self-evident. Unfortunately this phrase has been subjected to misrepresentation and misunderstanding. For example, one of the common misunderstandings is that “option for the poor,” has to do with a preference for ministry to and amongst poor and deprived communities rather than amongst the non-poor.\(^{15}\)

Van der Water goes on to clarify the phrase by drawing on Albert Nolan:

The option for the poor is not a choice about the recipients of the gospel message to whom we must preach the gospel; it is a matter of what gospel we preach to anyone at all...The gospel may be good news for the poor and bad news for the rich but it is a message for both the poor and the rich.\(^{16}\)

For far too long in theological education, we have assumed that contextualisation meant studying the contexts of the poor, women, oppressed, people living with HIV, etc. This is something that we had to be constantly wary of in the INATE. As there were institutions from North (such as those in Norway and Canada) interacting with institutions in the South, we had to resist the temptation that the South will always either offer, or be the “raw data” for contextual theological education. Let me illustrate this through an example.

In January 2003, a consultation, with the theme, “Theological Responses to Illnesses, Stigma and Discrimination: Forging Contextual Theologies in an Era of HIV/AIDS” was called in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa, for members of the network. Musa Dube and Tinyiko Maluleke were the key-note speakers at this consultation. They shared deeply and passionately about their commitment to theologising in contexts of HIV. The subsequent publication of all the essays presented at this consultation\(^{17}\) revealed the various ways in which partners in the network engaged with the issue of HIV/AIDS out of their own contexts. The titles of the essays reveal this commitment to cross-cultural and globally oriented perspectives in contextual theology: “Stigmata – The Wounds Of The Risen Lord And Disability” by Eszter Andorka (Budapest); “The Sick Person As Human Being: The PLWHA And The Role Of Theology In The Positive Focus Of Medicine” by Edwin Mora & Jose E. Ramirez-Kidd (Costa Rica); “Sex In Public: The Challenge Of HIV/AIDS To Canadian Theologies” by Marilyn J. Legge (Canada); “We Have A Dream: The Dream Of The Dalits” by Suneel B. Busi; “Towards Clinical Contextual Theologies: Theology And Sickness”; “The Hermeneutics Of Clinical Pastoral Education” by Hans Stifoss-Hanssen (Norway); and “Reading The Bible With Disease: Contextual Theology And HIV/AIDS” by Leif E Vaage (Canada). Unfortunately, both Musa Dube from Botswana and Tinyiko Maluleke from South Africa published their essays elsewhere. Nevertheless, the final collection of essays attempted to engage HIV from a remarkably broader perspective of stigma, disease and discrimination, with each essay engaging the ways in which HIV is present in their contexts, even if it is not present in large numbers or even if the actual virus is not present. This collection of essays, I would argue, was a good example of how contextual theology can become meaningful globally.


\(^{16}\) Van der Water, *A Legacy for Contextual Theology*, 49.

\(^{17}\) See the special collection of essays edited by Sarojini Nadar and Jonathan Draper in *Journal of Constructive Theology*, 11/2 (December 2005).
When one is dealing with subjects such as HIV/AIDS, it is so easy in the global North to develop a contextual discourse along the lines of “them.” Such discourses tend to have at least three disadvantages. In the first place it tends to “exoticise” the discourse. Secondly, it leaves little or no space for the ways in which contextualisation is also about the “non-poor.” And thirdly, rather unfortunately, it allows little space for critique. For example, in calling for “an anchoring of analysis and theorising/theologising in the local community”, James Cochrane asserts that:

What makes this doubly part of a contextual theology is that it privileges the wisdom – an epistemological privilege – of those who suffer most the aggravations and hurts of our social systems, and it privileges the experience – an ethical privilege – of precisely those same people.18

The creation of the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians shows precisely why such epistemological and ethical privileges granted to those who suffer aggravations in the social system do not always necessarily work for everyone. The Circle also shows why the recognition of inter-contextualities is important. While the project of contextualisation encouraged inculturation models of theology, through the development of theologies such as African theology, African theology nonetheless portrayed the African male experience of culture as the norm. In this respect, African women felt that their voices were not only excluded from this theologising, but that their experiences of culture and reconciliation as negative forces within their lives were particularly being ignored. It is for this reason that the visionary Mercy Amba Oduyoye and others like her decided that if African women’s engagement with theology and culture were going to be taken seriously, the African women would have to construct this theology themselves. In other words, while the African men may have suffered “aggravations and hurts” from the social systems of colonialism and apartheid, African women had suffered too as a result of patriarchy from within African culture. Hence to simply grant epistemological or ethical privilege in contextual theological education to “the poor” can be both a paternalistic as well as a dangerous exercise.

Unless contextual theology stops being a codename for poor or black or women’s theologies, students of theology will always marginalise the discourse, and contextual theology will remain as it has been in South Africa, “largely a white male affair” (Maluleke).19 In other words, the objects of study of contextual theology will remain black, and probably poor and marginalised. As Van Der Water quoting Nolan says: “The gospel may be good news for the poor and bad news for the rich but it is a message for both the poor and the rich.”20 Unfortunately, we have tended to focus on the former to the exclusion of the latter.

Contextual theological education must force both the student and the teacher to look inward first. The process of contextualisation must encourage “responsible specifying of experience; analysing context with attention to social, historical, and other relational particularities of … existence; and shaping theological images and visions appropriate to the context.”21 This “specifying of experience” is what then gets built not only into the content of contextual theological education, but also into the methods of teaching and the theorising of such theologies.

Methods of Contextual Theology

Under-girding the various methods of contextual theology which have been developed over the years, is a social constructionist approach to knowledge. In other words, contextual theology highlights that:

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20 Van der Water, A Legacy for Contextual Theology, 49.
21 Legge, Contextualisation, 56.
…human experience, including perception, is mediated historically, culturally and linguistically. That is, what we perceive and experience is never a direct reflection of environmental conditions but must be understood as a specific reading of these conditions. This does not mean that we can never really know anything; rather it suggests that there are “knowledges” rather than “knowledge”.

An academic environment (the university is a prime example) as one of the supreme heirs to the great Aufklärung which promoted positivistic and overly-rational goals in terms of higher education and research, has had little time for, or interest in, the idea of multiple kinds of knowledge. Multiple kinds of knowledge were quickly labelled as “relativism,” as opposed to “objectivism” with the latter being considered more highly. Feminist theologians have often been accused of being relativists, but as Deanna Thompson points out, feminists have found a helpful way of dealing with this accusation:

In response to this accusation, feminists protest the dualistic presentation of objectivism versus relativism and argue for a third alternative. Steering a course between objectivism and relativism, feminist advocate a view of truth which asserts that all truths are contextual and yet acknowledges that notions of normative truth a necessary for the communities of faith and justice…. Anyone who experiences the destructive effects of sexism, racism, classism, or homophobia knows that an “anything goes” approach belies the truth of oppression. Feminists thus recognise that they must continue to hold onto notions of justice and truth, but they add that such truths are always socially constructed…. In this manner, they avoid the objectivism-relativism dichotomy by searching for ‘truth’ in the context of liberating praxis.

If an academic environment allowed little time for social constructionist views, it had even less time for the notion of what Bell Hooks terms a “democratic classroom.” A democratic classroom is one that encourages a collaborative learning environment. Contextual theological education cannot be imparted in anything but a democratic classroom. Because contextual theology acknowledges epistemological multiplicity, the role of the contextual theological educator must be to allow all voices in the classroom to be heard – and to encourage rather than silence discussion even, and particularly, where divergence of opinion may begin to emerge. Indeed, in my experience of teaching gender studies within religion, many heated debates occur within the class, particularly between male and female students. This is a good outcome because it creates an environment of what Barbara Du Bois calls “passionate scholarship.”

In INATE there was always a commitment to “passionate scholarship” for the recognition of varied epistemological frameworks. There was recognition, within the network, quite early on, that globalisation could easily lead to a privileging of epistemological wisdom. Justin Ukpong, for example, argues that in the academy we experience globalization:

in the giving of epistemological privilege to the Western mode of intellectual production; to be accepted within the academy, scholars from other cultures must do things the way they are done in the West. Accepted rules and techniques of scholarly production, now regarded as normative and universal, follow Western patterns of thought and practices with little or no consideration for cultural difference.

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26 Justin Ukpong Justin. “Reading the Bible in a Global Village: Issues and Challenges from African Readings.” In *Handbook of Theological Education in World Christianity*
One of the things which INATE achieved was to introduce students both from the North and the South who had been held captive by Western epistemological scholarship to experience new and exciting ways of doing theology – what Barbara Du Bois called “passionate scholarship.” In the School of Religion and Theology in Pietermaritzburg, for example, the use of narrative is not just encouraged in scholarship and research; it is also used as a pedagogical tool. For example, a double issue of the Journal of Constructive Theology was dedicated to pedagogical reflection of a course that made use of a gendered narrative case study taught by a team of scholars at the School of Religion and Theology in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa. 27 One of the reflections from a German student, Thorsten-Marco Kirschner, who sat in on the course has this to say: “An African proverb says that a visitor sees where the house leaks. That is probably true, but at the same time, you can also see the deficiencies of your own home while you stay in a foreign house.” 28 This recognition by Kirschker points to the value of a truly cross-cultural and contextual education. Kirschner further reflects, “Even though I had engaged with most theories of feminism and liberation theology before attending the class, I had never applied my acquired knowledge to such a practical scenario.” 29 Again – the “practical scenario” referred to by Kirschner points to the value of using epistemological frameworks that are different to that encouraged and supported by predominantly Western and male forms of theologising.

Contextual pedagogy like feminist pedagogy engages students “in a learning process that makes the world “more real than less real.” 30 Using narrative is one way to make the process of learning “more real than less real.” Furthermore, using personal narrative is a powerful method of imparting theological knowledge. If contextual theology is concerned with context, then the context of the educator is as important as the context of the society, because context does indeed affect one’s scholarship. As Renita Weems asserts, “to acknowledge one’s social location means more than to itemize one’s vital statistics. It means also to scrutinize and talk openly about how one’s scholarship interfaces with one’s larger social and political hopes for the world.” 31

Making this link between one’s scholarship and the society in which one lives, leads to a direct concern for the transformation of that society. This leads us to a discussion on one of the primary goals of contextual theology: social transformation.

Goal: Transformation of Society

Tell me not what you believe, but tell me what difference it makes that you believe – Verna Dozier

The above saying can be equally applied to the area of theological education. A good contextual theological education will prepare students to be able to say that what matters is not just in the content of theological studies, but the difference that theological studies makes in the world. Education expert Gareth Jones from New Zealand, asserts that universities are to be characterised by an acceptance of “the role of critic and conscience of society.” 32 Similarly, I think that students of contextual theological education

27 Volumes 14/2 and 15.1 December 2008 and July 2009.
29 Kirschner, Reading from this place, 163.
31 Renita Weems Response to ‘Reading with.’ Semeia 73 (1996), 258.
32 Gareth Jones. Universities as critic and conscience of society: the role of academic freedom (New Zealand: New Zealand Universities Academic Audit Unit).
ought to see their roles as critics and the conscience of society too. While the realm of theology has often been concerned with the conscience, the role of criticality is equally important. A contextual theological education must prepare one to light a fire, not put it out – to ask the right questions, not simply know all the right answers.

The ability of students to become the critics and conscience of society is related to what the educationist Paulo Freire calls the “problem posing educator.” He asserts:

The role of the problem-posing educator is to create, together with the students, the conditions under which knowledge at the level of doxa is superseded by true knowledge, at the level of logos.\(^{33}\)

Further to preparing students for becoming the critics and conscience of society, contextual theological education does have as its ultimate goal, the transformation of society. This means, that central to the teaching of contextual theology, is an advocacy task.

While democratic classrooms are encouraged, one has to be aware too that we are living in increasingly conservative religious times. As I have argued elsewhere:

those of us who understand education as a practice of freedom have to be especially cautious that our “democratic classrooms” do not become sterile environments which allow for diversity of opinions, yet without critical engagement and questioning. As long as injustice exists in the world, advocacy has to remain a crucial component of education.\(^{34}\)

This means that the theological education which we provide must critically engage with the problems of our societies. Denise Ackermann has lamented that so much of what we do, has little significance for our societies:

So much of our scholarly and intellectual work has little relevance for communities of faith, and it is not surprising that these communities themselves take little interest in it… The failure to speak theological words into the moment has been costly… We grapple with evil and suffering while we seek hope. In these circumstances the navel-gazing and in-house games of certain bourgeois theologies are irrelevant, even reprehensible.\(^{35}\)

In my experience of teaching (albeit limited to a decade), I have noticed the ways in which students are transformed through contextual theological moments. Nothing is more fulfilling than watching students find that “light-bulb” moment. This has been true both for students from Africa as well as students from the North who visit our institution. Many students from the North, who think they are coming to study those in the South, end up learning more about themselves in the process. This is the wonder of contextual theological education.

As Hooks rightly claims:

The classroom with all its limitations remains a location of possibility. In that field of possibility we have the opportunity to labour for freedom, to demand of ourselves and our comrades an openness of mind and heart that allows us to face reality even as we collectively imagine ways to move beyond boundaries, to transgress. This is education as the practice of freedom.\(^{36}\)

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Bibliography


Introduction

Though Christian historians have claimed that Christian mission begun in Asia as early as elsewhere, a church historian from New Zealand, John England, rightly points out: “Christianity can be taken as an ancient Asian religion not just because of its origins in west Asian cultures and in the life of a Palestinian Jew, nor because of the Asian form of its foundational scriptures, but also because of its long and diverse presence throughout Central, South, Southeast and North-East Asian countries.” The historical legends such as Saint Thomas’ journey to India, Nestorius’ to China, and even of the young child Jesus to the Eastern world are all not unfamiliar to congregation members in this part of the world. It is, however, true that theological education as implemented through the current Western model is comparatively new to the churches and societies of Asia. Even the earliest theological institutions in this region may be no older than one and a half centuries. Most theological schools were established within the recent half of the past century.

Besides this feature of only a short period of history and experience, the minority situation of Christian populations in Asian societies can be related to the limitation of supportive resources in theological education in terms of both human as well as material resources. Therefore, even after more than a century of hard work, most of the theological institutions in Asia are either still in a situation of strong dependency on Western partners or weak in their operations as an educational agency. Generally speaking, almost all theological institutions in Asia were headed by Western missionaries and operated in a way which imitated Western seminaries in the period before the Second World War. The awakening consciousness of identity in two thirds world Christians after the Second World War led to a trend of an increasing independence of churches and eventually also of the theological institutions of their missionary societies. Nevertheless, the strength of theological education in Asia is still precarious, if not worsening, because of the shortage of experience and resources.

My thirty years’ experience of being a theological educator in Tainan Theological College and Seminary and Chang Jung Christian University, and particularly the knowledge about Asian regional theological education, which I learnt through my involvement in the Association for Theological Education in South East Asia (ATESEA) and South East Asia Graduate School of Theology (SEAGST) during the last half decade (especially during the last two years while being commissioned to lead study groups for the reengineering of both ATESEA and SEAGST), has given me a chance to observe and review the development of theological education implemented in Asia, and to reflect upon the strengths and weaknesses, the opportunities and threats that theological education in Asia has experienced and will be confronted with in the future.

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1 T.V. Philip, East of the Euphrates: Early Christianity in Asia www.religion-online.org/.
This paper is a concrete proposal for quality assurance in theological education implemented in Asia through an effective system and operation of a programme on accreditation. This proposal in fact was discussed and adopted by the former executive committee of ATESEA to improve its accreditation service to its member institutions, though it remains yet to be seen how it develops and how to evaluate its results.

Theological Education Seeking Ways to Respond to Asian Contextualities

The short history of Asian theological education in the past hundred years was a fruitful yet also difficult period. It can be divided into the following three phases, if we describe it with particular concern for the vitality of theology and theological education. The three phases are:

Transplanting period: as aforementioned, the first stage of theological education implemented in Asia was exclusively introduced by western missionaries who came to this part of world for evangelism. Bible schools and theological institutes were established to train local missionaries. These were headed by missionaries and tended to import their systems, theologies and resources from the missionary societies of Western churches.

Enhancement of Theological Education through Accreditation: the second phase was marked by the formation of the Association of Theological Schools in South East Asia which was founded in 1957 with 17 member institutions from 7 countries.3 This was a formative period for contextual theological education in Asia. John Fleming, the first executive director of ATESEA (1959-1968), classified its membership into three types, i.e., accredited, associated, and affiliated members. With the leading idea of promoting an excellent quality of theological education in member institutions, ATESEA has consistently worked to upgrade their faculties and theological library holdings. Only those theological education institutions qualified will be eligible to apply for accredited membership.

Conducting Advance Theological Degree Programs through Sharing Resources: nine years after the inception of the association in 1966, ATESEA established its consortium style of theological education institution to conduct advanced theological degree programmes for the Master of Theology and Doctor of Theology, entitled South East Asia Graduate School of Theology (SEAGST). The graduate school was further strengthened with its areas set-up for resources sharing and local operations. More than hundred D. Theol. graduates were produced from this graduate school and even more alumni are from its M. Theol. programmes over its 40 years of history.

Besides the above steps of moving towards quality theological education, ATESEA has also taken other steps to promote contextual theological education in the Asian region: two series of publications for theological text books in local languages were launched in Chinese (CTES) and in Bahasa language (BTES). Also occasional papers were published by SEAGST and a theological journal was issued, entitled “Asian Journal of Theology by ATESEA”. Many more programmes to enhance young theological educators were held annually to serve its member schools.

Recent Challenges Provoking Transformation for Theological Education

ATESEA celebrated its Golden Jubilee in 2007. Significant growth and expansion were made both in ATESEA membership and SEAGST programmes and operations. There were, however, increasing demands and challenges which have compelled the organization to consider self-transformation and re-engineering. The increase in membership was accompanied by advanced degree programmes offered by its member institutions. The progress and growing maturation of theological education, which was achieved in

the last 50 years, created new demands and challenges for the association. The quality of theological education demanded in various programmes, the plural trends of faith represented by different confessions and their diverse theological approaches created strong demands on the association for its inclusiveness, while at the same time challenging its understanding and standards of quality of theological education as implemented in its accreditation processes.

It was due to these factors that a series of steps aiming at the re-engineering of the organization were launched even before its Jubilee celebration. The revisiting of the Critical Asian Principle (CAP) and the creation of “Guidelines for Doing Theologies in Asia” (GDTA) were part of these efforts. Re-shaping ATESEA through enhancing its accreditation and re-engineering SEAGST by its curriculum revision and faculty strengthening were on the agenda. The financial crisis of ATESEA which was caused by the misappropriation of financial means in its Manila office, on the one hand, terminated these series of efforts; on the other hand, it forced the organization to take immediate action to transform itself in spite of potential resistance. The member institutions were able to reach an agreement on a new shape of ATESEA and SEAGST in its most recent General Assembly Meeting held in Malang, Indonesia, in June 2009, which has emphasized two major tasks as the essential mission of ATESEA, namely its accreditation service to its member institutions and faculty development programmes to develop and further equip young theological faculty members for the region, based upon the consistent position of the association to highlight the contextual concerns of theological construction and theological education.

The following sections are part of the background rationale which is related to the proposal of the accreditation service introduced for the new shape of ATESEA – seen from the perspective of somebody who had been chosen as a coordinator to lead this theological engineering.

Contextuality and Academic Excellence

ATESEA and SEAGST were founded on a strong theological commitment towards Asian contextualities. Contextual approaches for theological education thus were taken as the main mission thrust of the association and the graduate school. It is, however, with the rapid increase of members and participating schools in the family of the association and the graduate school that the concept of “context” is challenged to be revisited and to be expanded. What is the academic excellence of theological education in Asia? How is it to develop a coherent view of academic excellence with contextual concerns? This becomes an issue of debate not only within but also beyond the organization. The revisiting of CAP and the creation of the new GDTA-Guidelines (“Guidelines for Doing Theologies in Asia”) can be considered as part of the answers and responses to this challenge, although the task of how to uphold the spirit of the GDTA and how to materialize it in the ingredients of accreditation notations remain critical for the new leadership of the association.

Since the irruption of the two third world theologies in the 1960s, the demands of the vitality of theologies for people have become common concerns for theological education. The contexts of people and theologians thus moved to the centre of theological endeavours. Theological academic excellence, therefore, will not be attained unless it is adequately responding to particular contexts. A genuine excellence of theology can be developed only if this theology is spelled out and responding to concrete contexts.

Once the contextuality is taken as a major criterion of academic excellence for theology and theological education, plural norms for quality assurance and inter-contextual approaches for international cooperation of theological education and theological encounters become urgent and critical. In order to secure the quality of theological education with an appropriate awareness of this contextual concern, an accreditation menu with a standard operating procedure needs to be designed and implemented which regards contextuality as an organic part of academic excellence for theology and theological education.
Accreditation and Quality Assurance

Accreditation is a process in which the certification of competency, authority, or credibility of theological education is presented. The accreditation process ensures that its certification practices are acceptable, which means that they are competent to test and certify third parties, to behave ethically, and to employ suitable quality assurance.4

It is necessary to clarify here also the meaning of quality assurance, for according to Merriam-Webster, quality assurance refers to planned and systematic production processes that provide confidence in a product’s suitability for its intended purpose. It is a set of activities intended to ensure that products (goods and/or services) satisfy customer requirements in a systematic, reliable fashion. Quality assurance cannot absolutely guarantee the production of quality products unfortunately, but makes this more likely. Two key principles characterize quality assurance, i.e., “fit for purpose” (the product should be suitable for the intended purpose) and “right first time” (mistakes should be eliminated). Quality assurance includes the regulation of the quality of raw materials, samples, products and components; services related to production; and management, production and inspection processes.5 It is important to realize also that quality is determined by the intended users, clients or customers, not by society in general: quality is not the same as “expensive” or “high quality”. Even goods with low prices can be considered quality items if they meet a market need.6

Based upon the above definitions of accreditation and quality assurance, we come to the conclusion that the nature of accreditation is seeking to guarantee the quality of relevancy instead of distinction. It is a way to ensure that the promise of an institution is properly achieved through its standard operating processes, without seeking a leading position through competition among the organizations in the same field. Accreditation, therefore, enacts a process for quality assurance which is different from evaluation or inspection. It is a mechanism to ensure self-improvement for an institution (organization) to keep a proper standard to suffice its constitutional requirements.

Accreditation as a Way of Quality Assurance for Theological Education

Derived from the understanding of the nature of both accreditation and quality assurance, we agree that a well-designed accreditation system with a faithful practice of the standard operating procedures will improve theological education in a way to meet its academic excellence not only in the sense of its profundity, but also in its relevancy. And this is particularly important to be implemented in theological education in this post-modern era of human history.

In order to fulfil the task to assure the quality of theological education through accreditation processes, there are five areas of concern which should be answered by the institutions which apply for programmes to be accredited. These questions are:

1. **Vision**: what is the institution going to be?
2. **Core values**: what does the institution believe in?
3. **Mission**: what is the institution going to do?
4. **Objectives**: where and what is the institution going to reach for?
5. **Strategy**: how is the institution going to make objectives happen?

The first two questions are a basic criterion for accreditation, which are particularly important for today’s theological education, as the plurality of confessions and diverse trends of theology have become a reality for many churches and societies. Theological education should be responding to these multiple

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4 See Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia in http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Accreditation.
6 Ibid.
situations in churches and their theological interests. Thus, they are to be respected and taken into consideration by the accreditation processes.

**An Attempt at a Relevant Accreditation Service**

Accreditation, as mentioned above, in its nature is a self-improvement mechanism. Therefore, it is a continuing process of PDCA (Plan, Do, Check, Action) exercise. The external check through a professional visit is but a part of the process. The self-exercise done by the institution accredited to shape (clarify) its common vision and objective, to plan and establish suitable schemes to fulfil this vision and objectives, are an essential part of the overall process.

In order to materialize these principles of theological education into accreditation practices, five key areas are designed as essential instruments for the accreditation of educational programmes, which I believe are also suitable for programmes of theological education:

1. Objectives, mission and self-improving mechanisms
2. Curriculum, faculties and teaching environment and supply
3. Student learning supports and care for campus life
4. Research competence and support system
5. Graduates’ achievements and feedback from the users

As indicated, the purpose of accreditation is to help the institution to engage with a process of self-improvement, providing a suitable channel to collect feedback from the users and a stable mechanism for self-correction in all these five areas. Generally speaking, accreditation processes are a cycle consisting of self-studies, rehearsal and correction, accreditation visits (providing self-studies report), comments and verification, continual correction and improvement.

**Accreditation and Theological Education in an Ecumenical Setting**

In many countries of Asia, accreditation for higher education institutions is mostly carried out by the government. This turns out to become a practice of inspection or evaluation, which is inevitably connected to a sense of political control and regulation. Accreditation practiced for theological education, on the other hand, by its nature is a service rendered to theological institutions to allow them to fulfil their mission. It should definitely not fall prey to a misapplication of this instrument. Therefore, associations of the theological institutions are the best platform to carry out this service. ATESEA as an association of theological education in the South East Asia region is an appropriate instrument for this purpose and should re-target one of its principal missions, the accreditation of theological programmes and schools, in this process of re-engineering.

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7 See the chart below: quoted from Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia in http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:PDCA_Cycle.svg
One more concern, that needs to be mentioned, refers to the inter-contextual recognition of excellence of theological education in the process of accreditation. If theological education is not to cause further divisions of people in confessions, denominations, regions and even different theological interests such as gender, race, class, and also different religions, accreditation criteria should be formulated in a process which is subjected to inter-contextual dialogue and negotiation. The existing theological instrument of WOCATI (World Conference of Associations of Theological Institutions) can serve as a guiding platform for this purpose. It is, of course, WOCATI which also should be re-engineering itself towards fulfilling this role.

If WOCATI can serve as a platform for inter-contextual dialogue on ecumenical theological education on the global level, it will also provide a chance of mutual recognition of standards for theological excellence both academically and in praxis.
OUTCOMES BASED EDUCATION, ACCREDITATION AND QUALITY
ASSURANCE IN OPEN DISTANCE LEARNING:
A CASE STUDY ON THEOLOGY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

Nico Botha

Introduction
The arrival of democracy in South Africa brought with it a new education system and a different approach in teaching. The past fifteen years have seen a shift from what could be very broadly defined as classical education to outcomes based education. Loosely, classical education is positivist in nature in that there is a strong emphasis on content or volume which does not necessarily speak to a particular context and the kind of problems to be solved in that situation. It is the kind of education that does not interact with the prevailing political, social, cultural and economic situation which impacts the lives of people. Classical education is positivist in nature, and presupposes that the teacher is the receptacle of all knowledge, which simply has to be transferred to the learners. The metaphor most often used is that of a bank transaction: the reserves of knowledge are held by the bank, and learners can come and withdraw what is needed. Another metaphor that is called into service in explaining this approach is that of the learner or student being an empty container to be filled with knowledge. The context of the learners plays no role in the nature of the knowledge, which has been determined long ago. In contradistinction to this type of education, outcomes based education is very pertinently about solving authentic problems and the development of competencies in the areas of knowledge, skills and values that speak to the real life situation of people. This approach is undergirded by social constructionism which in broad terms understands the creation of knowledge that will enable people to meet the challenges of their situation, as contextual in nature. At an institution like the University of South Africa (Unisa), the issue was not only about the introduction of a new educational philosophy, but also about questions of accreditation, quality assurance and a definition of open distance learning which goes way beyond a mere correspondence university.

The question here is on how these developments have salvaged theology in at least the following ways. First, is it fair to suggest that constructionism in the form of outcomes based education has helped theology at Unisa to become more context-based and therefore more relevant in dealing with authentic problems in church and society? Second, does theology benefit from the accreditation of Unisa as an institution of higher learning and the search for greater quality assurance in the institution? Below a more extensive definition on accreditation from the Council on Higher Education is cited, for now it suffices to say that broadly speaking, accreditation refers to the process of assessing or evaluating whether the programs at an institution which lead to registered qualifications, meet a particular set of standards. Third, will gravitating towards the fifth generation of open distance learning which is progressively about issues like web-based and e-learning. The notion of a fifth generation of open distance learning will later on pass the revue for a slightly more extensive treatment. Fourth, are there prospects of open distance learning open up exciting

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1 The article is more of a statement based on draft documents developed internally at the University of South Africa (Unisa) and not a thoroughgoing research article on theological education. It is perhaps more a matter of flying a kite on theology at Unisa in arguing that the introduction of outcomes based education and measures relating to accreditation and quality assurance have helped theology to find greater relevance. A brief argument is advanced on how an open distance learning institution like Unisa could be of service to the continent of Africa.
and creative new opportunities for theology to take quality theological education to all corners of the continent of Africa?

Before proceeding with the attempt to answer these questions, there is a need perhaps to say that outcomes based education in South Africa has come under scrutiny, especially in primary and secondary schools the past number of years. The general complaint seems to be that in primary education it is not really assisting in developing good reading and writing skills amongst kids. On all levels, primary, secondary and tertiary education, the complaint is that the approach is too technical, keeping educators very busy with technical issues like the completion of unit standard forms, portfolios, numerous little workshops, resulting in a situation where good quality teaching is jeopardised sometimes. One of the almost standard complaints is that there is too much policing and too little real teaching taking place. On tertiary level in particular serious questions are posed on issues relating to academic freedom. The argument is that outcomes based education is too much of a sausage machine, too much academic Fordism, too much forcing everybody into the same mould and too little space for the own creativity and innovation. In responding to some of these complaints the Department of Basic Education (primary and secondary) has responded by promising not to discard of outcomes based education, but to make the technical demands of the system less cumbersome for educators.

Much as outcomes based education may indeed be fraught with difficulty, the basic thesis of the article is that the philosophical grounding of the approach could potentially bring about the rebirth of theology in facilitating the development of a more relevant and more contextual, quality theology.

At the University of South Africa (Unisa) theology was greatly challenged to develop new study material that was outcomes based compliant. I will argue that precisely this has enabled theology at Unisa to create context-based knowledge in responding to the needs of the new emerging South African society.

**Outcomes Based Education Undergirded by Constructionism**

There are basically three issues to pass the revue here. First, the issue of definition: What is social constructionism? Second, in what way does constructionism inform outcomes based education? Third, in very broad terms, in what way does constructionism help theology to arrive at a more relevant, context-based theology of good quality?

What is social constructionism?

It is entirely beyond the scope of this little article to present an extensive and thoroughgoing exegesis of social constructionism. For example, issues like the emergence of constructionism in specific disciplines like psychology and the differentiation between constructionism and constructivism are not dealt with here.

In very very broad terms the basic understanding of constructionism is that all knowledge is contextual knowledge. Constructionism therefore contradicts the notion of readymade universally valid ideas that could be appropriated and applied to different contexts. In constructionism as a theory of knowledge all reality is socially, historically, politically, economically and culturally constructed or created by a particular group or groups. What we quite often perceive to be objective reality brought about by laws or the divine or nature, is in fact the by products of human choices.

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2 See the general website of UNISA: www.unisa.ac.za/ and the website of the UNISA school of religion and theology: www.unisa.ac.za/default.asp?Cmd=ViewContent&ContentID=35.

If it is then true that the reality we live in is constructed reality, human made reality based on the interests of people, it means that such reality could be studied, analysed to the extent of uncovering the ways in which human beings participate in and contribute to the creation of social reality. A further issue therefore is that such reality is not cast in stone, but could be and indeed should be the object of deconstruction and transformation.

The connection between constructionism and outcomes based education seems to be the inculcation of competencies in knowledge, skills and values that will sharpen the reflexive capacity of learners, empowering them to confront authentic problems in society head on, solving them and by so doing to contribute to the transformation of society. Butler\(^4\) sees as the primary aim of outcomes based education the facilitation of desired changes in learners by increasing knowledge, developing skills and positively influencing attitudes, values and judgment. For her outcomes based education embodies the idea that the best way to learn is first to determine what needs to be achieved.

The rebirth brought on theology by social constructionism is to perceive of reality not as God ordained, but as socially constructed, much as in Christian theology there is a basic understanding of creation and of culture as gifts from God. Social constructionism forces theology and the church to be more rigorous in their discernment of the reality around them, more careful in reading the signs of the times. In the African continent social constructionism as yet another import article, can however, salvage at least the following situation for theology and the church: to perceive of the woes in the continent not as divine revelation almost or as the consequence of natural laws, but as the logical consequence of the type of social, political, economic and cultural constructions in the continent either by people from elsewhere in the world who benefit from the situation or by the powerful elite in the continent itself. Social constructionism is very much about meaning and power which is all we really can claim to know about. But it is also not only about analysis and deconstruction, particularly in theological education. Any danger of a paralysis of analysis could be overcome by strategically bringing together social constructionism and outcomes based education with the view of equipping people to work for transformation. In theological education and ministerial formation in Africa the most fundamental issue should be profiling. What should any woman or man, any pastor be able to do when they have done their training at a particular institution, be it a theological seminary or a Faculty of Theology at a university? How does one do theology in the African continent? How does one tackle authentic problems in the continent? How does one respond to real life situations from an ecclesiological and theological perspective? Social constructionism in combination with outcomes based education suggests that there are no ready made ideas, but new ones to solve the problems and the woes of the continent are to be constructed since knowledge is by definition contextual knowledge. A word is not a word _an sich_, but could only be understood really in the context of a sentence as the sentence only makes sense in terms of a paragraph, etc. New knowledge could, however, also mean interpreting old knowledge in a new way, creating new avenues for understanding. Particularly in the continent of Africa there is a real need for digging deep in terms of tracing the philosophical sources from the past that will enable us to understand ourselves better as Africans in a post-colonial, postmodern, neo-liberal age.

**Outcomes Based Education and Theology at UNISA Bth Modules At UNISA**

The coming of a new education system in South Africa necessitated a complete re-curriculation at Unisa. Outcomes based education rendered any form of wrap around existing study guides virtually impossible. A mere adaptation of existing study material would simply not work. The challenge was to develop modularised study material that was outcomes based compliant. This posed a very serious challenge for

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theology at Unisa, but it also came as a blessing. Theology was greatly challenged to start developing modules that were speaking to authentic problems and was afforded with an opportunity to draw from best practices in instructional design in developing study material that was context-based and relevant. In an attempt to rise to the occasion and to respond to the challenge, theology at Unisa, under the very able leadership of Klippies Kritzinger, stumbled upon a very creative design. Kritzinger is acknowledged in theology at Unisa as the auctor intellectualis of the design that will now be shown, albeit very briefly.

Tracks and Modules

In broad terms the design consists of four tracks identified as Scripture Studies, Theologies in Context, Congregational Ministries and Community Ministries. From the onset, it has been acknowledged that the four tracks cannot and should not be regarded as watertight compartments and that quite a measure of overlapping between them would appear. In equally broad terms the classical theological disciplines could be located as follows as far as the tracks are concerned: Old and New Testament in Scripture Studies, Church History and Systematic Theology in Theologies in Context, Practical Theology and Theological Ethics in Congregational Ministry and Missiology on its own in Community Ministry. Of great importance is the capstone module or Integrated theological praxis from the hand of Kritzinger. The capstone is a creative module that brings together the learning that has taken place in the other modules and the assessment is done in terms of how well learners can integrate what they have learned into their praxis of ministry and mission.

It is important to indicate that most of the modules have been developed in terms of best practices in instructional design or at least as collaborative ventures between academic departments and education experts from the Directorate for Learning and Curriculum Development at Unisa (DLCD), for theology in particular the names of Nöthling and Le Roux are to be mentioned.

Briefly now and based on the very cursory treatment of social constructionism and outcomes based education, a specific module in Missiology at Unisa will be pressed into service to illustrate how theology benefits from the unit standard in education in the areas of relevant, context-based study material developed in terms of best practices in instructional design and in quality assurance.

Unit Standard in Outcomes Based Education

The genius of outcomes based education for theology is that for the first time in the history of South Africa, theological education is forced to develop study material that is relevant and context based. Of course this has in a sense been pre-empted by modes of contextual and liberation theology in South Africa since the early nineteen seventies. The see, judge, act or action-reflection methodologies were very helpful in developing theologies that were context-based. Retrospectively one has to concede that this was indeed still very limited. With the arrival of a new education system in South Africa and in an attempt to curb the proliferation of little institutions offering theological education without knowing whether there was good quality, new structures like the South African Qualifications Authority and its concomitant Standard Generating Bodies, theology across the board was required to comply with a number of set criteria. One must hurry to say that in a situation like this there will always be the real danger of forcing everybody into a straight jacket or imposing a weird type of Fordism with a single mould or format for all or to put it

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5 Klippies Kritzinger was instrumental in developing the new modularised course material in terms of tracks during his tenure as Dean of the former Faculty of Theology at Unisa.

6 Marié Nöthling from Education and Chris Le Roux from Theology formerly, are two of the foremost experts on instructional design at Unisa. See also: www.unisa.ac.za/Default.asp?Cmd=ViewContent&ContentID=13275 (Marié Nöthling) and www.unisa.ac.za/Default.asp?Cmd=ViewContent&ContentID=13243 (Chris Le Roux).
differently, the process of production on a conveyor belt, seriously jeopardising academic freedom, particularly at tertiary institutions. However, my very strong suggestion here is that outcomes based education undergirded by the knowledge theory of social constructionism and strategically worked out in the South African education system in terms of accreditation criteria and quality assurance measures, have greatly assisted in arriving at a more relevant, context-based theological education that speaks to authentic problems in a country like South Africa.

There will always be a downside to standardisation, or perhaps one should rather invoke the notion of quality development. Be that as it may, since the nineteen nineties all new qualifications in South Africa and new study material have to comply with a number of unified criteria for purposes of quality assurance. This has forced theology to carefully formulate and develop purpose statements, outcomes, learning assumptions, range statements, assessment criteria, critical cross field outcomes and the embedded knowledge in a particular course or module.

Quality assurance is a foreign brand in education. The notion of quality assurance emanates from the manufacturing industry and is as such foreign to education in general and to theology in particular.

In tracing the history of quality assurance Allais shows how the practice of trying to make sure that quality products are marketed, is by definition a practice which originated in the world of industry where mechanisms are put in place to ensure the good quality or standard of the end product or commodity. She elaborates on how quality assurance emanates from large scale manufacturing where numerous technical mechanisms are put in place in the drive to achieve a product or commodity of quality. The argument here is simply that education in general and theology in particular cannot and in fact should not be subjected to the type of technocratic, mechanistic processes which are foreign to education and theology.

An Illustration: Module on Intercultural Christian Communication

The module called into service here has been constructed by Karecki who has very quickly picked up on outcomes based education and whose deep engagement with Unisa colleagues in Curriculum and Learning Development resulted in some award winning constructs. It needs to be mentioned perhaps that the module in its current form has undergone a slight title change from Intercultural Christian Witness to Intercultural Christian Communication in terms of capturing the content of the module more aptly.

Purpose of the Module

The purpose of the module is shown to be the development of competencies in intercultural Christian mission, enabling students to practice sensitivity as well as responding critically in communicating the gospel of Jesus Christ in various intercultural contexts. The purpose of the module is to foster understanding and respect for the other and to create an atmosphere conducive to cooperation.

As far as the specific outcomes of the module are concerned, students should be able:

- To explain key terms, facts, concepts, principles and theories on intercultural discourses in its relation to a Christian understanding of personhood. They are therefore assessed on the basis of whether they can identify, define and use technical terminologies associated with intercultural discourses. Also, whether they can identify, evaluate and find new solutions to intercultural problems in using theories appropriate to intercultural settings. This points to a very important

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8 Madge Karecki has taught in the Missiology unit at Unisa from 2000-2004 before returning to the United States to join the Poor Claires. She is currently back to teaching in Chicago.
aspect of outcomes based education, i.e. that it feeds into constructionist learning environments (Jonassen), driven by problem solving.

- To cooperate with people from a different cultural background than their own. They are therefore assessed in terms of whether they can select and apply methods, procedures and/or techniques in choosing and cooperating with a learning partner from a different cultural background. Also, whether they can create a high cultural context activity with the learning partner. Such activity is aimed at identifying differences in cultural concepts and behavioural patterns and negotiating and managing them with great sensitivity.

- To reflect critically on and evaluate the entire intercultural experience against accepted ethical Christian values and principles. Here they are assessed in terms of their ability to manage, take responsibility for, reflect on and account for the Christian intercultural learning process.

The specific outcomes of the module indicate how important the do-ability of theology/missiology is. To be able to do what is required in the intercultural communication of the gospel particular competencies in knowledge, skills and values or principles are required. A further issue is that the module is not speculative in nature or does not take a positivist approach by divorcing the learning process from authentic problems or real life situations. No, in the intercultural reality of South Africa it is necessary for theological students to be equipped for the context of religious and cultural pluralism, to mention only two. Once again, however, the issue is not simply the application of ready made ideas to the situation, but the construction of new contextual knowledge if this is not too much of a tautology. The genius of constructionism is that even this new knowledge might soon be up for deconstruction and serious scrutiny in search of the progressive transformation of society. Constructionism is assisting theology in overcoming and breaking through the explication-application model, which feeds into a linear reading of the Bible, as if there is a direct line between the text of the Bible and the context of people. In accepting that all reality is constructed reality, constructionism accepts that knowledge in the sense of language will always be interested language.

A third element from the unit standard is aimed at developing competencies that are not only relevant to the specific field of study, but cut across different fields. The critical cross field outcomes, envisaged for learners doing the Unisa module on Intercultural Christian Communication, are:

- Identifying and solving problems as well as making decisions in using critical and creative thinking. This goes way beyond classical education that has turned learners into parrots more than anything else, not at all developing their capacity for critical thinking.
- Organising and managing the learning experience in a responsible and effective manner
- Collecting, analysing, organising and critically evaluating information. In the age of information and communications technology this is in itself a huge competency.
- Communicating effectively using language
- Demonstrating an understanding of the world as a set or a complex of related systems by recognising that problem solving contexts do not exist in isolation.

Accreditation and Quality Assurance in Education: Theology at UNISA

Accreditation

This is perhaps not the place to engage all of the entities and processes relating to the accreditation of institutions of higher learning, except to say that the University of South Africa (Unisa) as Open Distance Learning institution is thoroughly accredited with the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC).
Accreditation in terms of the definition of the Council on Higher Education\(^9\) (CHE) “signals that programmes that lead to registered qualifications achieve set standards, conduct their activities with integrity, deliver outcomes that justify public confidence and demonstrate accountability for the effective use of public or private funds. It allows government to invest public funds with confidence in programmes that demonstrate their ability to pass through a process of rigorous external scrutiny.”\(^10\)

The one issue that has emerged strongly in the accrediting process at Unisa has been the self-evaluating nature of the process. A number of activities like student surveys and material evaluation were undertaken before the team doing the audit arrived at the institution. What are the benefits and challenges of accreditation? Apart from spelling out the process involved in accreditation, Kilfoil\(^11\) helps us to see some of the benefits of the process. First, it affords the institution an opportunity to identify its own strengths and weaknesses through a standards-based self-evaluation. Second, it generates an institution-wide involvement, particularly through peer review, student surveys and self-evaluation. Kilfoil calls this triangulated data on performance and educational effectiveness. Third, it generates a new sense of purpose and identity. In theology there was indeed a new sense of being taken seriously, not merely as part of the institution anyway, but as a cluster making a distinct contribution to the university and society at large. Theology was afforded with an opportunity to interview focus groups and to have study material peer reviewed. Being part of an institution, that has been thoroughly audited and assessed for accreditation, places theology at Unisa in a very good position.

**Quality assurance**

Harman\(^12\) defines quality assurance as referring to “systematic management and assessment procedures adopted to ensure achievement of specific quality or improved quality, and to enable key stakeholders to have confidence in the management of quality and the outcomes achieved”. In a sense, this rather general definition does obviously not reveal the fact that quality manufacturing by craftspeople and workers in mechanised factories and how each worker handles small bits of the total product with inspectors coming around to do sample checking. This is done to reduce defects on products. Clearly this sense of quality assurance is foreign to education in general and particularly so to theology. Allais\(^9\) draws attention to three models of quality assurance. First, the lead parachute where the objective is to comply with whatever criteria are set. Attempts are made to follow all the right processes. Second, the audit conundrum is a quality management system where the auditing is done by experts in that particular field, but not in the thing that is being audited. Alderman\(^13\) seems to be wary of regarding an audit as a measuring instrument for quality assurance in stating that an “audit is a powerful instrument of change, but it is not a measure of quality. It does not, for example, compare standards of degrees, or make judgments as to the quality of teaching”. Third, the business model is a total quality management system where all kinds of control mechanisms are put in place.

It should be clear that all of these models are bound to create serious problems for theological education. Pinning theology down on quality assurance measures which do not necessarily take cognisance of the fact that in the main theology works with faith assumptions and issues like spirituality which cannot be easily evaluated or measured against the mechanisms normally used for quality assurance in the corporate world of big business and capital. Theology in its simplest form is language about God and much

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\(^9\) See: www.che.ac.za.

\(^10\) Quoted in Wendy R. Kilfoil (Bureau for Learning Development UNISA), *Quality Assurance in Open Distance Learning* at www.fotim.ac.za/fotim_conferences/qaconference/papers/kilfoil.ppt.

\(^11\) Allais, M. Ibid.

\(^12\) Harman, G. (1998:346), quoted in Kilfoil, WR. Ibid.

\(^13\) Alderman (1996:185), quoted in Kilfoil, WR. Ibid.
as it is human language about, it is virtually impossible to measure theology for its quality in the same way as a commodity would be assessed for its quality. This is the downside of quality assurance for theology.

However, the upside of quality assurance for theology is to be found perhaps more in keeping theology on its toes, keeping it transparent and accountable, particularly at public institutions subsidised by the state. On the level of knowledge production, theology is challenged to find ways of complying with the criteria set by the Department of Education and related bodies dealing with accreditation and quality assurance and simultaneously developing study material that reflects the nature of theology. To suggest that theology and theological education is different in nature from other disciplines or fields of study, cannot and should not become an alibi for sloppy work that will not withstand public scrutiny.

During the proofreading and editing process some very intriguing questions relating to quality assurance in theological education particularly arose in the editorial committee.14 Are there theological criteria for defining quality assurance and quality assessment in theological education? There was a need felt in the committee to arrive at some definition on quality assurance that will make clear that quality assurance in theological education is more than merely absorbing and conforming to external standards. The little debate in the committee was located in the following very concrete concern that has been registered about students coming from churches in Africa, Asia and other parts of the world who enter the Masters program in Theology. The concern appears to be that there is a lack of competency in the areas of reading and interpreting texts, the developing of solid theological arguments, citing correctly from texts and being guilty of plagiarism. Quite often the argument is raised that the issues referred to relate to Western standards and are impositions. There are of course also the barriers of culture and language students from Africa and Asia and Latin America face when they enroll for a program in Europe or the United States. Yet, are there Christian values or kingdom values like honesty, integrity, truth and justice that could inform quality assurance in theological education so that plagiarism, for example, will give way to respect for the insights and theological imagination of others? The question in the editorial committee was: can we interpret quality in theological education as loyalty, openness and an affinity to kingdom values like truth, justice, love and compassion? Also, is there a critical relationship between the theological perspective of kingdom values or values relating to the reign of God and the notion of quality assurance in higher education?

In responding to these questions, there are some pitfalls for theological education to avoid as much as possible, but there is also a great opportunity to seize. A major pitfall to avoid is to call kingdom values into service as an alibi for not striving towards better quality in theological education. Quite often in South Africa, churches and theological institutions who raise criticisms against theology at Unisa, do so in the name of the gospel, but conceal the fact that the underlying matter is shying away from a set of basic standards required by educational authorities in the country. The very creative opportunity for theology and theological education is to achieve the following integration: not to shy away from some technical standards, but to formulate a theological response which illustrates that kingdom values transcend the criteria and mechanisms used for quality assurance in the corporate world.

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14 Some very pertinent questions on whether there are theological criteria for quality assurance in theological education are contained in an electronic feedback from Dietrich Werner on 17 January 2010.
Open Distance Learning (ODL)

In an interesting draft document on ODL from June 2009\textsuperscript{15}, a table showing the different generations of distance education is provided which gives a glimpse of the technologies, pedagogies and the types of student support informing each of the generations. Unisa is currently gravitating towards generation 5. First, in generation 5 the technologies indicated are online learning, e-learning, web-based learning and virtual universities. Second, pedagogically communities of learning are envisaged informed by socio-constructivism and critical theory. Third, in terms of student support computer conferencing, discussion forums, online collaborations are to be part of the model. This new approach is aimed at creating what in very general terms or should one rather say, in very specific terms, is defined as learner centred learning. This new approach means that an institution like Unisa will have to move from content only courseware to integrated courseware.

A major challenge in the continent of Africa is the inclusion of what the draft document terms “less privileged students” aimed at ensuring “that they do not remain as such – less privileged and computer illiterate”. If the challenge is carefully confronted, Unisa should be able to take quality education to the remotest parts of the continent providing that telecommunications centres could be put up or little cybercafés here and there. Theological education in Africa can benefit tremendously from such developments. Not only will they have access to good quality theological education, but they can undergo training in context, not being uprooted for having to relocate elsewhere for training. All of this could be done in a cost effective manner.

Theology/Theological Education and ODL Activities

Nöthling\textsuperscript{16} from the Directorate for Curriculum and Learning Development at Unisa shows a number of ODL activities that could potentially be introduced. In introducing some of these activities, an attempt is made to show the specific advantage for theology of such activities. First, is the need to learn how to learn. In learning how to learn students should be enabled to determine what they need to learn through questioning and goal-setting. This should go a long way in making theological students understand that learning is not so much about absorbing readymade theological ideas which can later be applied in practice. No, open distance learning which is informed by social constructionism, should empower learners to ask questions and to do their own goal-setting. Theological students can benefit greatly from reflective activities with supportive feedback from lecturers and in particular from journal writing where they try to answer questions like: Why am I doing this? What progress am I making? What have I learnt? Other examples alluded to by education specialist are self-assessment opportunities in the text and online, portfolio activities and projects with built-in reflection on the own learning of students. A second issue is that of authentic learning where teaching is anchored in realistic and meaningful contexts. Authentic learning contradicts a potential assumption in theological education that theology deals only with metaphysical, abstract issues, divorced from the realities on the ground. In ODL theological students will be encouraged to explore examples from real life and a diversity of forms like text, audio, video and news paper clippings. The electronic instrument myUnisa could be utilised for a discussion forum amongst learners where case studies done by learners, narratives and reflective activities can feed into. A problem-based curriculum rather than a topic-based curriculum is to be developed with a good mix of well-structured and complex, ill-structured problems. A third issue to be introduced is collaborative learning.


\textsuperscript{16} Nöthling, M. 2009. Draft document on open distance learning activities.
where group tasks are assigned and online discussion forums are encouraged with both structured and unstructured tasks. Such collaborative activities are aimed at helping students take on complex problems through argumentation, structured controversy and reciprocal teaching. This could be hugely liberating to theological education where the tendency quite often is to avoid the more difficult and complex or controversial issues or to treat them in a superficial manner. The group in which learners collaborate does not necessarily have to be a peer group, but could, for example, be elders in a community to be interviewed on a specific question. Other categories of people like church members, pastors, women, youth and social activists who could be engaged on a particular problem in the community.

**Conclusion**

The article is meant to show the potential of constructionism in the form of outcomes based education to liberate theology from its captivity to the enlightenment paradigm. The subjection of theology in South Africa to the same criteria set for the other sciences, has surely contributed to an enhancement of quality in theological education, not merely by absorbing these, but by creatively reacting to the challenge. Apart from a few other criticisms of outcomes based education alluded to in this article there are already those in South Africa, amongst them experts in the field of curriculum and learning development, who suggest quite strongly that we should move on to post-structuralism. We shall have to wait and see. For now, I would like to suggest that outcomes based education has facilitated two issues for theology. First, the development of study material geared towards authentic learning environments, speaking to context and secondly, the development of greater quality in theological education, once again, not simply by succumbing to the dictates of a very technical understanding of quality assurance, but by opening up creative spaces for itself.
In the early twentieth century, a group of North American schools offering theological education came together to discuss common interests. They formed the Conference of Theological Seminaries. The original and continuing purpose of this group – now named the Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada – is the improvement of theological schools, specifically those engaged in post-baccalaureate, professional education. The focus on professional education accounts for the fact that membership does not include graduate schools or departments of religion offering only academic degrees.

In 1936, the group changed its structure to that of an association, with a constitution, by-laws, and an accrediting program. The decision to undertake the role of accreditation brought theological education into a North American world already populated by regional agencies, whose work is primarily limited to geographically related states, which now includes program agencies – legal and medical education, for example – and other national agencies that, like the ATS, both accredit institutions and approve degree programs.

All of these accrediting agencies and the activities they undertook began in medias res. The original members of the Conference of Theological Schools, the North Central Association… all of them started by looking at schools that were already mature, with governing boards, faculties, students, facilities, and graduates. Inevitably, the process of accreditation that these institutions, both secular and theological, developed was one of identifying characteristics that the initial schools shared and, in order to determine whether or not to admit other schools to the group, of creating a process for screening those seeking membership against those common characteristics.

The focal term in the original and continuing purpose of the ATS, improvement, implies movement and change, change for the better. Even as a conference of theological schools that would gather to exchange information, the underlying purpose of the exchange would be in order to support and empower reformation and innovation.

The accrediting program, since 2005 carried out by a separate but related entity, the Commission on Accrediting of the Association of Theological Schools, maintains a list of institutions that it has accredited. The first list of accredited members of the association contained forty-six institutions; the current (2010) membership stands at over 250 free-standing seminaries and schools within universities and colleges. The association developed a set of standards and a set of “notations.” These “notations,” possibly unique among accrediting agencies, represented “a policy of public shaming.”¹ Many of the early notations intended to encourage member schools to reduce or eliminate the admission of students without an undergraduate degree. The adoption of the 1996 standards added the requirement that notations be addressed within two years.

Attending to the improvement of theological schools is actually a two-pronged undertaking, reflected in the two related entities, the ATS and the Commission on Accrediting of the ATS. The first offers an educational program that includes a series of professional affinity groups (chief executive officers, deans, chief financial officers, academic deans, development officers, etc.), re-granting programs of fellowships in support of research and scholarship in areas common to the curriculum, and programs focusing on areas significant for theological education, e.g., the Character and Assessment of Learning for Religious

Vocation and Theological Schools and the Church. In these three areas, the ATS provides the framework and support for ongoing dialogue, emulation, and experimentation related to the work of theological education, that is, how this work is actually undertaken in the wide variety of circumstances, e.g., theological, geographic, demographic, etc., of the member schools. The ATS includes three levels of membership, i.e., Associate, Candidate, and Accredited.

The second entity, the Commission on Accrediting, consisting of ATS Candidate and Accredited members, and its operative agency, the Board of Commissioners, develop, revise, and maintain the standards that the membership has voted to adopt. There are two types of standards: general institutional standards, at the beginning, address the character of the institution, both structural and operational e.g. purpose, planning, and evaluation; integrity; curriculum; library and information services; faculty; students, governance, and resources. The standard on the curriculum in the general institutional standards describes elements in the curriculum in broad strokes. The second section of the Commission standards provides much greater detail for each of the major degree program areas offered by member schools, grouping them in four categories: basic and advanced / professional and academic. The language of the standards is similar to the binary character of the association, in that the function of the language is either to describe quality, i.e. “characteristics of theological education to which institutions should aspire,” or to define normative expectations.\(^2\) There is also a specialized subset, mandatory requirements.

Over the past three-quarters of a century, the process of accrediting and reaffirming the accreditation of members of the ATS has changed in a number of important ways, each change designed to facilitate and to make more reliable the improvement of theological education. The process begins, for schools approaching accreditation for the first time and for long-time members, with the self-study. The tyranny of “the way it always has been done” manifests itself in this institution-wide process, for the core of the self-study as a summary document is based on the self-reports in the late 1930s that the first accredited members of the newly re-organized association submitted, which consisted of information, mostly numerical (how many, how much, etc.), about the institution. One sign of a self-study that has stopped short of engaging the “study” part of the name is one that has limited itself to the accumulation of facts, data, and information about the institution without asking itself, “What insights about the institution flow from a critical review of this information and what questions does the same critical review pose?”

The **Handbook of Accreditation** is the ATS Commission’s effort to outline the process. The first four sections deal with the theoretical basis of accrediting through suggestions for managing the process, including questions appropriate for the self-study to address for each of the standards.

Although the focus for the institution is the self-study, and especially the questions it raises and the responses those questions elicit, the focal point for the accrediting process is the visit, by a group of three to five peers. These visitors, who have read the self-study closely, spend the bulk of their time on site, primarily through interviews with all segments of the community, gathering information in service to clarification, confirmation, and expansion of their understanding of the institution beyond what they found in the self-study. These visitors have a rather special responsibility. In its simplest terms, their role is to stand, insofar as possible, in the shoes of the institutional community and, based on their reading of the self-study and thoughtful inquiry on site, to write a report at the conclusion of the visit, to reflect, once they have confirmed that or to what extent that the institution meets the general institutional and degree program standards – the normative expectations – where, in the light of the institution’s own mission statement, it has achieved its aspirations and where, once again in terms of its own goals, it has yet some distance to travel.

The Board of Commissioners, an elected group of peers and public members, receives the report of these visitors, together with the recommendations with respect to accreditation (reaffirmation or initial), to

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\(^2\) ATS Commission on Accrediting, *Handbook of Accreditation*, Section 5, 2.
the approval of degree programs, to the identification of unique strengths and concerns, and, finally, to naming specific points, if any, where the institution falls short of the standards. The Commissioners review the report and act on the recommendations of the visitors. The responsibility of the Commissioners is both to confirm that the recommendations of the visitors are demonstrably anchored in the text of the report and to ensure that recommendations from the multiple visits that the Commissioners review at any one meeting are coherent with actions in similar circumstances at the same and preceding meetings.

In the first decade of the twenty-first century, the most intense focus of accrediting agencies, not just in North America but worldwide, seems to be on the assessment of learning outcomes, and it has become almost passé to contrast the “new” outcomes-based assessment with the “old” resource-based assessment. Close attention to the history of the ATS reveals that decades ago, the internal discussions and public statements recognized the need for accountability. Writing in 1976, Eugene Van Antwerp reminded the readers of *Theological Education*, “In 1934, the North Central Association [one of the regional accrediting agencies] changed the situation entirely, and institutions were to be accredited on a new basis. Instead of conforming to a universally applicable set of standards, an institution would be evaluated on what it claimed to be doing, whether in fact it was doing it effectively and could be expected to continue doing it in the foreseeable future.”

Marvin Taylor, two years later, commented, “[The self-study process] leads finally to some serious, tough-minded attention to educational outcomes.”

The problem was not that no one was talking about the identification of outcomes and the need, albeit difficult, to find ways of determining the achievement of those outcomes by graduates, and the transparency of the process. The problem seems to have been that no one wanted to hear.

The accreditor, the schools (governing board, president, faculty), the students, the persons or agencies underwriting the cost – if not the student – and the churches or agencies employing the graduate, all have in mind that the student who completes the program should have matured in some way. The period from the mid-1930s to the first decade of the twenty-first century has witnessed steady development, from a conversation to a mutually agreed upon a statement of shared values, to the development of a set of policies or standards, which codify and, where possible, quantify those values, to an evaluative process that verifies that particular schools meet those protocols, to a regular revisiting of the accredited schools to confirm that each of the member schools continues to meet the protocols – including revisions and updates to the protocols.

This process assumes an element of trust by the churches and agencies that employ the graduates of these schools, an acceptance of the notion that peer review enhances the likelihood of results that are reliable. The broadly ecumenical, even interfaith, character of the “peers” creates an unusually wide spectrum of views and practices because the unspoken but uniformly understood protocol is that the focus is on the process of education, not the content of that education. The single exception to this careful boundary, in the early 1920s, “caused an uproar.”

Although, as the prior sections of the article show, a consciousness of the need for accountability and even the naming of outcomes as an element in the process of accountability were present in the early discussions and formulation of standards, such considerations received a low priority in the actual implementation of the standards by the schools, in the review of the standards by the on-site visiting committees, and in the enforcement of the standards by the accrediting entity. This relegation of accountability to a lower priority is understandable. In the judgment of some, the outcomes of theological degree programs are not susceptible to articulation, as though they were skills in a trade. Even if they could be articulated, they are not quantifiable as though they could be measured or counted. In spite of such opinions, church search committees, bishops, district superintendents, and denominational judicatories all

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5 Miller, *Piety and Profession*, 453, n.5.
make decisions requiring discernment of the fit of candidates for ordination to certain preconceived configurations. The public statement of the contribution that a particular theological education makes to the configuration is going to serve everyone with a stake in the process well.

The initial decision of the members of the Conference of Theological Seminaries was probably not either-or, that is, either resource-based assessment or outcomes-based assessment. The process seems to have been an orderly development from a decision that everyone would benefit from sharing practices and ideas to a more formal organization and description of the common areas found in all of the schools. Such a framework led inevitably to a discussion of what elements in what amounts are minimally necessary to make for good theological education. These earliest statements did not arise in a vacuum. Those participating in the discussions must have had in mind and in view their own institutions and those of their discussion partners, but the “amounts” they identified were not the lowest common denominator.

The process, which is still in motion, has taken many years. Initially, there was an agreement to develop an outline of the required elements and, where possible and appropriate, the minimum numbers, then to devise a process for interested institutions to seek formal recognition that they had the requisite resources and in the requisite amounts. Recognition, following a site visit to confirm the stated resources, came in the form of addition to the list of other institutions that had the required elements in the minimum amounts.

At first, there was no provision for reconfirmation, periodic or otherwise, that the required resources continued to be in place. “From 1936 to 1966 ‘once accredited, always accredited’ prevailed. But the Association came to recognize that this assumption may have actually had a negative rather than a positive effect on quality… [and in 1966] the Association adopted a policy of decennial review.”

The Federal government began to assume a major role in accrediting when it undertook to develop and manage a list of accrediting agencies that it deemed reliable authorities. There was, of course, benefit in ensuring that the accrediting agencies themselves met certain common, public standards. The Federal program, called recognition, requires more frequent reconfirmation of alignment with its rules – at least every five years – on the part of the agencies it has recognized than it requires its recognized agencies to apply – at least every ten years – to the educational institutions and programs they accredit.

The ostensible reason for the involvement, in this way, of the Federal government at least in the affairs of higher education (baccalaureate and post-baccalaureate) was to ensure that the graduates of educational institutions and programs, whose students were the beneficiaries of certain loan programs that the Federal government subsidized, had achieved what the public declarations of these accredited institutions said they would. All of the member institutions of the Commission on Accrediting of the ATS come under the requirement to furnish assurances of the achievement of “learning outcomes,” even though in some instances, the institutions have elected not to participate in Federally subsidized loan programs. Canadian member schools come under the same requirements and, in fact, some with U.S. citizens among the student body also participate in these loan programs.

The relentless Federal insistence on the credible demonstration of the achievement of degree program learning outcomes has partnered with another phenomenon in higher education generally, namely, a movement away from the traditional, residency-based model, which has emerged roughly parallel to the increasingly specific Federal demands. The rise of a wide variety of non-residential models has produced thorny, intractable issues as the Commissioners have sought to discern what the equivalent of a year of full-time study is when the “year” is not the traditional two semesters, each fifteen week semester offering five courses, and each course consisting of one hour classes three times a week. Other factors and new configurations only added to the confusion. Among the variations are block scheduling (weekly three hour classes), intensives (two or three weeks with forty-five contact hours), and a series of weekends. In addition, the onset of extension sites – what are the “required” resources – and distance education – how to

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6 Taylor, “Accreditation as Improvement,” 50-51.
identify what residency (as a resource) contributes to theological education – further compounded the difficulties of maintaining a level playing field among the peer institutions.

By the early 1990s, the ATS recognized that its standards looked and read more like a patchwork quilt rather than a highly integrated, internally coherent set of rules. The ATS had adopted the standards then in place in 1972 and through the course of the intervening years, had amended the original document frequently, including the addition of standards focused on special concerns e.g. globalism and gender issues. The process of redeveloping a set of standards for the ATS was a widely collegial and interactive undertaking requiring multiple drafts and four years (1992-96). The result was a tightly integrated set of aspirational standards that benefitted from attending to the past, listening to the present – through the voices and written comments of faculty, administrative staff, and others throughout the ATS – and looking to the future through setting high but reachable, the bar for the development of a culture of assessment by current and prospective member schools. This third element brought the concept and requirement of assessment to the front – Standard One – and center – the first of four overarching themes that run throughout both the general institutional standards and the degree program standards.

Although the need for assessment has been a part of the declared purpose of the overall accreditation process from the beginning, the resource-oriented elements e.g. curriculum, library, faculty, students, administration, finance, together with purpose and planning, tended to overshadow their evaluational partner. Outcomes-based assessment, however, recognizes that resources, merely as a consequence of their presence, do not ensure that graduates of a program will possess any particular skills or characteristics or habits. Outcomes-based assessment demonstrates that graduates of particular degree programs have achieved specific, and publicly identified traits, habits, or capacities.

Assessment could be a vast undertaking because it is applicable to virtually every aspect of a theological school. A summary list of possible areas or persons would include the following:

- Under administration: The governing board, the chief executive officer, the development officer, the chief financial officer and business operations, and the support staff.
- Under academic affairs: the academic dean, the faculty, the library, information services, and degree programs, courses, and individual classes.
- Under student affairs: recruitment, student advising, field education.

The Commission standards include a succinct developmental guide:

Evaluation is a process that includes: (1) the identification of desired goals or outcomes for an educational program, or institutional service, or personnel performance; (2) a system of gathering quantitative or qualitative information related to the desired goals; (3) the assessment of the performance of the program, service, or person based on this information; and (4) the establishment of revised goals or activities based on the assessment.

Institutions shall develop and implement ongoing evaluation procedures for employees, students, educational programs, and institutional activities.7

A simplified outline of the appropriate steps includes identification, first, of observable outcomes in a dialogical process involving as many elements as possible of those affected by the activity; second, of strategies for making the required observations; and third, of an array of commonly agreed upon indicators of the presence or level of presence of the indicators. Good outcomes assessment includes both direct (external validation) and indirect (self-witness) measures. Once the data from these activities of identification, implementation, and observation are in hand, the responsible agents (initially) undertake a review to discern the rates of achievement and to ask whether the variances suggest needed revisions. The purpose of the institution, to which the framers would have aligned the outcomes at the beginning, would

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7 ATS Commission on Accrediting, General Institutional Standards, Standard 1.2.2.

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periodically come under review either to confirm a particular outcome or, perhaps, to undergo revision as a consequence of changed circumstances, as demonstrated by the assessment of the outcomes.

Logic suggests that the development of learning outcomes for degree programs is probably a good place to begin, in part because this is an area in which all three of the major areas of the institution has a stake, a different stake, to be sure, but in this instance, the stakes are of approximately equal value.

Experience suggests the following mantra as the process begins: few and small are good. Any of the stakeholders could produce numerous possible outcomes, but those responsible for implementing the program will find that, as in many new undertakings, the first round is highly labor-intensive. As faculty members, administrators, governing board members, and students become accustomed to participating in a different way of defining success, efficiencies will emerge. It is, however, always going to be a demanding, albeit rewarding, undertaking.

From the beginning, in 1996, with the restatement of the importance of assessment, and especially outcomes assessment, the ATS has provided both coaching for specific, representative institutions engaged in the self-study process and for the publication of the results of projects that are illustrative of different approaches to development and implementation of assessment programs. There were two phases of these publications, one under the rubric of “The Pilot Schools Project” and the other under the rubric of “The Character and Assessment of Learning for Religious Education.” In addition, a section of the Handbook of Accreditation, “A Guide to Evaluating Theological Learning,” provides an important introduction to assessment with specific reference to the MDiv degree program as an illustrative model.

At the present time, the area for the Commission on Accrediting at the ATS Web site (www.ats.edu/Accrediting) has full-text copies of the Standards and Handbook of Accreditation, as well as a section, “Assessment Resources,” which contains links to many external tools. In addition, the publications section provides access to an index of the ATS journal, Theological Education, from its inception and full-text copies of issues from 1990 forward.

There are many other resources, identified in the bibliography, that provide models, theoretical backgrounds, and practical advice, both inside and outside the world of theological education.

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PUBLIC MINISTRY AND COMMUNICATION STUDIES
IN THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

PUBLIC MINISTRY, ETHICAL FORMATION AND THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION IN INDIA – AN EXPLORATION OF KEY ISSUES

Peniel J. Rufus Rajkumar

Introduction

Theological education in the Indian context has consistently attempted to derive its sense of purpose and direction in relation to its contextual realities. This proclivity to be contextually embedded has invariably led to an accent on the role of theological education in ‘public ministerial formation’ (by which is meant ministerial formation which seeks to engage the political realm in specific contexts) on the one hand, duly complemented by the remarkably diverse areas of emphases that discourses on theological education in India have focused upon, on the other. Therefore, along with a general focus on ministerial formation – for which theological education is considered as a tool for societal engagement and transformation – discourses on theological education in India have engaged with various concerns like nation-building, religious fundamentalism, inter-religious dialogue, spiritual formation, disabilities, development, ecumenical cooperation, Dalit issues, HIV/AIDS and the challenges they pose to theological education and ministerial formation.

On the basis of an overview of the major foci of theological education in India in the recent past one can arguably say that there has been a recognition that it is imperative for any form of theological education which has the potential to engender a relevant public ministry and ethical formation in the Indian context to have an orientation towards a twin-‘otherness’ – namely religious otherness and ‘socio-political’ otherness, the latter encompassing economic, political, cultural and physiological otherness. However, engaging with this twin otherness is not without its challenges and it is the intention of this essay to highlight certain key issues which are concomitant to any engagement with this twin-otherness. It needs to be made clear that the discussion on the key issues will be fore-grounded in the consciousness that the focus of this article is on the role of theological education in fostering contextually appropriate ethical formation and engendering relevant public ministries in the Indian context.

Before we proceed further, a caveat must be introduced. Given the rich diversity which characterizes India, it may sound naïve to speak of India as an integral whole. However one of the integrating features of Indian theological education, at least in the Indian Protestant circles, is what is called the Senate of Serampore.10 As a degree granting authority the Senate of Serampore seeks to provide an umbrella structure to Protestant theological education in India. Further, it ‘attempts to unify the theological focus of the (affiliated) colleges with a common curriculum, provides for common theological research and interaction among educators and evaluates the colleges for excellence’.11 This essay in its analysis of ‘Theological Education in the Indian Context’ will confine itself largely to the findings of various committees on theological education, publications by colleges and other institutions like the Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society (CISRS), and other conference reports which have emerged within the gamut of the Senate of Serampore, while being fully aware that theological education in India happens even outside the structures of the Senate of Serampore,12 and that bodies falling outside the Senate of Serampore College have also published material on theological education in India.13 However, it also needs to be noted that much of what has been written on theological education assume a ‘pan-Indian scope’ and thus are general enough to be considered as seeking to influence theological education in India.

Theological Education and Public Ministerial Formation

There is a public ministerial formation dimension to theological education in India. What Thomas Thangaraj says in a global context also pertains to India:

Theological education is not limited to the training of ministers alone. It involves a serious grappling with theological issues as an academic and/or ecclesial community with a view to the emergence of “public” theologians among us. By public theologians I mean those who, in their varied locations (ecclesial or otherwise),

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10 This is an interdenominational Senate which in its present form is a product of the reorganization of the earlier Serampore College which was started in 1818 by William Carey, Joshua Marshman and William Ward and was granted separate rights and immunities under a Royal Charter of date 23rd February, 1827, by the King of Denmark. Sigga Arles, *Theological Education for the Mission of the Church in India: 1947-1987* (Frankfurt am Main: Verlag Peter Lang, 1991), Studies in the Intercultural History of Christianity Series, 2-4. For a history of Serampore College Arles draws our attention to George Howells’ *The Story of Serampore and Its College*, Serampore: College Council, 1927, 116 ff and Wilma Stewart (ed.), *The Story of Serampore and its College* (Calcutta: The Council of Serampore College, 1960), 124.


12 Like the Asian Theological Association (ATA) and The Association for Theological Education by Extension (TAFTEE) in the Protestant Circles.

feel equipped to think theologically and offer theological insight, critique, and guidance to the larger society regarding the global issues that we face today.\textsuperscript{14}

With regard to this public ministerial formation dimension it has to be mentioned that ministerial training in India in general has actively sought to ‘integrate the practical aspects of theological education into its ministerial programme’.\textsuperscript{15} In this regard the United Theological College, Bangalore, in which I currently work, has been striving to offer its students appropriate field exposure through its ‘Field Education’ programme ‘which would enable them to encounter new life-contexts that would challenge them to broaden the horizon of their thinking as well as their involvement, both in the church and the society-at-large.’\textsuperscript{16} The point of departure for this field education is the recognition and the acknowledgement of the fact that ‘theological education and ministerial formation’ should move beyond the class room lectures and must be integrated with the field outside.\textsuperscript{17} What is envisaged is the initiation and fostering of dialectic between field experiences and reflection.\textsuperscript{18} The effects of such exposure have been profound as the context of Field Education provides a radically subversive ‘pedagogical laboratory’ for the students. Evangeline Anderson-Rajkumar gives a ‘down to earth’ example of how the ‘field’ of the field education programme changes the entire language and experience of talking theology when she points out how while for the urban people, human excreta is something which ‘you don’t have to think about because of the excellent planning of the sewage system’ it may not be the same when through your field exposure you are exposed to the life style and struggles of a manual scavenger ‘who works among human shit as a ‘work ground’...’\textsuperscript{19} In such a context ‘for the students to read about manual scavenging is one thing. To witness to their lifestyle and struggle with their daily stories of exploitation and oppression is entirely another.’\textsuperscript{20} In such a context field education ‘is an opportunity to be existentially challenged to reorganize one’s lifestyle, behavior pattern, theologies and worldviews in a radical way so that our God-talk becomes more credible, contextual and relevant’.\textsuperscript{21}

Public ministerial formation is also a question of ethical commitment. Ethical commitment involves choice – choice of the way in which we want to be oriented in life. With regard to such an orientation theological education in India has been influenced by the various strands of liberation theology which have ushered in an epistemological shift in the way one chooses to be formed by bringing in the category of ‘preferential option’ for the ‘others’ of human history. In continuity with such an orientation the Gurukul Lutheran Theological College and Research Institute in Chennai, conceives of theological education ‘as the power to understanding and realization of the gospel in our total context, particularly the context of the marginalized’.\textsuperscript{22} Similarly the 1974 National Consultation on Theological Training which called for a

\textsuperscript{16} Jathanna, ‘Foreword’, 7.
\textsuperscript{18} Razu, ‘Towards a Praxis Oriented Theological Education’, 36.
\textsuperscript{20} Anderson-Rajkumar, ‘Field Education’, 229-230.
\textsuperscript{21} Anderson-Rajkumar, ‘Field Education’, 230.
\textsuperscript{22} Monica Melanchton cites from the Calendar and Year Book 1999-2000 of the Gurukul Lutheran Theological College and Research Institute in her article ‘Theological Education: A Tool for Transformation’, in Report of the LWF Global Consultation on Theological Education – Revisioning Theological Education, August 23 to the 27, 1999, Rome, Italy (Geneva: Lutheran World Federation) (105-115), 105.
radical change in the conceptualizing of theological education through a deep involvement in the Indian situation, critiqued the church’s tendency to maintain its societal involvement at ‘a safe, elitist level’ and stressed that ‘to do theology means to be present at the bleeding points of humanity.’

Responding to this challenge Gnana Robinson and H.S. Wilson clarified that the task of theological education involves understanding where the church stands in its political commitment. This involves questioning ‘whether the theological education we impart simply affirms the prevailing ideology and values which at present are benefitting only a minority in India at the expense of the majority.’ It further involves asking questions about the constituency to whom theological communities are accountable and with whom theological communities are collaborating on issues of justice and human rights, and interrogating whether theological communities are ‘unduly subject to ideological control of any sort or are (we) able to promote a counter-force, dissenting voice against the ideological hegemony?’

The focus on those on the underside of history, the resilient survivors of the politics of erasure has brought in an activist dimension to ministerial formation. The primary objective of the Slum Development Programme and the Rural Development Programme, two of the important action programmes of the Tamil Nadu Theological Seminary (TTS) in Arasaradi, Madurai, is stated to be ‘conscientising and organizing people for fighting for a just socio-economic order’. This has led to conflicts and struggles, which have been occasions that have demonstrated both the ‘solidarity of the oppressed’ as well as the seminary community’s ‘Christian solidarity with the oppressed’—the consequences of the latter being arrests, accusations with ‘fabricated charges’ and threats to the seminary of ‘serious consequences’. Reflecting upon the field exposure programme of the United Theological College Sathianathan Clarke writes, ‘we are not afraid to admit that our notion of Christian ministry does encourage our ministerial students to be social activists. Thus they are sent out into the world to be fully involved with engendering life, especially among the communities that are threatened with displacement and death’.

Having so far focused on the public-ministerial-formation dimension of theological education in India, we will now analyse how Indian theological education has engaged with the twin-otherness which characterizes the Indian context and point to some concomitant issues that arise in such engagement.

**Theological Education and the Turn to the ‘Religious Other’**

Drawing our attention to how ‘when Asian Christians encounter the other religions of Asia, the question of the ‘other’ becomes crucial and the perception and view of the other plays an important role in defining the goals and the processes of the encounter’ between Asian Christians and the other religions of Asia, Thomas Thangaraj delineates the various ways in which the religious other has been imagined in the various models of encounter between Asian Christians and other religions. The various models posited by Thangaraj are: ‘the other as an enemy of God’, ‘the other as potential convert’, ‘the other as primitive superstition’, ‘the other as an unfulfilled seeker’, ‘the other as a storehouse of culture’, ‘the other as

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24 Robinson and Wilson, ‘Perspective in Theological Education’, 76.
25 Robinson and Wilson, ‘Perspective in Theological Education’, 76.
companion in struggle’ and ‘the other as a partner in dialogue’. While some of these models of encounter have denigrated other religions, others have been affirmative. In the same manner, the way in which theological education in India has acknowledged and responded to its multi-faith locale has straddled both the pejorative and the affirmative. As T.K. Thomas has pointed out there were times when teaching of other religions was done to prove the defectiveness of other religions in comparison with Christianity. This in Thomas’ opinion was a kind of reconnoitering exercise, and the course was expected to yield strategies for evangelization. From that point there has been a shift to a position which seeks to enlist different religions as allies in the struggles affecting humanity. In a recent article Wati Longchar, while emphasizing that ‘theological education should create and allow space for different identities to flourish’, reiterated the need for forging inter-religious alliances to confront the issues threatening India as follows:

Religions have worked in isolation, sometimes undermining each other, sometimes claiming superiority over the other. India is confronted with poverty, illiteracy, natural disasters and environmental degradation. The new diseases like HIV, global warming and religious fundamentalism affect all people. Today the life-destructive tourism industry is also booming and becoming the biggest threat for continuity of marginalized people’s spirituality, cultural and traditional way of life. One religious tradition or one religious group alone cannot solve all these problems. It is time that all religious resources are pulled together and (we) stand united to meet our present challenges and crises.

Though pregnant with possibilities, the promise that such a proposal -to forge alliances across religions – holds must be considered in juxtaposition with the important questions that postmodernity raises. Postmodernity, which is ‘as essentially contested a concept as it is an indispensable one,’ and may best be construed as ‘(a)n ‘exodus’ from the constraints of modernity, as a plea to release the other, as a demand to let particulars be themselves rather than having to conform to the structures and strictures of the prevailing ideological or political system,’ raises disconcerting but pertinent objections about the possibility for such alliances across religions by bringing into question the very foundations for those partnerships. With its own cautiousness towards any quest to articulate meta-narratives which could be applicable simultaneously to diverse communities, postmodernity questions whether it would be possible to evolve a vision common enough to encompass various traditions to work towards transformation? It reminds us that in a religiously pluralistic world the crucial question which needs to be handled is ‘whether issues of global responsibility are something which can be endorsed by different religions?’ Thus postmodernity calls us to reflect upon the nature and adequacy of the common grounding of inter religious alliances, and their relative potential to act as catalysts in enabling people who come from diverse traditions to come together and work on equal terms. In such a situation, the challenge then for theological education is one of creating the space for reformation, where ‘given the anguished needs of our species and our earth, all of us are offered both the necessity and the possibility of belonging to both our particular ethical communities and to the global

30 Thangaraj, ‘Religious Pluralism’, 159-162.
32 Wati Longchar, ‘Beyond Four-Walled Campuses: Models of Ecumenical Theological Education in Interfaith Issues in India’, in International Review of Mission, Vol.98, No.388, April 2009 (64-76)

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ethical community’, as well as willingly letting our truth claims and our ethical decisions to be formed not exclusively in our individual communities but also in our global community. The challenge then for theological education is to contribute constructively and creatively towards creating what Knitter calls a ‘global community of dialogical ethical discourse’, which:

(w)ill be a “community of communities,” a paradoxical but actual community in which we belong both to our own religion and culture and yet genuinely participate in the global community struggling for eco-human justice and well-being … a community in which we are both particularists and universalists, making strong claims on the basis of our particular religious convictions but knowing that such claims might be relativized in the wider conversation with other strong claims and with the even stronger demand to remove human and ecological suffering.

The other issue that has been raised regarding the relationship between theological education and the multi-faith milieu of India concerns the area of interfaith dialogue, where it has been noted that ‘in spite of several programmes of inter-religious dialogue and encounters in India, on the whole it has been limited to the initiatives of a few individuals and institutions and … seems to have become a specialised area of concern.

Delving further into the issue of inter-faith dialogue, it needs to be stressed that a polysemic or multi-layered approach to interfaith relations is needed in a context where there is a growing recognition of the nexus between power and religion. In such a context it is the task of theological education to bring a socio-political lens to the various attempts at interfaith dialogue. Shantha Premawardhana brings such a corrective lens appropriate for the Indian context when he points out that ‘where caste is legitimated by Brahmanic religion, it is right to question whether we should be in dialogue with them’. Out of such ‘political consciousness’ emerges the affirmation that ‘[T]oday our partners in dialogue are not necessarily those religious leaders who are a part of the exploitative structures, but those who suffer from exploitation’. Such a view subverts the traditional and popular views of interfaith dialogue. Recognizing that those affected by exploitative structures are ‘overwhelmingly the poor,’ Shanthawardhana identifies these people as the ‘partners in dialogue, to build alliances and to challenge the power structures of government, corporations and indeed religions that exploit and destroy our communities’. It is this counterintuitive mode of dialogue which theological education in India needs to affirm in a context of rising religious fundamentalism so that inter-religious dialogue becomes a viable means of furthering the flourishing of ‘cosmo-theo-eco-anthrophic’ relationships.

Public Ministry, Ethical Formation and the Turn to the Marginal ‘Other’

It has been rightly recognized that ‘[D]oing theology in an Asia way demands a methodology “from below”… (which) means the insights gained from our commitment to the struggle of the marginalized’. In continuity with this conviction, theological education in India has begun to pay attention to the various incarnations of the ‘other’. This shift has entailed recognizing the presence of the several absentees of theological discourses like people with disabilities, people living with HIV/AIDS, dalits, tribals, women

37 Robinson and Wilson, ‘Perspective in Theological Education’, 77.
40 Premawardhana, ‘The Strange Exorcist’, 64.
and the poor; and making them the locus of discourses on theological education. Discussions that have engaged the question of these ‘others’ have been both critical, deploping the tacit inclination in theological education to be oblivious to their struggles; and constructive, attempting a recovery of their agency and subjecthood and seeking to extend to them opportunities which they were previously deprived of, for the purpose of the edification of all.

With regard to these ‘others’ various issues have been highlighted. For example, some of the important issues that have been raised concerning women and theological education are the lack of encouragement and church sponsorship for women to take up theological education, the need to include value orientation with regard to matters pertaining to women, ‘incorporating women related concerns in all subjects of our theological education and not merely compartmentalizing them as women’s concerns’ and, increasing the opportunities for women to be on the teaching staff of seminaries or theological colleges.\(^{42}\) In a similar manner some of the issues that have been raised concerning Dalits and theological education are the visibility and representation of Dalits in the curriculum, the identity-damaging potential of existing curricula,\(^ {43}\) the under-representation of Dalits and tribals at the higher levels of theological education and the lower levels respectively,\(^{44}\) which, in Saral K. Chatterji’s opinion, may facilitate the creeping in of perceptions ‘that finally dominate theological education’ as a result of which ‘ministerial training and church perspectives, are conducive to the maintenance of the status quo’.\(^ {45}\) Issues raised with regard to people with disabilities include addressing ‘cultural prejudices, exclusive or negative theological perspectives, social stigmas and taboos (that) have often led to the exclusion and isolation of people with disabilities’,\(^ {46}\) ‘the importance of integration or infusing the concerns of persons with disabilities within the existing curricula,’\(^ {47}\) adopting more ‘disability friendly’ infrastructures for theological colleges and seminaries and resorting to new ways in the ‘teaching-learning process’.\(^ {48}\)

One of the key issues that the focus on the ‘others’ raises for theological education which seeks to foster ethical formation and enable appropriate forms of public ministries is related to the question of epistemology. It concerns making the ‘other’ the point of reference in evaluating the validity of the various resources of our ethical formation. Any discussion on ‘Christian’ ethical formation inevitably entails touching upon what Robin Gill calls ‘the complex and intimate relationship between moral agency and moral communities’.\(^ {49}\) This concerns understanding ‘the importance of religious membership in providing


\(^{43}\) According to Balasundaram the observations made by Abraham Ayrookuzhiel regarding the ‘pattern of general education in the country, can be said to be applicable to theological education also.’ Balasundaram quotes the following from Ayrookuzhiel:

They(Dalits) are ‘the invisible people’ with no representation in the curriculum … In these lessons Dalits appear as people with slavish minds or as objects of charity … that Dalit children are forced to internalize symbols of backward behaviour as their appropriate historical heritage which further damages their identity. In other words the curricula serve the interests of the dominant castes and their culture. The syllabi and text books do not reflect Scheduled Caste (Dalit) and Scheduled Tribe life, rights and remedies, so that a deeper and more just cultural process appears in the campuses in the place of caste consciousness as at present (Balasundaram, ‘Dalit Struggle and its Implications for Theological Education’, 71).


\(^{46}\) Longchar, ‘Engaging Theological Education in Context’, 32.

\(^{47}\) Longchar, ‘Engaging Theological Education in Context’, 32.

\(^{48}\) Longchar, ‘Engaging Theological Education in Context’, 33.


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an adequate account of moral agency’.\textsuperscript{50} It implies dealing with how our membership in a particular moral community influences our moral agency or moral action. It accounts for questions like what are the specific moral sources which shape my ethical behavior or ethical character. When we discuss the issue of resources – for an ethical formation which forms the basis for a relevant Christian engagement with contextual issues (public ministry) – it should be premised in terms of a dialectic between intramural and extramural questions. Intramural questions concern the distinctively Christian resources perspectives and moral values that we bring to social issues, the consistency of their applicability, their nature and pattern whereas extramural questions concern ‘the moral and political values and institutional arrangements with which surrounding cultures confront the church’\textsuperscript{51} and how the church can relate with them. Extramural questions involve asking:

If we are in the church, which of these values and arrangements can we positively assimilate? Which may we indifferently leave alone? Which should we resist as incompatible? Should we specify a general strategy for the church’s relation to the world? If so, should the strategy be communal withdrawal, qualified participation, or attempted dominance?\textsuperscript{52}

According to Gene Outka, these intramural and extramural questions ‘represent more than a convenient starting point for discussion; they indicate a permanent orientation’.\textsuperscript{53} It is in the context of these two sets of questions that one can think of Christian ethical formation and response to contextual issues. Theological education which has an ‘other-turned’ praxis orientation has the responsibility of fostering a ‘hermeneutical irruption’ from the perspective of the margins to the intramural and extramural questions. This involves according epistemological primacy to the experiences of the others in evaluating the appropriateness of the sources of ethical formation. In such contexts the challenge may be to place the bible and Christian worship under critical scrutiny from the perspective of the margins. This is equally applicable to the resources found in surrounding cultures, ethical standards and world views, especially when it comes to the question of Christians entering into liberative partnerships with the ‘outside world’. Such an ethical orientation contains in it the spores to redress the impasse in praxis which has resulted from the current lacunae in translating theological convictions into viable practice in the life of the church. One good example of how the hermeneutical irruption of the margins can be integrated to Christian ministry is the area of Christian worship. In the Indian context an orientation towards the ‘other’ in the arena of worship, should involve inclusion of the culture of the traditional ‘others’ – like the dalits and adivasis, who in spite of being the majority in the Indian Church are relegated to the margins in liturgical and administrative life of the church – in Christian worship by being sensitive to their ‘oral and enacted dimensions of liturgical life’.\textsuperscript{54} This will be radically re-affirmative in the Indian context where there is a tacit inclination to camouflage Christianity in a ‘a false Brahmanic identity’. As Clarke points out:

The focus on opening the door of Christian worship to oral-centered and symbolic act-centered religious expression reaffirms our roots in popular and local religions in India. This nontextual character of Dalit and Adivasi traditions influences the direction of contextual liturgical expressions: instead of reaching back to the

\textsuperscript{50} See Robin Gill, Churchgoing and Christian Ethics (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999) and also Moral Leadership in a Postmodern Age especially the chapter entitled ‘Moral Communities and Christian Ethics’ (49-65) (Edinburgh; T & T Clark, 1997).


\textsuperscript{52} Outka, ‘Christian Ethics?’, 199.

\textsuperscript{53} Outka, ‘Christian Ethics?’, 198.

pristine and original world of the past (mostly inscribed and frozen in sacred texts), they may be intertwined with an orientation towards the future.55

Such orientation to the marginalized in our ethical formation and the ministries of the church has the potential to critically deconstruct Christian living in the Indian context and offer concrete forms of action through which public ministerial engagement can happen in the Indian context. Christian ministry thus becomes an important area where other-focused ethical formation can be effectively translated into practice.

(In) Conclusion

Having discussed a few key issues that are concomitant to the efforts of theological education in India to engender relevant public ministries and nurture a firm Christian ethical formation, we can conclude by saying that the possibilities that Indian theological education has opened up to facilitate shalamic flourishing in the Indian context can be furthered through a prophetic concern for the ‘others’ and a willingness to enter into transformative partnership with them. In this regard it can be stated with conviction that theological educators are called to be ‘activators’ who seek to move the body of Christ the church ‘into greater faithfulness’ and for involving the body of Christ in God’s actions in the world.56 This demands a baptism into that circle of friendship which is called by Jesus to be the salt and the leaven whose very nature it is to bring change where it matters the most!

55 Clarke, ‘Hindutva’, 222.
Public Ministry

In the minds of most North Americans Christian ministry refers to the various functions that ordained clergy and lay leaders perform in founding, maintaining, and expanding the internal life of the churches in which they serve. By contrast, most of them view public ministry as the many and varied needs that the church addresses outside of its institutional boundaries. These include various types of social ministries, chaplaincies, and numerous advocacies for public policy.

In my judgment, North American theological schools prepare men and women well for the church’s internal ministry but less well for public ministry. There are multiple causes for this inadequacy but foremost among them is the priority agenda of the churches. They tend to give primary attention to their internal maintenance needs and secondary attention to the moral issues in the wider world.

Clearly, the vast diversity of Christian traditions within and among the many denominations ensures considerable diversity in the substance of theological education. Yet, as this essay progresses it should become evident that a basic principle within theological education militates against the adequate preparation of men and women for public ministry in the service of social justice.

Though different in content, a common structural form of the curricula exists throughout the many accredited theological schools. From the time of their origin up to the present day, most of them have organized their academic programs in four departments namely: Bible, Theology, Church History, and the Practice of Ministry. Many specialized fields exist within each of the four departments with the largest number of them being in the Practice of Ministry with areas that include pastoral theology, Christian education, church administration, homiletics, liturgy and worship, evangelism, world mission, field education.

Some large seminaries have centers for specialized research and teaching in the following areas: Psychology and Family Services; Youth Ministry; Intercultural Studies; African American Church Studies; Hispanic American Church Studies; Asian/Asian American/Pacific Islanders Studies; Theology and the Arts; and many others. Since students pursuing the basic professional degree in ministry must take a large number of required courses in the various departments, most can receive not more than minimal exposure to any of those specialized areas of study.¹

Yet, as important as those areas of study are they give minimal attention to issues of social justice mainly because they are deeply rooted in an understanding of ministry that assumes a positive relation between the church’s ministry and the basic values of the society at large. Such an understanding emerged out of the established church tradition where an integral relation existed between the church and the state. In the free church tradition a similar model was preserved among the churches of the social and political elites as they founded theological schools for the education of their clergy. Clergy who were trained to serve the spiritual needs of those elites were expected to share a common set of cultural values.

In recent years several theological schools in North America have formed joint programs in Religion and law, Religion and Social Work, and Religion and Education. In each of these instances students are

¹ In theological schools that offer a one-year post M.Div. degree (i.e., Master of Theology) or a Doctor of Ministry degree, interested students may be able to concentrate their study in one or more of the specialized fields.
admitted separately into the two programs which they can complete in one year less than it would have taken them to do the two degrees separately. Such a saving of time is due to the willingness of each school to give one half of a year’s credit for courses taken in the partner school. Once again, though social justice issues emerge in each of the programs and while resources are provided for attending to them, the primary aim of the programs is not social justice per se.

Now, the subject matter of social justice is located largely in the field of Christian Social Ethics. Unfortunately, our theological curricula offer a limited number of courses in this area. In fact, some schools offer no courses whatsoever in ethics. Often this is due to the lack of an ethicist on the faculty or the general perception that the formal study of ethics is a secondary concern for theological education. That is to say, many assume that students will easily discern in the other areas of study the practical implications of those courses for ministry and, hence, there is no need for formal training in Christian ethics. Unfortunately, the lack of such training is often evident in the public pronouncements that churches make on a wide range of social justice issues. To devalue the importance of a disciplined field of study in theological education is a major problem for all who believe in the relevance of Christian ministry to the contemporary world.

Throughout the twentieth century up to the present day, however, Union Theological Seminary in New York City has been exemplary in preparing students for public ministry. In fact, that aim is explicitly stated in its mission and vision statements. In brief, Union strives to integrate three functions: (a) its service to the churches in preparing men and women for various forms of ministry; (b) its service to the larger world by helping students see the need for discerning and expanding social justice; (c) its service to the academy through its teaching, research and publications.

In carrying out its mission Union has faithfully related itself to the various sources of knowledge outside theological education as well as the insights of non-Christian faiths. Most important, its ethos has not only determined the shape of its faculty and their course offerings but has imbued its leaders in the 1950s with the necessary courage to found the East Harlem Protestant Parish and from the 1960s onwards to be a safe and encouraging haven for the development of Black, Feminist, Womanist, Asian, and Hispanic theologies.

Let me hasten to say, however, that students who enter many seminaries with a deep concern for social justice issues may take the initiative in seeking the necessary knowledge and skills for the pursuit of public ministry both within the institution and without. This may be done through independent study, field education, internships either at home or abroad, or enrolling in courses at neighboring institutions for transfer credit. In all such situations the burden of responsibility is placed on the student to manage his/her course of studies. In many situations there is ample opportunity for such initiatives by the students themselves.

As implied above, there are two models of public ministry namely (a) a pastoral or priestly model which adapts to the prevailing social mores and (b) a prophetic model which challenges the status quo by analyzing the injustice and demonstrating how it can be corrected. This latter model is deeply rooted in the Hebrew prophetic tradition where the prophetic declarations represent the voice of God in their condemnation of injustice and their demands for justice. In fact, sometimes the focus of the prophet’s message is the moral corruption among religious leaders as was evidenced in the great sixteenth century reformer, Martin Luther. At other times, it has been the unfair treatment of the weak and the vulnerable such as children, the poor, strangers, minorities, the sick, and all who are denied the right to be treated with dignity and respect. By any measure the following persons have exemplified this prophetic model in

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2 Sometimes schools use the nomenclature, Church and Society or Religion and Society as synonyms for Christian Social Ethics.
3 See Union Theological Seminary’s mission and vision statements at www.utsny.edu/Page.aspx?pid=282.

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Christian public ministry: Dorothy Day, Martin Luther King, Jr., Walter Rauschenbusch, Howard Thurman, Mother Teresa, Desmond Tutu, to mention only a few.

Clearly the prophetic style of ministry is controversial because it identifies the precise nature of social injustice, names its cause and demands the necessary corrective. In doing so, prophets reject compromises which invariably invites the criticism of the ruling elites since their complicity often enables the injustice that the prophet condemns.

While prophets demand either social or ecclesial transformation, many Protestant evangelicals and others exemplify forms of Christian public ministry that readily embrace and bless many of the dominant traditional values promulgated by the ruling societal elites. These values comprise the following: laissez-faire capitalism; traditional family values; opposition to abortion rights; denial of ordination to women; condemnation of homosexuality as sinful; support for capital punishment and prayers in public schools; to name only a few. Some of the most prominent seminaries in the United States that embrace this type of social conservativism are the following: The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky; Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena; and Dallas Theological Seminary in Texas.4

**Ethical Formation**

Ethics is reasoning about good moral action. The latter cannot be acquired through teaching but by habitual practices. That is to say, we become good by cultivating the habit of doing good actions. This understanding is as old as Aristotle’s Nicomacheon Ethics. Suffice it to say that a moral disposition is a prerequisite for ethical studies because without it a person would not be able to grasp the first principle of good action. In any case, since moral formation arises out of the habit of doing good actions, ethical formation arises out of the habit of thinking well about moral action and thus displaying the capacity for good moral judgment.

Since ethical formation is always contextual, it is reasonable to assume that a satisfactory adjustment to one’s environment implies an embrace of the moral values implicit in that situation. Thus, seminaries and divinity schools give much careful consideration to the applicants entering their programs in order to discern their moral, spiritual, and intellectual readiness for success.

Clearly, the environment of theological schools plays an important role in the ethical formation of its members. For example, when seminaries and theological schools began admitting larger numbers of women to their basic Master of Divinity degrees and various denominations began ordaining them, all seminarians in those contexts were gradually formed in accordance with their embrace of that value. I vividly recall the unease some men had with that transition in the mid nineteen seventies. By contrast seminarians in Roman Catholic, Orthodox or Protestant Evangelical schools are formed differently in those contexts because ordination is reserved for men only. Regardless of the rhetoric that praises women’s ministries among the laity, the official church position of these churches upholds the value of gender inequality among its church leaders. Accordingly, ethical formation occurs for all who embrace those traditions and commit themselves to their preservation.

Further, many schools have changed their environments by (a) increasing racial and ethnic diversity among their students, faculty, and administrators; (b) augmenting their curricular offerings with courses in African American, Asian American, Hispanic American church studies; (c) organizing programs in Women’s studies in ministry; (c) adopting sexual harassment policies and grievance procedures; (d) permitting the formation of Gay/lesbian/Bisexual/and Trans-sexual student organizations. All of these structural changes manifest the value of tolerance and respect for differences among human beings. Most important, those environmental changes in theological schools are welcoming and affirming gestures of

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4 All of these schools are accredited by the Association of Theological Schools (ATS).

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good-will to the increased diversity in our midst. Those who elect to study in these institutions imply a willingness to be shaped ethically in accordance with the values implicit in these structural arrangements. Needless to say, however, the great diversity among theological schools enables all students to find an environment that fits their moral dispositions relative to the many conflicting societal issues of our day.

In conclusion, theological education, public ministry and ethical formation in North America reflect the values implicit in the ethos of the many varying schools that prepare persons for Christian ministry. That ethos derives from its denominational or non-denominational tradition which shapes its mission and determines everything else done in the school. Clearly there is no one universal model that applies everywhere. Rather, there are many diverse models that often conflict with one another. Thus, it is important for students to select a school that fits their own theological and moral perspectives and their goals for ministry.

Bibliography
Introduction
Communication is part of being human. Defined as the sending and receiving of messages and participation in the process of making meaning, communication is a constituent part of all education, social formation, and cultural interaction. Religious communities use the various means of communication to propagate, educate, and promote their beliefs and worldviews. When a particular religious community communicates effectively, the community will be successful in bringing people to their faith; consequently, most religious communities give particular attention to communication in the training of their leaders and teachers. In Christianity, the importance of communication is founded on the belief that God communicates, in various ways and means, with all human beings (Hebrew 1:1).

Christianity is a religion strongly engaged in communication and inspired by methods and types of communication as lived out by Jesus himself in his context. Since the time of Early Christianity the churches have included different methods, means and types of communication in their training for ministers, missionaries and leaders. Particularly in theological education communication has played and continues to play a major role in ministerial, social and academic formation of both staff and students. But communication was not recognised as a separate discipline or field of study in theological colleges until the 20th century. Every discipline dealt with the issues of communication and media in their own ways. Because the communication field was not studied as a separate discipline or not taken seriously, church leaders and theologians often felt that they were not treated properly by mass media or were unable to communicate effectively in groups or communities.

Churches sometimes fail to communicate to wider communities and are misunderstood because of their own inappropriate patterns of communication. For example the Canterbury archbishop’s intellectual use of the word ‘Shariah law’ was misquoted and thus his talk was misunderstood by the public. In a similar way the Pope’s reference to Islam in one of his speeches was quoted out of its context which has led to misunderstandings among Muslims about the proper meaning of his speech. This indicates that a lack of proper strategies, policies and theologies of communication can hinder church leaders from communicating effectively and clearly both in the public and private sphere. If this is to change for the better communication studies have to become part of every theological education programme. This paper intends to highlight how communication and media studies were brought into theological education using a few selected examples in different parts of the world. It will also highlight the ecumenical agencies which have made some attempts to explore new areas and understandings of mission and communication.

What is communication?
The word communication comes from the Latin root word ‘communis’ which means ‘common’. Communication thus means to share ‘something in common’. This word also shares a common root word

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2 http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/7232661.stm.
with ‘communion’ which is used to refer to Eucharist in some Christian traditions. Any training for ministerial formation should include skills, techniques and means of communication in the study programme. Communication includes various types such as intra, interpersonal, group, mass and folk communication. These different types of communication are used in every ministry and mission of the church and should therefore also play a role in theological education. Communication also involves various types of media. The past century has seen a process of rapid change in communication media as new technologies have been introduced. Media vary from simple microphones, printed books, radio, television to computers. As the height of the media towers became taller than the churches’ towers, media symbolically replaced the churches as centre of influence through their powerful impact on people’s faiths, values, worldviews and cultures.

Convergent media

Marshall McLuhan argued that the medium shapes the message and thus the medium becomes the message. The media technology became more convergent (in bringing various methods together – sound, vision and writing), user-friendly (such as the internet) and interactive while at the same time creating a new division between an information richness or abundance and an information poverty in many parts of the world. Though different types of media were used and applied in the mission and ministry of the church and also were part of the community life theological education often did not take them seriously enough to enable informed use of media. Though a few theological colleges made use of different types of media until the middle of the twentieth century communication and media studies were not developed as separate fields of study. It is the intention of this article to give some historical background on how communication and media studies have evolved in some theological colleges in the period since 1910.

Evolution of Media and Communication Studies

As it was pointed out earlier Jesus was an effective and influential communicator. He asked his disciples to communicate the good news to all. Not only his disciples but also later missionaries explored and used many types and means of communication to proclaim the gospel, to persuade their audience and to bring about changes in their lives. As followers of Christ churches and mission agencies used media and communication for their ministry and mission purposes. At the Edinburgh 1910 World Missionary Conference there was a zeal towards investing and using new communication technology for mission purposes, particularly to evangelise non-Christian communities. It was stated in Edinburgh 1910 that media should be used with effectiveness and power for arousing interest in world evangelization. After the merger between the International Mission Council and the World Council of Churches in 1961, the WCC Assembly in New Delhi stated that broadcasting is an effective means of evangelism and education. Since then both Roman Catholic and WCC documents have made positive statements about media and communication in terms of using them for education, advocacy, mission and publicity.

In the following period the World Mission Conference in Mexico City in 1963 established the Christian Literature Fund (CLF) which was meant to train and encourage writers and publishers to improve means of publication and to organise a network of distribution centres for the sale of books and periodicals,
particularly theological books in regional languages. This led to the founding and further support for Christian Literature Societies in India (1891) and Africa (1923). Major Christian publishers (SPCK and SCM) began to get involved in new theological publications from churches in the South. This provided a great support for developing theological education though there was no systematic training yet for theologians on how to write or prepare publications. In 1947 several of the different existing Christian media associations and publishing houses decided to start an agency at world level which was called the World Association for Christian Communication (WACC)\(^\text{10}\). Since 1975 WACC has strategically developed and invested in training programs, technology, production and leadership in the area of communication and media studies, including courses designed for theologians and staff in theological colleges around the world.

In 1946 the Foreign Missions Conference in the US set up an audio-visual mission committee. This committee along with the National Council of Churches of Christ in USA and the Radio Visual and Mass Communication Committee (RAVEMCO) promoted media and communication studies in different mission and ministerial training centres around the world. One of such programmes was the Christian Association for Radio and Audio Visual Services (CARAVS) in Jabalpur, India, which started producing cassettes in 1960. CARAVS provided training and support to the Leonard Theological Seminary in Jabalpur for a long time. Since then other theological colleges around the world began to have their own printing presses, audio-video centres and computing services\(^\text{11}\).

Though theological colleges have used various media and methods of communication, most of the colleges did not have a course or module on communication studies as part of their curricula for ministry formation. Independent research on theology and communication studies, particularly related to print and audio-visual technology, started in Europe and in the United States in the 1960s.

**Communication in Theological Education – Case Studies**

**South Asia**

One of the few institutions which began to take communication and media studies seriously in the middle of 20\(^\text{th}\) century was the Board of Theological Education of the Senate of Serampore College (BTESSC). This umbrella organization for theological education in India has organised four workshops on communication since 1983 primarily focussed on theological teachers in India, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh\(^\text{12}\). Contributions came from scholars from broader areas of communication and media studies, voluntary organisations and from government sponsored agencies in media. Workshops focussed on developing modules and course material for communication and media studies for theological students which later were published as a volume under the title “Communication in Theological Education – A curriculum”. The specific aim was to promote communication modules at the Bachelor of Divinity and Master of Theology degree level at colleges affiliated to the Senate of Serampore.\(^\text{13}\) In 1991 the Senate of Serampore in India made three papers or modules compulsory for students which included an introduction

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to communication and media studies; a course in skill development in journalism and other media skills and also a media awareness (theoretical and practical) paper. Tamilnadu Theological Seminary (TTS) in Madurai was one of the pioneer institutions in developing communication studies. It started an MTh program in communication studies in 1988 with a focus on alternative communications and development communication. Gurukul Lutheran Theological College in Chennai followed with similar programmes in 1995 and research programmes in Communication Studies around 1999. The United Theological College in Bangalore began its MTh programme in Communications in 1996 and a doctoral programme in 2000.

United Kingdom

The New College, Edinburgh was one of the pioneer theological institutions that established the media and theological education project with the funds from the Jerusalem Trust. The project provided a postgraduate degree in Theology and Ethics of Communication for the ministers and theologians across the world since 1991. The project along with the University of Edinburgh enabled many theological students to focus their research on communication and media studies and helped many theological colleges to develop faculty in this specialised area of study. With a special scholarship from WARC this centre in Edinburgh enabled many theological teachers from developing countries to focus on communication and media studies and return back to their countries to teach in the seminars this area. This centre has contributed to many theological colleges by identifying and developing scholars from around the world in the field of communication and theology.

United States

Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena focussed on cross-cultural communication as part of their mission training. Charles Kraft and Vigo Sogaard are the pioneers in promoting the media and communication studies at Fuller. In the University of Colorado at Boulder, the Center for Media, Religion and Culture has contributed enormously to this interaction between theology and media. This centre’s research and publications have contributed enormously to develop specialised areas of research and methodologies in the field of communication. Specially content analysis, audience research and cross cultural readings are a

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14 There is a Syllabus for Communication studies Com 1 titled “Introduction to Communication and Media Studies” in the BD program of the Senate of Serampore Seminaries which distinguishes four thematic areas: 1. Understanding Communication process (Definitions, Models, Types of and Barriers to Communication); 2. Issues in Communication (History of Mass Media, Type of Media, Functions of Media), 3. Christian Communication Practice and Principles (Communicating Faith; Christian Principles of Communication, Theology of Communication, Jesus’ Model of Communication), 4. Communication and Kingdom Values (Promoting community values, Koinonia and ecumenical networking, Justice, truth-telling and reconciliation in the practice of media).

15 www.div.ed.ac.uk/projectstory_1.html.


17 www.colorado.edu/journalism/cmrc.

18 The following is taken from their website to highlight their contribution to the interaction between religion and media: “The Centre’s conference and seminar series has placed it at the centre of global discourses about relations between religion and the media. Prior to the founding of the centre, faculty at the University of Colorado hosted the first international public Conference on Media, Religion, and Culture in 1996 (the second in a series that began with an invitational meeting in Uppsala, Sweden, in 1994). Since its founding, the Center has held invitational meetings on religion journalism, and public conferences on Fundamentalism and the Media (in October, 2006) and Media, Spiritualities, and Social Change (in June, 2008). And Islam and the Media (January, 2010). Studies have addressed questions of family identity, digital media, consumer culture and the marketplace, youth culture, parenting, schooling, and faith-related education and formation, all in relation to the emerging and growing significance of media culture. This research began a new phase in summer, 2006, focusing on issues of gender, work, career, ideas of vocation and civic engagement, again in relation to religion, spirituality, and media”. www.colorado.edu/journalism/cmrc/about.html.
few methods that were borrowed from different sociological, psychological and cultural fields and thus were introduced in this new area of religion and media. This has helped theological students to use these methods to identify and discover how meanings of faith are shared, distributed and challenged in different spheres of communication.

**Ecumenical Associations that Promote Media and Communication Studies in Theological Education**

*World Association for Christian Communication*  
It has been mentioned already that following earlier cooperative networks of Christian broadcasters in the 1950s and the formation of a World Association for Christian Broadcasting in Kenya 1963 in 1968 this group was merged with the Coordinating Committee for Christian Broadcasting in Oslo to form the World Association for Christian Communication. WACC calls itself an international professional organisation that promotes communication rights for social change. In 1975 the Agency for Christian Literature Development (ACLD), a programme of the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism (CWME) was merged with WACC in order, according to its new constitution “to make more effective their common witness through the media of mass communication”. WACC has a membership of some 1000 personal and corporate members (mainly media related) in 100 countries.

The World Association has clearly stated their principles as:

- communication creates community
- communication is participatory
- communication liberates
- communication supports and develops cultures
- communication is prophetic.

WACC has developed a number of documents and Christian principles for media practices and communication methods in mission which have widely been used around the world. To some extent, though WACC claims to be ecumenical its mission has become secular and focuses mainly on human rights issues and marginalised communities, thus becoming more like a non-governmental organisation. Some of the evangelical organisations who focus more intentionally on sharing the gospel through different media do not often associate with WACC. Here we face an ongoing division between evangelical and ecumenical media associations and institutions which to some extent hinders mutual sharing, learning and correcting. But WACC’s contribution to theological education has been and still is enormous. WACC provided scholarship to many theological educators to pursue research in the field of communication and also supported them to develop departments of communication in their institutions. Having moved beyond a conventional understanding of communication aimed at propagating the gospel towards a wider concept which includes cooperating with wider communities in bringing about awareness (such as gender awareness in the media) and development (community media) has brought about new paradigms in theological education which were not available before and which are particularly relevant to Asian, African and South American contexts. There is also a significant WACC contribution for developed countries in

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terms of raising interest in the field of communication and media studies which has resulted in the development of a number of centres for theology and communication.

*Association of Christian Broadcasters in South Africa*\(^{22}\)

There have been also some evangelical media associations emerging parallel to WACC. One such association is the Association of Christian Broadcasters (ACB) in South Africa. ACB is an “organisation consisting of evangelical individuals concerned for the spreading of the gospel of Jesus Christ, which have come together for the sake of promoting and improving Christian broadcasting and more effectively ministering to the spiritual welfare of the nations.”\(^{23}\) Eighty participants from various organisations and churches from Africa attended for a conference at the Lutheran Conference Centre at Kempton Park 1994 and gave the form for the ACB movement. One of the main objectives of this network is to provide an organisation for the interests of Christian broadcasting in promoting and strengthening the spread of the gospel of Jesus Christ through electronic media. In this way ACB has been operating as a platform for those who have used media for evangelizing purposes. They too provided training to their own theological students, ministers and missionaries across South Africa though there was no systematic curriculum for communication studies developed for such training.

*SIGNIS (World Catholic Association for Communication)*\(^{24}\)

The World Catholic Association for Communication – SIGNIS (Association Mundial para la Communicacion) – was created in November 2001 resulting from the merger of UNDA (International Catholic Association for Radio and Television) and OCIC (International Catholic Organization for Cinema and Audiovisuals), both founded in 1928. Both had similar objectives: to bring together Catholics already working as professionals in the media (OCIC in the field of cinemas and UNDA in radio and television). Catholics saw the opportunities offered by mass media to present their views and opinions on life and the world and thus they became involved in promoting Christian education and values. As a church organization SIGNIS attempts to develop a theological perspective on its actions and to encourage theological reflection on communication. Their Theology and Communication programme is essentially aimed at *research, information and training* in collaboration with Catholic Universities in different parts of the world.

SIGNIS and the Commission for Social Communication in the Catholic Church have worked closely together in promoting various centres within and outside theological colleges for Christian Communication and for the production, distribution and set up of various media programmes around the world.

**Media, Communication and Theological Education: Needs and Realities**

*Communication Studies:*

Communication studies have emerged with various theories and models for interpersonal, group, cultural and mass communication which are applied to various areas of theological education. In reviewing existing literature on the topic Paul Soukup\(^{25}\) has highlighted four main areas that bridge media/communication and theology. There is a first area which deals with the attitude of the Christians and churches towards communication media. A second area is related to ethical issues that arises out of the interaction between media and its audiences. A third area is concerned about the use of media and communication methods for

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\(^{22}\) www.acb.org.za.

\(^{23}\) www.acb.org.za.


various purposes including propagation and advocacy. A fourth area is related to the way religious self understanding is being shaped by the communication media. For integrating communication studies into theological education new areas have emerged such as theology of communication, Christian principles of communication, Cross cultural communication and mission, Development Communication, Communication Ethics, Media Literacy and Tele-evangelism.

Jürgen Habermas has highlighted the importance of challenging the shrinking public sphere due to the privatisation and profit motives of the media industries. In this sense communication studies in theological education should not merely focus on the use of different media and communication types and ethical concerns on their impact but should open itself other to wider issues such as the implications of the changes in the communication processes and media technologies for theological understanding itself. Communication studies are relevant and meaningful for the ministerial formation and for theological education also in the sense of developing alternative media for the purposes of development, advocacy and participation of communities.

**Media Literacy**

Media Literacy or media education has become a key word and new discipline particularly for contributing to the shaping of responsible citizenship in a country. This has been emphasized in countries like Australia, the U.K., New Zealand and has found support also in South Asian countries like the Philippines, Sri Lanka and India. The need for media education is now widely recognized, particularly also the concern to bring media education to the people in local contexts and school education where this issue really matters. Theological Colleges in Asia and in South America are involved in programmes where teachers from various schools alongside the ministry students are given media awareness training for one or two days so that they in turn might bring a better media awareness amongst the school children.

The aims of these courses are to conscientize school students and to enable them to read the media and to grow into media responsible individuals. Courses on media education have been made part of the curriculum of schools in India so that the school takes responsibility to provide media education with active support from theological institutions such as United Theological College, Bangalore. Becoming aware of new media languages, overcoming media illiteracy and becoming aware of manipulations by the media is crucial for enabling school students to develop a proper use of the media in a creative, critical and distinctive manner.

Media Education thus can be seen as a deliberate attempt to enable an informed, critical understanding of the mass media. It involves examining the techniques, technologies and institutions involved in media production; being able to critically analyze media messages; and recognizing the role audiences play in making meaning from those messages. Media education seeks to empower citizens and to transform their

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27 Joshva Raja and Jerry Kurien, Media Education (Delhi: ISPCK, 2006).


29 www.media awareness.ca/english/teachers/media_literacy/what_is_media_literacy.cfm.

passive relationship to media into an active, critical engagement – capable of challenging the traditions and structures of a privatized, commercial media culture, and finding new avenues of citizen speech and discourse. Media educators follow eight key concepts and principles. These concepts provide an effective foundation for examining mass media and popular culture.

**Impact of communication studies on pastoral ministries**

The introduction of communication studies has made a huge impact on ministerial training in theological seminaries. The theologians and ministers began to develop their own communication skills including journalism, web-oriented programmes (blogs, YouTube) and in using audio and visuals for their sermons and worship services. Many of the church magazines became community-centred media in which issues such as ecology, HIV/AIDS and conflicts were reported and discussed. Many churches began to develop church magazines using different media and also serving wider communities through alternative media (alternative to mass media). Some of the communication methods were also applied to different theological disciplines in their research such as audiences’ response in studying the biblical text (similar to reader’s response criticism), cross-cultural hermeneutics, content analysis of the religious films and also the study of the effects of media on the lives, worldviews and faiths of the people. Churches began to develop departments of communication work and also audio-visual studios in some places. Church leaders appointed proper public relations officers to issue news releases and press reports. Churches thus began to engage creatively with different media that were used by people besides regular communication.

**Media studies and Challenges for Theological Education**

To summarize some of the implications for theological education, it should be emphasized first and foremost that every theological institution has to take the globalization of media very seriously because through the new ways of intercultural and international communication, people’s attitudes, beliefs, worldviews and to some extent their behavior is deeply shaped, influenced, and at times controlled via global media. Global media provide a wide spectrum of meanings and values often related to neo-liberal values and orientations. The new forms of a global visual culture provide also have a certain impact on new methods of hermeneutics on various texts including Biblical texts.

As disengagement from the new global arena of media is no option for the churches, the priority is about engaging with media and communication with a critical mind and countering with abilities of critical media responsibility. That is why theological education has to incorporate not only communication skills training for pastors but should also include media literacy and a critical and ecumenically oriented theology of communication. A second vital issue for theological education is a serious study of the ethical questions of the impact of global media on people in which questions like freedom of expression, the questionable neo-liberal policy of self-regulation of media content which is proposed by big media corporations and the media-induced spread of all types of obscene content, misrepresentations of realities and distorted information should be discussed. Most of the global media are organized by corporate industries which reduce the public space into a private majority’s space in which ways of representing realities are often compromised for the sake of the majority’s security or emotional feelings. Theological Education should focus on study of the visual, text-based, and audio texts and see to what extent they really serve the life interests of communities.


Part I: Theological Education in Global Context: Issues and Themes
Theological education in the perspective of communication studies also needs to consider how to change the ways in which learning takes place within the campus. First of all theological education should not be limited to a few selected ministerial candidates alone. It should be available to all – lay and priests. Today theological colleges in India, and in a few other countries, retain campus based education for the theological students. This five star theological education system does not encourage the students to go to villages to serve as pastors; rather it encourages them to try for the city churches.

Now technology has enabled us to take theological education to anyone who wants to study – provide accessibility of modern means and technologies of communication is provided. Distance education courses should be offered to any religious person who wants to study theology at a higher level. Not many theological colleges in India have yet explored using internet or any other media (cable channels) for educating lay Christians and others who want to study theology online. Education should also involve visual based teaching such as using powerpoint presentations and video clips to illustrate a particular theme.

Networking across continents has become much easier than before through online technologies though many are yet to realise and access this reality of the global Internet. Thus theological education should no longer focus only on local theologies but should also reflect on theologies of other countries and engage critically reflecting on them as well. Very frequently students immerse themselves so fully into local theologies only that they do not develop a sufficient understanding of Christianity in other parts of the world and the ecumenical horizon. Certainly theological education should provide a solid introduction into local theologies which are relevant for a given context, but it is equally valid that if an Indian student of theology is interested in South American theologies that this should be encouraged as well. Such cross cultural engagement in theological learning is made more easily possible through modern media and communication networks today. Each local theological seminary can also make their materials for theological education available to other seminaries through the internet.

Communication processes today have become more interactive with the new technologies available while the old mass media structure was more according to a ‘one way model’ of communication. Theological education should adapt to these new possibilities and make best use of the technological means to present a multiplicity of meanings and to enable students to choose, critique and select and apply the relevant meanings, beliefs and views for their contexts. The learning process itself should become more interactive with teachers more trying to bring out the meanings from the students and learning together with them rather than imposing the learnt meanings of others onto them. This will enable both teachers and students to critique the way globalized media usually operates. Without trying to change our own ways of teaching and learning how can one credibly criticise the globalization of the media? Challenging the ways in which media today operates undemocratically means to raise the critical issues again which years ago were aptly described in demanding and proposing a New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO). Theological education should contribute to bringing the NWICO momentum back to the international stage by cooperating and coordinating ecumenically with other churches and NGOs.

Theological education finally also is relevant for democratising our own communication systems in Christian media and church structures so that the voices of many can be heard. Some communication practices of churches, communities and agencies should be challenged and encouraged to be democratised so that the voice of the voiceless can be heard in public.

Theological education thus also will be concerned about the serious trends of a general decay of the culture of intellectual discourse in the public because of commercial pressures on the educational and media institutions. There are not too many people who would critically engage in the public with multinational corporations or global bodies. Theological education should strengthen critical research on

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neo-liberal ideologies and their impact on nation-states and people’s lives in order not to be simply blamed as bad but to be intellectually countered and overcome by alternative paradigms.

In conclusion one may agree with McLuhan in saying that we live in a global village where the globalization of the media is the reality of the day. Internationalisation of the media has made a huge impact on the lives of people around the globe. This process raises a number of questions for theological education both intellectually and practically. By engaging critically and by encountering the reality in and through the global space theological education may point to new ways of engaging in mission, ministry and education for the churches. By allowing ourselves to be changed, and by going out to face the reality of the world as it is, theological training – related and in cooperation with communication and media studies – will again become relevant to the churches today. It is essential that theological institutions who have not implemented communication studies as part of their training need to consider seriously bridging the gap between churches and communities; theological educators and lay people and also Christian communities and other religious communities. If communication studies are included as a field of study then ministers will rediscover new ways of communicating to people in order to encouraging them to creatively communicate with each other and thus witness the gospel among themselves and with others effectively.

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SPIRITUAL FORMATION IN THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

SPIRITUAL FORMATION IN PROTESTANT THEOLOGICAL INSTITUTIONS

Marilyn Naidoo

Introduction

In the early centuries of the Christian church the main focus of a priest’s education was on spiritual matters or character formation. As Carl Volz observes, “what appears unique to the earlier times of the church … is the high valuation placed upon character, rather than skills of the pastor.”¹ John Chrysostom (347–407) warns against using the spiritual disciplines as a pious escape from the duties of the pastoral office; but the warning given as a corrective does not disguise the fact that the early church fathers and mothers were concerned that persons not take on the clerical office if they “lacked the necessary spiritual maturity even though they may possess knowledge and skills. On balance the primary qualification for ordination in antiquity was to possess the desire for God”.²

The dominant structure of many seminaries, however, favours academic instruction with some practical exposure and compartmentalises the spiritual with spiritual formation happening implicitly, informally and on a person basis. Effective integration of the three aspects has seldom been achieved.³ The common academic pattern drawn from the university model continues to be departmentalised with further specialisation within those departments. The reason for the fragmentation and isolation of disciplines has been a subject of concern in the literature for several years.⁴ The scholastic method further shaped by the Enlightenment has resulted in the study of theology becoming a science supporting the professionalisation of the ministry. Farley⁵ attributes this situation to the fragmentation of a formerly unified theology. Theology has diversified into practical ministry skills and an aggregate of disciplines which emphasises the cognitive over the spiritual.

For many years administrators and faculty have been searching for ways to integrate the theoretical and practical disciplines. In recent years, the question of how to include spiritual formation has been brought into the discussion. The main concerns⁶ that stimulated the need for spiritual formation in the seminary were (1) the lack of spiritual formation in the backgrounds of entering students; (2) the fact that students were searching for guidance to help them discern how the Spirit was working in their situation; (3) greater contact with other religious traditions that created a sharper awareness of spirituality; (4) a rediscovery of

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¹ Carl Volz,, “Seminaries: The Love of Learning or the Desire for God?” Dialog (28/2, Spring 1989) 104.
² Carl Volz,, “Seminaries: The Love of Learning or the Desire for God?” 104.
⁵ Farley, Theologia.
the Christian contemplative tradition; (5) the presence of women in formerly all-male student bodies and faculty added a new spirit to the theological school; (6) the social and political crisis that motivated a concern for the spiritual and (7) increasing concern over a fragmented curriculum with no integrating centre. Spiritual formation, it was felt, could provide that centre.

There has been much debate on the nature and place of spiritual formation in theological institutions. The largest body of literature available comes from the growing dissatisfaction with theological education from the 1970s onwards expressed by churches and increasingly the educators themselves. This has resulted in a new search for a greater emphasis on the spiritual formation of the student. This new interest in the subject is traceable in the Association of Theological Schools (ATS) North American seminary movement, the Roman Catholic Church, The World Council of Churches-affiliated colleges across the world and the Evangelical Accrediting Movement. Many of these reports and conference papers can be read in various editions of *Theological Education* and since they have not been widely acted on they form essential reading for today. Much of the literature on the subject of spiritual formation has to do with defining terminology and discussing the wisdom of trying to solve the problem at all.

The term “formation” has a rich history in the church. The word has often been narrowly associated with a structured way of shaping clergy to be spiritual and professional leaders. The Roman Catholic tradition has long focused on the formation of religious men and women and has a sacramental conception of ministry as priesthood. Formation takes places through the provision of programmes and resources organised around clear institutional goals. A good outline of the history can be found in John O’Malley’s article “Spiritual Formation for Ministry; Some Roman Catholic Traditions – their Past and Present.” The most recent document is the apostolic exhortation of 1992 *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, which highlights the priest’s fundamental relationship to Jesus Christ and with the church. The exhortation affirms that the mission of the seminary embraces four key dimensions of formation: human, intellectual, spiritual and pastoral. The *Fourth Edition of the Program of Priestly Formation*, 1993 highlighted the need for a new emphasis on priestly identity with the insistence that the priesthood is unique in the church and therefore ought to have its own specialised programmes of learning and formation.

In Protestant theological institutions formation is more likely to be pursued through individual faculty contributions and extracurricular activities. The language of formation used means spiritual and human formation, though Protestants rarely speak explicitly of human formation. They usually speak of

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8 Through the early 1970s and into the 1980s, various conferences were convened to study spiritual formation: David E Babin et al., *Voyage, Vision, Venture: A Report* (Dayton, Ohio: American Association of Theological Schools, 1972); Tilden Edwards (1980); Samuel Amirtham (“Spiritual Formation in Theological Education: An invitation to Participate,” *Programme on Theological Education* (World Council of Churches, Report and Study paper, Geneva, 1987); see Liefeld and Cannell (1992) for a discussion on the various studies done in Protestant seminaries in the US.
formation in ways that centre in spirituality, but are understood expansively rather than narrowly. Thus Protestant seminaries may use the language of (spiritual) formation to include broadly what Catholic seminaries address separately as human formation.

In the average Protestant theological institution, there is a resurgence of attention to formation in its theological curriculum but how to meet that need is still a matter of debate. Disputed issues include the theological and educational status of the field of spiritual formation, the relationship between spiritual formation and other aspects of ministerial education and the form that spiritual formation might take within a programme of studies.14

This essay explores spiritual formation as a point of focus in ministerial education. Because a certain type of person is needed to be trained for church leadership with a particular spiritual aptitude or maturity, theological institutions have a responsibility to engage students in reflecting on the spiritual life, to provide opportunities for students to deepen their spiritual journeys and to develop in students the spiritual maturity that is required of future church leaders. Were this practice to be intentional, it would ensure that students have actually progressed in terms of their understanding and experience of God and it would lend itself to the development of spiritual and moral leadership; leaders who are committed, people of integrity and competent, which is greatly needed in our time. This essay will discuss broadly the need, the challenges and the relevance of spiritual formation and how it fits into Protestant theological education.

The Work of Spiritual Formation

Spiritual formation is a lifelong process of becoming, of being formed and developed in the likeness of Christ.15 It is personal and relational formation which seeks to promote encounter and cooperation with God and society as a whole. Johnson relates the concepts of spiritual formation to transformation, which for her means “the formation of Christian character implies transformations of character.”16 Formation and transformation, processes and turning points, are woven together in the lifelong process of conversion, of becoming Christian, and shaping Christian character.

From a review of the literature it would seem that many definitions of spiritual formation abound; however, one that is helpful to this discussion is a World Council of Churches publication that defines spiritual formation as “the intentional processes by which the marks of an authentic Christian spirituality are formed and integrated”.17 In this definition certain processes are discussed that allude to the processes of spiritual development and, for Christian spirituality to be authentic, it must be integrated into the lives of the students and so be observable, whether that be in the classroom, church or society.

People are constantly in a process of formation, in families, in congregations, in faith traditions and through society at large. In this essay, the focus is limited to theological formation, the “spiritual shaping” of students over a period of time spent at a theological institution. Formation encompasses a wide range of competencies and traits. It includes “conversion of mind and heart, fostering integrative thinking, character

15 Gal 4:19; Col. 1:28; Rom 12:2.
formation, promoting authentic discipleship, personal appropriation of faith and knowledge, and cultivating a spirituality of the intellectual life.”

Spiritual formation is the never-ending inner work of the Spirit that is needed to form theological students into people with the appropriate blend of qualities which will enable them to work effectively in their communities.

It is essential to note the formation of ministerial identity in the conceptualisation of spiritual formation. For some it boils down pragmatically to learning what a minister should do; it is a formulaic approach to ministry. Urban T Holmes argues a position when he claims that a priest is first of all a spiritual person. His concept underscores the “apartness” of the priest and contrasts the function of that apartness to professionalisation. The identity of the minister is not the external trappings and privileges of the office but the profound sense of identity that comes from conforming oneself as a servant of the gospel; subjecting one’s preference to gospel norms.

A minister formed without recognising the need for an integrated ministerial identity is more likely to succumb to the temptation to approach ministry as just another job, rather than something that calls upon all of who he or she is.

Professional identity, competence and integrity should function as a lens or framework through which students appropriate the knowledge, skills and spirituality associated with the work of the profession. However, it also becomes increasingly difficult to shape such a personal identity, as church and faith are less and less evident in our society and the traditional landmarks of clergy, tradition and roles are no longer self-evident.

Challenges to the Practice of Spiritual Formation

It is important to acknowledge that not everyone is convinced about the central role of spiritual formation or its place in theological education. As Charles Foster notes, there are three categories of objections to notions of formation:

a) An implication that students are “passive and more or less infinitely malleable, plastic to the will or power of some superior shaping force”

b) A concern about “spiritual formation” and who is responsible for this in seminary education including questions of hierarchy, potential abuses of power, competency and training

c) An assumption that a “preordained pattern” or “form” exists to which the most diverse human sensibilities and personalities must somehow be “conformed”

Other challenges are that in many Protestant institutions there is still little impetus for adopting an emphasis on spiritual formation that educators feel is difficult to quantify and almost impossible to programme effectively. Also, institutional and curricular forms do not easily accommodate the mysteries of the Christian faith, for example Hinson, in *Spiritual Preparation for Christian Leadership*, states that institutionalising spiritual development within the training of Reformed clergy excessively focused on “methods and techniques that imply a works salvation” which could misconstrue spiritual formation to mean some attempt to find a secret guarantee of salvation. Furthermore, criticisms include the relative neglect of social justice teachings; insensitivity in the areas of racism, sexism, and so forth, and the

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18 Patricia A Lamoureux, An Integrated Approach to Theological Education, *Theological Education* (36/1, 1999), 142.
22 Frederick Reisz, Assessing Spiritual Formation in Christian Seminary Communities, 30, see also John Harris, Assessment of Ministry Preparation to Increase Understanding, *Theological Education*, 39/2 (2003), 127, difficult to develop criterion to measure spiritual and human growth, sees assessment as multifaceted and understood as “leaves in the wind.”
separation of spiritual formation programmes from the rest of the curriculum. Faculty also feel they are not rewarded academically for modelling spirituality; educators feel that if they spend too much time being spiritual mentors, they could suffer academically and their career progress might be jeopardised.24 There are also concerns of how to reconcile formation as a corporate term with the functional, individualistic cast of theological curricula and outcomes. Attempting formation in an intercultural community25 has its challenges of ethnocentrism, and prejudice and formation processes must take the personal and contextual into account with equal seriousness.

The most pressing challenge affecting the practice of spiritual formation is the consensus of contemporary literature that theological education is in crisis26 The analysis of the problem is that theological institutions have failed to produce the desired product, a skilled leader, or that the purpose of theology is not understood27 and therefore the theological curriculum is in disarray with minimal integration among the disciplines and a tendency to functionalism.28 Whether the purpose of theological education is understood as the nature of theology, the church, Christian witness or professional ministry, whatever advantages each approach has it still presents only a limited perspective on theological education. The reform of theological education as integrated education will require that the whole faculty address together the conceptual problem of what pieces of study and action might reconstitute theologias, the deep formative understanding of God. Clearly, the purpose of theological education that is foremost in a theological institution will shape the nature and content of the curriculum and have implications for the practice of spiritual formation within its educational structure.

The Need for Spiritual Formation

Interest in spiritual formation has grown in recent years; the most obvious need for formation is the preparation and shaping of future church leaders. An essential capacity of church leadership and its most distinctive is facility with the spiritual dimension of human life and experience. Church leaders are routinely expected to exercise this capacity in ordinary actions and rituals: teaching, preaching, leading liturgy and even conversing. In dealing with people’s questions, fears and hopes about the ultimate meaning of their lives and experiences, church leaders require sensitivity and skill. They must sense which aspects of their religious tradition might best provide resources for healing or liberating; they must know how to be prophetic in given situations and how to frame appropriate responses for changing situations and circumstances in congregations and communities. How are church leaders prepared to exercise this capacity? Theological students need to become aware that ministry in the form of ministerial leadership is

27 The literature presents various perspectives as to the purpose of theological education: nature and reform of theology to restore the unity of theology (Farley 1983); the mission and purpose of the church (Hough and Cobb 1985); the development of vision and discernment in theology (Wood 1985); professional image of ministry (Glasse 1988); pluralism and globalization facing church leaders (Stackhouse 1988); the nature of Christian witness (Kelsey 1992) and the missional model (Banks 1999).
28 Farley’s Theologia (1983: 29-124) argues that the standard theological curriculum is a haphazard collection of studies handed down from earlier periods and now entrenched in separate academic guilds. The pieces cannot be fit together from any vantage point because the disciplines we have now were never part of the larger whole in the first place. What once held theological study together has been lost, that is theologias (a sapiential knowledge of God which disposes the knower to God and deeply informs the knower for Christian life and ministry). Theology as “habitus of wisdom” has shifted to “clerical paradigm.”
a public not a private role, and consequently students must attune to the issue of behaviour and the accountability required of those who enjoy the community’s trust. One might identify a number of relatively distinct needs in this connection. Ministers and those in similar positions of leadership need to know themselves well. Leadership in general is full of temptations. The professional roles occupied by such church leaders in our society give ample opportunity for various kinds of abuse. 29

Self-deception, as well as the deception of others, is an easy and attractive feature of religious leadership. Misuse of time and resources, manipulation of others by means of one’s professional knowledge and power and other forms of depravity are possible. These are also often subtly encouraged by the social arrangements in which leaders find themselves and the psychological dynamics of the situation. 30

There will also be particular demands on the leader’s spirituality. As teachers of the tradition, leaders are expected to know whereof they speak, and this demands some sort of internalisation of the tradition and competence in living out of its resources. If they are to provide leadership to congregations and individuals under all sorts of conditions, they must understand human behaviour in health and adversity. This requires some degree of psychological, anthropological and sociological understanding, as well as a theological grasp of the human condition before God. 31

It also requires insight and penetration and a multitude of other personal qualities, which finally rest upon one’s self-knowledge and on the character of one’s spiritual life. Students preparing for such work must be well acquainted with their own strengths and weaknesses when faced by such challenges, and with the opportunities that this affords for genuine and effective service. In these and other ways, the responsibilities of church leadership call for a particular sort of spiritual maturity.

The growing interest in spiritual formation points to other needs within the theological institution. In recent years even denominational theological institutions can no longer guarantee that new students are already being formed within a particular religious tradition or culture. 32 The dislocation of traditional family life and the decline in church participation among many young people, particularly in mainline denominations, has resulted in many students having little or no sense of the history, customs and ethos of the religious communities they feel called to serve and lead. Theological schools are thus being forced to take some increasing responsibility for the personal and spiritual development of the student it is preparing for public ministry. This concern is related to reports that interpersonal and relational deficits are associated with the vast majority of psychological and spiritual problems faced by pastors. 33

The changing demographics of student bodies highlight the important need for spiritual formation. Many candidates for ministry are older students, who bring a potential for increasing maturity and the possibility of a longer, more complex web of personal experiences and psychological baggage. These students also bring with them some of the marks of current culture: unstable broken families, experimentation with alcohol, drugs and sexuality; the strengths and weaknesses of living in a materialistic, competitive and highly individualistic culture and so on. These facts have been documented in a number of recent studies. 34

Spiritual formation is more urgent than it used to be because of the growing awareness of professional misconduct by some clergy. Many people in churches hold theological institutions at least in part responsible for such scandalous failures. They demand that institutions do a better job of screening clergy

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34 Study of Roman Catholic seminaries by Hemrick and Walsh (1993); broad study of Protestant, Orthodox and Catholic seminaries by Larsen and Shopshire (1988).
candidates and give more priority to the teaching of ethical values in their curricula. Such criticisms raise the issue of standards for admission and readiness for ministry. Member schools of the Association of Theology Schools (ATS), for example, have been sued over the misconduct of their graduates.35

Spiritual Formation within the Theological Institution

It is pertinent here to ask the question: what is the role of spiritual formation in education for church leadership? Firstly, a Christian leader should be well formed in the capacities and outlook belonging to the tradition with a certain kind of spiritual aptitude as discussed above. Secondly, a leader should be well formed in the tradition by developing an aptitude for theology, becoming a competent participant in theological inquiry,36 that is, one must know the key concepts of the tradition, for example God, grace, sin, creation and so forth. There is also a sense in which theological education is requisite to spiritual formation.37 To be willing and able to trust in God more than in one’s own beliefs about God and to see theology as a means to ongoing repentance and renewal is to have grasped something of its spiritual significance. This process of acquiring theological aptitude is one factor in the process of growth toward spiritual maturity. Correspondingly, one is unlikely to develop and sustain an aptitude for theological reflection if one has not developed the spiritual resources that make it possible to live with and even welcome the challenges it brings. Theological education, however, should not become solely spiritual formation either. It involves spiritual formation but, in order to develop a mature faith, this must include a critical re-evaluation of belief. For Lindbeck, the most crucial to the overall function of leadership is the student’s capacity to think with and on behalf of the tradition.38 He suggests that a student who is simply indoctrinated into the tradition and who appropriates it uncritically is probably a poor candidate for a position of genuine leadership. At the same time, a leader who is not well formed in the tradition is likely to be ineffective no matter what abilities for critical reflection she or he may possess. What is needed then is a combination of thorough internalisation and critical perspective which may be best produced by developing a closer partnership between institutions of theology and churches.

It is important for those engaged in creating formative experiences within the theological institution to think critically and reflectively about the intent, the structure and the content of formation.39 Considering the increasing pluralism, the inter-confessional and the intercultural mix, theological institutions need to ask what goals should orient the practice of theological education and what shape their practice should take. Some institutions stress theological education with the intent to develop students’ aptitude for theological inquiry, whatever the students’ vocational aims may be, while other institutions stress theological education with the aim of preparing leaders for the church. This second sense is the focus of this essay and therefore theological education will be coordinated with other sorts of education that pertain to qualification for church leadership. The more ecumenical a theological institution is, the more difficult it is to define spiritual formation.40 To take all perspectives seriously requires openness to different approaches to and meanings of Christian spirituality and how to achieve it. In denominational institutions, notions of spiritual formation vary widely from discipleship to inculturation into a particular liturgical or confessional tradition. Other institutions are church-based and conduct spiritual formation for their students.

35 Donald Senior and T Weber, What is the Character of Curriculum, Formation and Cultivation of Ministerial Leadership in the Good Theological School? 32.
36 Charles, M Wood, Vision and Discernment.
37 Charles, M Wood, Vision and Discernment.
38 George Lindbeck, “Spiritual Formation and Theological Education.”
on behalf of the church as a part of the students’ ongoing Christian education. Some institutions are a combination of these various features and are pulled in various directions.

Theological institutions then need to specify what they mean by the term “spiritual formation” and how it fits into their own distinctive mission. To stipulate what role spiritual formation should play in a theological institution would require an understanding of what constitutes a theological school and of what belongs to its mission. For instance, it was found through an investigation of spiritual formation in evangelical Protestant theological institutions in South Africa\(^\text{41}\) that there was generally a lack of clarity about institutional goals which negatively influenced the practice of formation. Many theological institutions were frustrated in their efforts to develop a plan for spiritual formation within their theological offerings because of a lack of consensus on the goal and means of this formation.

How spiritual formation is structured in theological institutions involves using different methods which are not methodological in the sense that they “produce” the type of spirituality one desires or effectively guarantee certain “results” which afterwards can be measured like intellectual abilities. Taking into account the fact that each person already has a certain kind of spirituality, different methods of spiritual formation are conceived as helping each person to discover and be transformed to manifest the marks of true Christian spirituality. If a variety of means are not found through which spiritual formation of students can deliberately be pursued, it may not take place at all. These methods could include courses on spirituality, instruction in personal spiritual disciplines, counselling services, small group work, psychometric and psychological testing, classroom teaching, spiritual direction, personal mentoring and personal development interviews, devotional worship services and fieldwork exposures or in-service training. For example, in the classroom spiritual formation will not be the explicit agenda of many of the courses because it is approached more easily indirectly than directly. But in certain ways even the predominant mood, the learning climate and the relationship between teachers and students contribute to the overall spiritual formation process and can have deep consequences for personal and communal spirituality.

Important for spiritual learning is a participatory learning style which allows the direct and full involvement of students in the learning process.\(^\text{42}\) This expanded notion of theological teaching assumes that teachers have received formal training in pedagogical methods. So how teachers teach may be just as crucial in the formative process as what they teach.\(^\text{43}\) The quality, style and personal values of a good faculty must actively support the kind of curriculum and spiritual formation that the theological institution envisions for itself. Much of the legitimate criticism of theological institutions’ spiritual aridity will be dissipated when educators can become intentional about creating “safe spaces” to help students explore issues of their own faith formation and spiritual lives in tandem with their academic work.\(^\text{44}\) At the same time the curriculum should be understood not as an accumulation of courses but as an overall process of critical reflection and integration\(^\text{45}\) and calls for a common understanding of the purpose of theological education among the various disciplines and departments. Attention should be given also to the hidden curriculum\(^\text{46}\) which affects trust and mistrust and openness or closeness in a classroom community.

When naming the content of spiritual formation it is important that formative practices must be multilayered and must provide ways to develop and integrate the multiple aspects of ministerial identity. The social location of the individual and community in which ministry is engaged informs the development

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\(^\text{41}\) M Naidoo, “An Investigation into Spiritual Formation Programmes at selected theological institutions in Kwa-Zulu Natal” (DTh thesis, University of Zululand, 2005).


\(^\text{43}\) Susanne Johnson, Christian Spiritual Formation in the Church and Classroom, 135.

\(^\text{44}\) Fredrick Reisz, Assessing Spiritual Formation in Christian Seminary Communities, 30

\(^\text{45}\) Patricia A Lamoureux, An Integrated Approach to Theological Education, 143.

of concrete formative experiences; attention to context is essential\textsuperscript{47} because human beings and the very nature of the church and Christian leadership is ever evolving.

Those engaged in crafting formative practices for Christian leadership need to invite students, religious leaders, parishioners and others into the reflective practice of pondering how theology informs their notions of spirituality and professional identity.\textsuperscript{48} Moving too quickly over the theological commitments of particular communities of faith and denominations can result in missing some of the nuances and differences that make for a richer vision of religious leadership. Theological educators should also be encouraging the development of lifelong formative practices that acknowledge the ever-unfolding process of formation. Formation cannot be accomplished in either formal or informal theological education alone but must be part of the broader landscape of practices that help craft a Christian leader’s sense of vocation, awareness of God and theological conviction.

**Conclusion**

The success or failure of a theological institution ought to be measured by how well the interrelation of beliefs and practices is articulated, forming students to see their study, prayer and service as a complex, integrated whole. It ought to include constructive “formative” experiences that open up the tradition to students in ways they have not previously attained. This requires particular gifts on the part of faculty and particular insights about teaching and learning and an environment conducive to spiritual formation. When different methods for cultivating spirituality are aligned in an intentional way, the effect will be powerful. Spiritual formation in this case is not simply a goal among others, but a permeation of all educational goals.

**Bibliography**


\textsuperscript{47} See Victor J. Klimoski and others, *Educating Leaders for Ministry: Issues and Responses* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 2005) highlighting four aspects of formation in theological education including one’s heritage (e.g. race, age, religion), socio-cultural background (e.g. economic status), educational background (e.g. natural abilities, learning styles), and ecclesial understanding (e.g. recent convert, theological perspective).

\textsuperscript{48} Joretta Marshall, *Formative Practice: Intent, Structure and Content*, 70.


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The nature and function of theological education continues to foster an animated and fruitful debate that encroaches on the topic of spiritual formation in theological education. The purpose of theological education, we are told, ranges from the study of the knowledge of God, to a very practical reflection on our intersecting the justice of God in a fallen world. The questions have focused on identifying the core of theological education. Should the core of theological education be the pursuit of sapiential knowledge of God? Is theological education primarily a theoretical reflection upon the praxis of ministry? Does theological education exist principally for the professional development of church leaders? Should spiritual and character formation be a natural outcome of theological education? Or, does it impede the pursuit of sapiential knowledge of the divine? Should theological education be chiefly concerned with how the servants of God intersect the experiences of others in relation to justice and God’s mission on earth?

Several reviewers of theological education (especially Kelsey and Banks) have proposed an eclectic approach and would affirm most of the above. For the sake of economy, this paper is based on an eclectic approach, like that of Robert Banks who proposed four functions of theological education; classical (the pursuit of divine knowledge), vocational (professional or clergy development and certification), confessional (serving the practices of the church), and missional (theological education which includes the perspective of what God is doing in the world).

Regarding the topic of spiritual formation in theological education, this writer appeals to the observation made by Linda Cannell:

Spirituality grounded in experiences of faith in relation to the event of the gospel, and buttressed by ongoing efforts to understand, is the best out-working of the human desire to know God. We can accept … that rational theology is in some way subordinate to spirituality, but we also need to accept that spirituality is undone without efforts of reasoned understanding.¹

This discussion is worthy of greater elaboration, but suffice to say: sooner or later, the pursuit of theological studies must be grounded in some practical outworking. Surely, the acquisition of more knowledge about God is, by itself, an inadequate outcome for theological education. Knowledge about God should inspire love for God, and love for God, obedience to God. The very well known initial verses in chapter twelve in the epistle to the Romans also serve as a reminder to balance our goals when it comes to these pursuits:

Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God – this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will.²

¹ Linda Cannell, Theological Education Matters: Leadership Education for the Church (EDCOT Press, 2006), 92.
² Romans 12:1, 2 New International Version (UK).
The spiritual act of worship that the Apostle Paul refers to is the offering of our whole selves as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God. The King James Version uses the expression “your reasonable service”. The word in question is *logiken*, from which the word logic is also derived. The second verse also refers to a transformation that occurs through the renewing of our mind. Therefore, we see a link between acts of obedience and the renewing of our minds. Worship itself is reasonable, not simply rational, but also spiritual. This link is not merely implicit, because we cannot really have one without the other. In this way, neither can we imagine the pursuit of theological education without the pursuit of spiritual and character formation.

**Defining the Task of Spiritual Formation**

First, this writer needs to make a brief clarification about spiritual growth and character formation. Defining spirituality is itself no small matter. A brother from India recently reflected on the vast diversity amidst world faiths (and non-faiths) with respect to the pursuit of spirituality. K. John Amalraj wrote, “True spirituality is a live, continuous personal relationship with the Creator God that fulfills my deepest human longings for inward and outward peace and gives me meaning and purpose for everyday life.”

This simple definition works for this writer because it describes something that is living, related to the divine, effective in producing inward and outward peace and provides meaning and purpose in our daily lives. Spirituality is about all relationships: with God, with one’s self and with others. Though this paper focuses on spiritual formation in missionary training or theological education, the matter of character formation will also arise. These two are inseparable. A person who pursues spiritual growth will also discover areas of the character that are in need of transformation. In this writer’s mind, these are not synonymous, but closely related. As a student learns to love and obey God, she also discovers that she must love her neighbour, and that may imply the development of character qualities not previously valued, like generosity, graciousness towards others, self-sacrifice, etc. So, spiritual formation relates to one's relationship with the divine, but cannot be separated from one’s self in relation to others.

**Competencies, Outcomes and Spiritual Formation**

If we embrace spiritual formation as a core task of theological education, we can begin to ask questions regarding how to achieve this end. How does one actually go about helping others grow spiritually? The language around this question is necessarily awkward. Teaching spirituality is not a complicated matter. Linda Cannell reflects that seminaries, when challenged to produce spiritual growth merely add another course. The problem with teaching spirituality is that we all know how easy it is to endure teaching that produces little learning, and there is no greater challenge than to experience real learning when it comes to spiritual growth. After all, that which is hardest to measure (assess) is most likely also hardest to teach!

This discussion is also germane to the external pressures brought upon the academic community under the Bologna Accord. Around the world academic accrediting bodies are requiring educational institutions...

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to demonstrate the achievement of expressed competencies. There is already growing concern about this model approach to education on the grounds that it all too easily overlooks the affective domain, i.e., the spiritual and character formation of those who embrace the study of theology. Academia naturally resists addressing affective learning goals because these cannot be objectively measured. Yet, spiritual formation, if it is to be affirmed as a function of theological education, is an affective undertaking. It was Ted Ward who warned of potential complications:

Thinking of Job requirements and necessary competencies in terms of learning tasks, however, leads to several dangerous habits. First, it leads to presumption that skills and knowledge are the only sorts of qualifications that are important to establish qualifications. (What about character traits and moral judgment?) Second, it exalts the qualities of a person that can be assessed through objective testing. Testing objectively justifies a piecework mode of teaching that dehumanizes our development and growth process. (Is it enough to assess the stuff on information shelves and to come up with scores for the skills that a person possesses?) Third, it overlooks the human quality of interrelationship. A person is not simply the sum of what is remembered and what can be done with that information. (Does fragmented facts and catalogs of information add up to a fair representation of one’s personality, style, sensitivities, and being, a true assessment of the person?).

For this reason outcomes based education or curriculum emerged as an alternative phrase. Strikingly similar, yet more inclusive, outcomes easily embrace learning goals relating to spiritual or character formation. Competencies speak to us of measureable qualifications for certification. Outcomes are the ends, final results or learning commitments that serve to underpin the curriculum, and can include cognitive, skill related or affective learning goals. The language of outcomes based education is friendly to the three areas or types of learning common to theological education: cognitive (knowledge or understanding), psycho-motor (skills and abilities), and affective (spiritual and character formation).

**Intentionality and Generating Difficult Outcomes**

Whether the process is called competency based or outcomes based training is really not as significant as the question of methodological procedure. Though methodological procedure implies intentionality we will be surprised to discover that, in many institutions, not all outcomes are addressed intentionally and this is especially true when it comes to the affective domain. Spiritual and/or character qualities are normally expressed as desired outcomes of theological education. When institutions are asked to demonstrate where and how these outcomes are generated, vague references to times of worship or prayer are made. Educational theorists warn us that Affective outcomes are not easily generated in the context of formal education. When Allen Thomas talks about conversion, perspective transformation, or paradigm shifts, he states these “are likely to occur only in the learning domain.” That his reference to the “learning domain” is synonymous with informal education can be seen in that he also states “… so much learning in this domain does not take place as the result of explicit teaching,” and “learning that results from teaching has predetermined, and usually socially acceptable, goals, whereas learning that results from collective action is unpredictable and continually challenges the status quo.”

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8 Ibid., 96.
9 Ibid., 96.
Spiritual Formation in Theological Education

Our reliance on methodological procedures that serve to acquire knowledge, understanding and to develop critical and analytical skills, is the primary cause of failure to achieve affective outcomes. In other words, we do not use the correct methods to transform character and develop spiritual growth. Ted Ward reminds us; “Real people have real feelings, not just disembodied information systems called brains. Thus, thinking always occurs within some combination of emotional colorations.”

Intentionality also addresses another concern, inappropriate contexts. The three domains of education also correspond to three contexts. Cognitive learning is best suited for the context of formal education, which we associate with schools, institutions, classrooms and graded systems of assessment and development. Behavioural learning (psycho-motor or skill development) is best suited for the context of non-formal education, which should be associated with on-the-job learning, systems of certification, and the demonstration of competence in specific skills. This is a very significant area of learning when we consider the ministry skills needed for cross-cultural Christian workers. Finally, affective learning, or spiritual growth, character formation and attitude transformation, is best suited for the context of informal education, which includes the vast amount of learning we acquire throughout our lives in the contexts that are outside of an organized or systematized experience.

Here is a conundrum. Outcomes are best generated with a high degree of intentionality. Yet, the very definition of informal education requires the lack of intention and measurability. When learning becomes intentional and systematized it ceases to be informal and migrates towards non-formal or formal. Yet, educational theorists will tell us that the affective domain is most effectively addressed through processes of socialization and informal education. This is where the concern for contexts must be raised. Perhaps, we cannot be intentional about providing learning experiences to generate affective outcomes, but we can be intentional about providing the kinds of contexts in which we can anticipate and know that certain outcomes will be generated.

When asked how are affective outcomes generated? Affective outcomes relate to the “being,” the character and spiritual qualities of a person, which are observable only through outward behaviours. Behind the expressions of outward behaviours are attitudes. When attitudes change, a person’s character is transformed and spiritual growth may occur. Attitudes can change and the most effective means of transforming attitudes are through instrumental (operant) learning and observational learning. Instrumental (or operant) learning is the result of an individual learning on their own through exposure to experiences within a given context, it produces attitude transformation out of life’s experiences. Observational learning is strongly relational. Participants observe a model (a professor, a missionary in residence, an international student, a pastor, etc.) and assimilate desirable qualities.

A factor appearing to influence the immediacy of this kind of learning is the perceived suitability of the model in the mind of the learner. “Observational learning is greater when the model is powerful, when he or she is seen as having much control over the observer’s environment and its resources.” This does not negate, however, that any model whether “powerful” or not, can eventually produce the same results. Arthur Cohen agrees that “who” says something is as important as “what” is said. However, long-term results tend to even out due to, what he calls the “sleeper” effect.

To effectively address the spiritual and character quality outcomes we need to use appropriate methods in the correct contexts. Because the kind of modeling that occurs in the context of formal education is severely limited, most of the attitudes and spiritual / character qualities that are desired will not be

11 (Zimbardo and Leippe 1991, 44 and 51).

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observed. This is especially true for cross-cultural training. Desirable methods and contexts will be highly relational and will require our programs to develop learning experiences outside of the classroom or ministry practice. Mentoring programs, advisor groups, peer facilitation groups, and other highly relational experiences become the fruitful ground of spiritual maturation and growth. This growth is not easily measured, but we know it occurs in the context of authentic community. Practitioners and professors need to engage students socially outside of the context of the classroom, in the context of authentic community. This is where attitudes will be modelled, observed and acquired.

Unfortunately, the business of providing an education does not value highly relational experiences that foster this immeasurable learning. Professors are not paid to socialize with students. Times of spiritual activity, praying and caring for one another, are frequently seen as an imposition on the already busy schedules of professors. Of course, this places the spiritual and character formation goals of the program at risk. Worse, their absence sends an entirely different message and model, which students cannot help but acquire. Perry Shaw reminds us that the Null and Hidden curricula play a significant role in the education of theological students.14 By failing to intentionally address outcomes, we will end up generating other outcomes, some not at all desirable. Can we really afford to shift these responsibilities on others? Can an educational institution say “spiritual growth is the task of the church or the home”? An academic career rewards the pursuit of more knowledge and publications, but rarely notices the personable and friendly professor even though she may have the greatest impact in the life of the students. The question of theological education and spiritual formation implies an intentional process on the part of the institution. Institutions need to value the unique demands of the affective outcomes and begin to resource these outcomes if they are truly desired.

**Integral Curriculum Development and Spirituality**

Affirming that theological education includes spiritual formation is just one of many assumptions that educators bring to the table. Protestant theological education has blossomed into a rich canopy of spiritual expression. We find amongst our communities historical approaches to spirituality that include pietist, puritan, separatist, and the holiness movement, amongst others. Spiritual formation has a distinct look and feel in each one of these contexts. Yet, within these distinct expressions of faith our theological education builds on similar structures or foundations.

If we affirm the importance and central role of spiritual formation within Theological Education or missionary training, we place ourselves before a commitment to develop curricula that generates desired outcomes in the affective domain and specifically, producing spiritual growth and character qualities. This can be achieved only when we re-examine our educational assumptions, our methodologies and the contexts in which we seek to provide learning experiences.

An integral curriculum approach seeks to generate outcomes in all of the areas of needed learning. The needs of the whole person are addressed and learning resources are allocated accordingly. This will inevitably require sacrifices and adjustments in our training programs. Knowledge will be viewed as instrumental and not an end in itself. Fewer classroom hours will be allotted for the acquisition of knowledge and understanding. More resources will be directed towards acquiring needed skills, as well as generating expressed desirable spiritual and character outcomes. For a description of a process to develop an integral and outcomes based curriculum, the reader is referred to the book, *Integral Ministry Training Design and Evaluation*.15

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A couple of simple metaphors could be used to describe our educational assumptions and commitments. First, consider the metaphor of dividing up a pie. If an institution’s curriculum were like an apple pie or a pizza and we were dividing it into three slices according to our educational commitments. How big of a slice would go to formal, non-formal, or informal education? Second, consider what a balanced meal (proteins, carbohydrates and vegetables) looks like. If the plate was dominated by any one of the following: protein (meat or vegetable derived), potato (or pasta, bread, etc.), or vegetables, we would not say the meal was balanced. So, we ask the question, how balanced are our programs of theological study? If we are honest, we will admit that one element of the balanced educational diet far outweighs the rest.

Setting The Stage: A Unique Moment in Time for Theological Education

The impact of the Bologna Process is still being felt on theological education. The North American context is in a quandary where seminaries are being asked to quantify the achievements relating to specific outcomes in the area of affective learning. Accrediting bodies are requiring seminaries to demonstrate that spiritual growth and character transformation has occurred (if stated as desired outcomes). Efforts are being made to develop methods to assess spiritual growth. The present is an optimum moment to rethink and to reshape our educational assumptions and commitments.

This paper began with a reflection of the place of spirituality in the theological education or missionary training and this question goes to the heart of the rationale for theological education. Certainly, a balanced approach to the role of spiritual formation in theological education recognizes the singular importance of spiritual formation during theological education. On the other hand, our theological programs of study are not designed to intentionally achieve affective outcomes like spiritual growth and character formation.

Related to all of this is the question of what the stakeholders of our institutions desire. We need to re-engage the church and Christian service agencies, and develop curricula that meet the training needs expressed by those who use the services of the trained. We will fail in our task if we merely consider what the needs and interests of the students are. What do our churches want, pastors or theologians? What do our mission agencies desire, missionaries or missiologists? Is spiritual growth and character formation an important value expressing the training needs as perceived by the church?

Speaking as one coming from an independent church background, with the wonderful privilege of having attended a variety of churches including Pentecostal, liturgical, and non-liturgical, free-church and Baptist, this writer is struck by the choices church governing boards make when searching for a pastor. For example, a multi-staffed church recently promoted an associate pastor to senior pastor whose training background was limited to commerce and accountancy. More striking, however, is the fact that this church is located only twenty minutes drive from the denominational university and seminary. This appointment sent shivers through the Theological faculty at the seminary. Why would a church appoint someone without theological training? This is now a common question that many seminaries are asking. The answer, in part and perhaps misguided in and of itself, relates to perceptions that many in our churches have regarding theological education and the lack of spiritual growth and character formation.

Now, with pressure from our stakeholders (the churches and Christian service agencies who presumably will employ our graduates) on the one hand, and from accrediting bodies and agencies (whether associations or government agencies) on the other, our institutions of theological education and ministry training are corralled into a position that surely will force some action. We express commitment to spiritual formation through explicit outcomes or competencies, which please both students and stakeholders. However, ours is now the difficult task of reshaping our methodologies and contexts of instruction to

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16 Jurgensen, op. cit.
ensure that the achievement of these outcomes can be demonstrated. This is, indeed, a unique moment in time for theological education.

Bibliography

Introduction

Today, we all live in a multicultural society. As a result of globalization and migration, our contemporary world has become pluralistic, and monocultures are giving way to multicultures. And with the multicultural also comes the multi-religious – a new situation that compels the Christian church in Africa and its theology to rethink and relate to this rapidly growing phenomenon.

All around us, people of various religio-cultural persuasions are coming closer to each other on a global scale and this interaction already serves as an unproclaimed dialogue – an ongoing dialogue of an informal nature.

In such situations, distances are now being narrowed and, in certain areas, compromises are replacing confrontations. In educational institutions for example, halls of residence, lecture rooms, libraries, canteens, buses, offices, faculty common rooms, and playgrounds are all meeting places for adherents of various religious traditions. What then should be our theological orientation and ecumenical praxis towards this plurality of religious faiths; and, how do we interpret all the non-Christian experiences which our increasingly pluralistic culture provides?

Inter-Religious Dialogue as Ecumenical Mandate

Contemporary understanding of “ecumenism” obliges the church to enter into dialogue with people of other faith traditions. If the church’s ecumenical mandate or vision is not only to bring unity and renewal of the whole Christian community, but also to embark on a worldwide mission and seek the unity of the whole human race, that is, the whole inhabited earth, then theology and theological education “ought to be taught and done in relation to the people of other faiths, and [have] to take inter-religious dialogue seriously.”

Dialogue then becomes an essential and constitutive part of the church’s mission and therefore very important for Christian theology. Today, “theology of dialogue” has become one of the most significant missiological currents and has found a firm place of acceptance in both the Roman Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches. Such a theological understanding has led the ecumenical bodies to initiate a
number of contacts with African traditionalists, Jews, Muslims, Hindus, and Buddhists, and to convene bilateral and multilateral conferences.\(^2\)

The term “dialogue” is derived from the Greek *dia-logos* which literally means “through word.” Dialogue is therefore “talking together” or “conversation.” Inter-religious dialogue is primarily a conversation between believers of different faiths or religious traditions.

Fundamentally, inter-religious dialogue has come to be understood as an encounter between people who live by different faith traditions in an atmosphere of mutual trust and acceptance. According to S. Wesley Ariarajah, inter-faith dialogue is seen as

a way not only to become informed about the faiths of others but also to rediscover essential dimensions of one’s own faith tradition. The benefits of removing historical prejudices and enmities as well as new possibilities for working together for common good [are] recognized and affirmed.\(^3\)

In point of fact, the Christian faith’s attempt to understand its relationship with other religious traditions began in the early church when the new faith had to grapple with diverse religio-cultural environments including Jewish and Graeco-Roman worldviews. Again, history is replete with evidence that from the patristic period through the medieval to the modern era, there had been divergent schools of thought on how to understand and relate to religious life-style that was not based on Christian convictions.

It was not until the rise of the modern ecumenical movement – whose beginning is usually traced to the World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh in 1910 which focused on the evangelization of the whole human race – that inter-religious dialogue was seen as a constitutive part of the church’s *oikoumenic* mandate. Inter-faith dialogue – its concept and practice – therefore became a serious ecumenical agenda.

It is not surprising, then, that both the Edinburgh (1910) and Jerusalem (1928) Missionary Conferences should give prominence to inter-religious relations. For example, while Edinburgh compared the Christian encounter with “religious traditions of Asia... as being of the same order as the meeting of the New Testament church with Graeco-Roman culture” thus “demanding fundamental shifts in Christian self-understanding and theology”; Jerusalem (1928), although asserting the capabilities of the Christian gospel to provide answers to problems of our troubled world, nevertheless affirmed the *values* in “other religions and called on Christians to join hands with all believers to confront the growing impact of secular culture.”\(^4\)

It was this same *oikoumenic* visionary mandate of the church that led the ecumenical movement to affirm at the Kandy (Sri Lankan) Conference of 1967 that dialogue was “the most appropriate approach in inter-faith relations.”\(^5\) The establishment of the sub-unit on Dialogue with People of Living Faiths and Ideologies by the World Council of Churches’ Central Committee in 1971 in Addis Ababa, and also, the Vatican Secretariat for Non-Christians tremendously increased the visibility of inter-faith dialogue in the life of the churches. In 1970, under the auspices of WCC, the first multi-faith dialogue was convened in Lebanon bringing Christian, Muslim, Hindu, and Buddhist participants together.


\(^4\) Ibid. 312. It must be pointed out, however, that there were some participants at the Jerusalem meeting who disagreed with the positive affirmation of other faiths and maintained the uniqueness of Christianity. Therefore the Christian attitude towards other religious faiths became highly controversial shortly after the Jerusalem Conference in 1928.

\(^5\) Ibid. 314.
Inter-Religious Dialogue as Ecumenical Praxis

Inter-religious dialogue is not only an ecumenical mandate; it is also an ecumenical praxis. If we trace the meaning of ecumenism to its Greek root oikos which means “household” or “home”; we realize that oikos supplies the root meaning of three important words that collectively determine the question of survival of the globe. First, it provides the root meaning for oikoumene which questions whether the people of the earth are able to inhabit the earth in peace. Second, it furnishes the root meaning for economy which questions whether everyone in the global household has access to what it takes to live a meaningfully abundant life that Jesus Christ talked about; and third, it provides the root meaning for ecology which questions whether nature will have a home, its own living space. The survival of our globe would be determined by these three spheres. Therefore, the questions of oikos are questions of life and death because to be homeless is to be condemned to death.

All the three-level understanding of oikos dealing with the radical questions of economy, ecology and socio-economic conditions that affect the lives of ordinary people in Africa and the rest of the Third World compels the church to look beyond ecclesial unity; and, putting its faith into action, engage in a theological praxis that would “expand the existing boundaries of orthodoxy [and] enter into the liberative streams of other religions and cultures.”

In our dealing with persons of other faith traditions therefore, dialogue becomes an ecumenical praxis that enables us to involve and address the more radical questions of life and death including issues of creative justice which is God’s power of life against death. Inter-religious dialogue then affords the Christian church the opportunity to join other oppressed and exploited people of the world – the vast majority of who perceive “their ultimate concern and symbolize their struggle for liberation in the idiom of non-Christian religions and cultures.”

It is thus our contemporary understanding of ecumenism with its concomitant theological orientation towards the more radical questions dealing with the survival of the whole inhabited earth that lead us into theological and inter-faith praxis – that is, an informed, creative and committed action undertaken to shape and change our ailing and divided world.

Such an ecumenical theological praxis is guided by a moral disposition to act truly and justly and to show genuine concern for human well-being and for life in its fullness. In this context, praxis becomes the action of people who are free and are able to act for themselves. But such a committed action also involves risks and, therefore, requires that a person makes a wise and prudent practical judgment about how to act in a particular situation.

It follows then that our oikoumenic vocation obligates the church to cooperate with people of other faiths to welcome the assistance of our partners in dialogue to be able to respond to God’s will and strive to contribute to the coming Kingdom of God. Inter-religious dialogue then becomes one way of working for the coming Kingdom. For Arnold Temple, inter-religious dialogue,

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is an attempt by the church to act in partnership with those outside its institutional life in the promotion of the
Kingdom of God, the resultant effect being the renewal of societies to manifest the value of the Kingdom – love,
justice, freedom and truth. It is from these values that peace proceeds.\textsuperscript{11}

The focus of our inter-religious dialogue and praxis ought to be guarded by both theological and
pastoral awareness that it is the ordinary believing Christians living in everyday contact with believers of
other faiths that will make the whole process successful. Therefore in our inter-religious praxis, priority
must be given to \textit{life} – life that is shared among believers in God. This is the most important dimension
of the dialogical process and not just mere gathering of theologians and church leaders sitting around tables
with scholars and leaders of other religions talking and discussing high-minded topics. This “dialogue of
life” takes place when people of various faiths

witness to the other concerning the values they have found in their faith, and through the daily practice of
brotherhood [and sisterhood], helpfulness, open-heartedness and hospitality, each show themselves to be a God-
fearing neighbour. The true Christians and [their neighbours of other faiths] offer to a busy world values arising
from God’s message when they revere the elderly, conscientiously rear the young, care for the sick and the poor
in their midst, and work together for social justice, welfare and human rights.\textsuperscript{12}

In the 21\textsuperscript{st} century, there is the need to shift focus of inter-religious relations from scholars and religious
leaders to ordinary believers at the grassroots. In this paradigm shift, priority ought to be given to \textit{life
praxis} and we should therefore speak more of inter-faith praxis than dialogue. And as praxis, the process
refers to actions taken in all the various aspects of human life embracing not just one but the many
practices within the social realm. This should be so because a shared life among believers in God can take
many different forms. In point if fact, within the African context

When people of various faiths live together – not simply co-habiting the same town but \textit{together} – the question
of dialogue or proclamation doesn’t arise. When they work, study, struggle, celebrate, and mourn together and
face the universal crises of injustice, illness and death as one [as in the case of the devastating effects of HIV and
AIDS], they don’t spend most of their time talking about doctrine. Their focus is on immediate concerns of
survival, on taking care of the sick and needy, on communicating cherished values to new generations, on
resolving problems and tensions in productive rather than in destructive ways, on reconciling after conflicts, on
seeking to build more just, humane, and dignified societies…

And again in Africa,

…when believers are actively cooperating in such activities, at certain rare but privileged moments, they also
express what is deepest in their lives and hearts, that is, their respective faiths, which are the sources of strength
and inspiration that form the motive force which drives and guides all their activities.\textsuperscript{13}

Inter-religious relations or dialogue is to be understood as the sharing of life at all levels among
believers of different faiths. This is a praxis which brings enrichment to all partners when it is carried out
in a consciously unselfish way.

\textsuperscript{11} Arnold Temple, “Inter-Faith Praxis in the African Context,” \textit{Voices From the Third World}, vol. XXV, Nos. 1&2,
December 2002, 51.
\textsuperscript{12} Thomas Michel, “Towards a Pedagogy of Religious Encounter” on website \url{www.puffin.creighton.edu}
/Jesuits/dialoguedocument/articles/michel_religious Encounter (accessed 23/1/05), 1 citing Federation of Asian Bishops’
Conference, “The Second Bishops’ Institute for Interreligious Affairs (BIRA II), 1979” in \textit{For All the Peoples of Asia},
\textsuperscript{13} Ibid. 2. What Thomas Michel says here is very true of the African situation.

\textit{Handbook of Theological Education in World Christianity}
Interfaith Dialogue in Theological Education

Part I: Theological Education in Global Context: Issues and Themes

Some Advantages of Inter-Religious Dialogue and Praxis

In the political context, dialogue is understood as the opposite of conflict; while entry into dialogue could bring conflict and hostilities to an end, the abrupt end of dialogue resumes conflicts and even war. Among believers of God of different faiths, enmity has been created because of the prejudices and stereotypes that have been handed down from generation to generation; and even today, there is the reinforcement of such caricatures that generate religious intolerance and fundamentalism. In the name of religion, crimes are committed against humanity. Various reasons have been given why inter-religious dialogue is not only important but also necessary; and here, I examine just a few of these.

Pluralistic and peaceful co-existence

In a multicultural and multireligious global environment, dialogue becomes necessary as a means of promoting understanding and acquaintance with our neighbours. Without dialogue, we will all end up in all kinds of situations of conflict. In a pluralistic situation, dialogue then becomes a contention to find mutual basis for peaceful co-existence.

Unless we learn how to walk together in harmony and peace, we will drift apart and destroy ourselves and others simply because we believe differently. In Africa, inter-religious engagements after conflicts and civil wars have produced encouraging results in countries like Liberia and Sierra Leone. Arnold Temple, describing the West African situation writes:

There are stories of success of the Inter-religious Council of Sierra Leone. As a result of its engagement, the Inter-faith Council of Liberia won the All Africa Conference of Churches Desmond Tutu Peace Prize in 1997. In Sierra Leone, the Inter-religious Council continues their engagement in the process of reconstruction of a devastated community.14

It is the aim of inter-faith relations, dialogue and praxis in Africa to rid the continent of all religious disputes and conflicts so that all will be able to live in peace and harmony.

Clarifying our own beliefs

In dialogue, all partners as “believers” are invited to deepen their religious commitment; to respond with increasing sincerity to God’s personal call and gift of the Divine Self. For us Christians, this comes through Christ Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit. For us to engage in meaningful and serious dialogue, we must then be well-grounded in our faith and have strong belief. The same thing is expected of all dialogue partners. This calls for adequate preparation in which we have to ask ourselves questions concerning our own faith. For example, questions about the Doctrine of the Trinity and that of the Incarnation – about Jesus being *Vere Deus, Vere homo*.

In all these, there is the need to formulate our belief in such a way that the stranger or the non-Christian can understand and believe. The dialogical process therefore helps to clarify and makes us understand our beliefs more and, thus, makes us stronger: “Being involved in inter-religious dialogue,” says Mogen Amstrup, “always raises new questions about our own belief.”15 In inter-religious dialogue, all the faith traditions are challenged by the encounter with others.

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Searching for the truth

In inter-religious dialogue, we are not only seeking the truth in our own faith but also, in that of our neighbours. Dialogue is therefore to be viewed as “a common pilgrimage toward the truth, within which each tradition shares with the others the way it has to perceive and respond to that truth.”\(^\text{16}\) “Truth,” it has been argued by Thomas Thangaraj, “is nothing we know” and it is also “a part of eschatology and we are living in the eschatology, but we don’t know all of it.”\(^\text{17}\)

By emphasizing the eschatological dimension of the epistemology of truth, Thangaraj is reminding us that in eschatology there is the “already” as well as the “not yet” or the “yet-to-come.” Therefore in inter-religious dialogue, all the partners become pilgrims walking together towards truth.

Dialogue as mission

Dialogue is not antithetical to mission; on the contrary, it promotes mission. If one does not take one’s belief or religion seriously, one will not be so eager to talk about it and tell other people about it. Mission is therefore part of dialogue because we share and tell others about our faith. In point of fact, in real life situation, dialogue and witnessing cannot be separated. They are all part of the life that we share together. Just as Thomas Michel has observed:

> In a shared life, we are all constantly influencing one another and learning from each other, all growing and being enriched by encountering the acts and attitudes which God produces, through our respective faiths, in each.\(^\text{18}\)

Dialogue as part of the church’s *oikoumenic mission* is well established in ecumenical circles. Arnold Temple, for instance, has contended that inter-religious dialogue is not an option against the church’s mission. Such thinking, according to him, is a “myth.” Rather, to the contrary, “dialogue is a vital aspect of the mission of the church... [and] is for the sake of mission.”\(^\text{19}\)

Again, following questions raised at the WCC 5th Assembly in 1975 in Nairobi, a theological consultation was held two years later in Chiang Mai, Thailand which affirmed that “dialogue is neither a betrayal of mission nor a ‘secret weapon’ of proselytism but a way ‘in which Jesus Christ can be confessed in the world today’.”\(^\text{20}\)

To a certain extent, progress has been made in inter-faith dialogue especially, between Christians and Muslims which has yielded evangelistic fruits. For instance, as a result of dialogue, a Christian church has appeared once again in Ben Ghazi, Libya. On the other hand, a mosque has been built in Rome “for the first time in recent history.”\(^\text{21}\)

Mutual enrichment

Some have affirmed that in the dialogical process, there is mutual enrichment of the life of believers of God coming from different religious traditions. Each believer, it is argued, becomes spiritually richer than before the religious encounter and therefore becomes a better believer as Christian, Muslim or Traditionalist.

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\(^{16}\) Ariarajah, “Interfaith Dialogue”, 315.


\(^{18}\) Thomas Michel, “Toward a Pedagogy of Religious Encounter,” 3.

\(^{19}\) Temple, “Inter-Faith Praxis in the African Context,” 51.

\(^{20}\) Ariarajah, “Interfaith Dialogue,” 315. The Chiang Mai Consultation led to the formulation of “Guidelines on Dialogue” which was adopted by WCC Central Committee in 1979 and was commended to all Churches for study and action.

Furthermore, such encounters assist people to do away with stereotypes and to overcome prejudices. Thomas Michel has underscored the fact that dialogue provides believers with the opportunity to examine together those universal human tendencies towards exclusivity, chauvinism, and violence which can infect religious identity and behaviour.22

When enough room is created for the partner in religious dialogue, each will have confidence in the process and genuine sharing takes place. In dialogue, new rooms need be created in the residence of our mind and thinking, as well as in our actions. This encourages sharing together which also brings mutual enrichment.

Challenges of Theology of Religions and Dialogue – Quo Vadis Africa?

Two movements or trajectories of thought quickly come to mind when discussing theology of religions, namely Evangelicalism and Ecumenicalism. Evangelicals have strongly opposed the theology of religions and dialogue and have denied the presence of God in other religions.23 They argue that words like “dialogue” and “presence” often serve as replacements for key words of Scripture. For instance, the Frankfurt Declaration states:

We refute the idea that ‘Christian Presence’ among the adherents of the world religions and a give-and-take dialogue with them are substitutes for a proclamation of the gospel which aims at conversion. Such dialogues simply establish good points of contact for missionary communication.24

Such an evangelical view is not also absent within the ecumenical movement itself. At the World Council of Churches Sixth Assembly in Vancouver (1983), while there was no serious disagreement on the need for inter-religious dialogue, there was much controversy over the theology of religions. The debate was whether other religions were the “vehicle of God’s redeeming activity” and a number of participants challenged a statement in the report that spoke of “God’s hand active in the religious life of our neighbours.”25

In Africa, one of the strong evangelical voices that still challenges our theological community and cannot just be dismissed is that of Byang Kato, who, writing three decades ago made a sharp distinction between early patristic ecumenism and modern ecumenism revealing the “pitfalls” in the latter. He wrote:

Unlike the true type of early ecumenical councils, present-day ecumenism plays down doctrinal issues. Their thesis is that doctrine divides, but service unites. The drive, therefore, comes mainly through service. To the ecumenicals, unity, almost at any cost, is the greatest thing that could happen to the Christian church. Any group that refuses to join the bandwagon of liberal ecumenism is considered a separatist, sectarian, or uncooperative group.26

23 David J. Bosch has identified at least six or seven different strands of Evangelicals, namely; (1) Confessional Evangelicals; (2) Pietist Evangelicals; (3) Fundamentalists; (4) Pentecostals; (5) Conservative Evangelicals or Neo-Evangelicals; (6) Ecumenical Evangelicals; and (7) Radical Evangelicals. See his “Ecumenicals and Evangelicals: A Growing Relationship?” The Ecumenical Review, vol. 40, Nos. 3&4, July-October 1988, 458-9 for more details.
24 Jongeneel and van Engelen, “Contemporary Currents in Missiology,” 454.
According to Kato, from the very outset, orthodox Christianity has been interested in fellowship and unity with people of other faiths “as long as doctrines are not compromised... Doctrinal truths cannot be sacrificed at the altar of unity.”

Kwame Bediako captured the full picture of Kato’s theological enterprise against the ecumenicals when he said:

Kato therefore concluded that there was “poisonous elements” in the “theology of ecumenism” – basically “syncretism” and “universalism” – at both the world-wide level of the World Council of Churches (WCC) and the local level of its African manifestation in the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC)... Kato’s major concern was to show how the “poisonous elements” in the “theology of ecumenism” were progressively replacing what he saw as “the essential basic doctrines of the church.”

Eugene Smith, himself an ecumenical, has enumerated the evangelical charges against his fellow ecumenicals:

The most frequent charges against us were theological liberalism, loss of ecumenical conviction, universalism in theology, substitution of social action for evangelism and the search of unity at the expense of Biblical truth.

Ecumenicals, on the other hand, have not only defended themselves but also criticized the exclusive attitude of Christians towards other religions; and have argued that the challenge to the Christian faith now come not from other faiths, but from anti-religious or secular movements.

The Ecumenical voice within the context of EATWOT has been very strong. According to Sergio Torres, “It is wrong for Christians to ignore the existence of other faiths that provide spiritual homes for hundreds of millions of persons” including African Traditional Religions. These religions, he contends, “challenge the institutional churches of the Christian tradition with very important questions.” And for Diego Irarrazaval the current President of EATWOT, he gets spiritual nourishment when participating “in indigenous rituals and celebrations that have syncretistic and non-Christian features.”

The argument of EATWOT is that the vast majority of Third World population is non-Christian who “perceive their ultimate concern and symbolize their struggle for liberation in the idiom of non-Christian religions and cultures.” Thus speaking through the voice of the Sri Lankan theologian Aloysius Pieris, EATWOT declares that “a theology that does not speak to or speak through this non-Christian peoplehood is an esoteric luxury of a Christian minority” and emphasize the need for a theology of religions that will go beyond the existing boundaries of orthodoxy.

EATWOT therefore advocates the disengagement of Christian theology from Western dominant moorings and relate to other religions. But in doing this EATWOT cautions and calls for the need to be aware of the negative and oppressive elements as well as the diversity in and within these religions. Furthermore, EATWOT calls for inter-faith praxis that will go beyond mere dialogue at the academic level.

27 Ibid. 133.
to promote integral liberation and development. The Final Statement of EATWOT’s 5th Conference in New Delhi (1981) declares further:

We favour ongoing dialogue between Christians and the members of other religions. But this dialogue cannot remain only on an intellectual level about God, salvation, human fulfillment, or other such concepts. Beyond dialogue there must be collaborative action for the integral liberation of the oppressed... Our common praxis with the people of other faiths is a valid source of theology in the Third World.34

Revelation and Salvation
There is less agreement among Christians on the issues of revelation and salvation and how these doctrines relate to other religions. These differences are seen not only within the corridors of the evangelical-ecumenical divide, but also, between Protestants and Roman Catholics.

While some Christian thinkers following Karl Barth insist that Biblical faith based on God’s encounter with humanity is radically different from all the other religious faiths as we find in the works of the Dutch missiologist Hendrick Kraemer and the African Conservative-evangelical Byang Kato; dissenting voices coming mainly from ecumenicals also disagree that the gospel is in discontinuity with other religious traditions. For Kraemer, the divine will may only “shine” through other religions “in a broken way” but the “only true way to know the revealed will of God is by responding to the divine intervention in history in Christ.”35

Providing a sharp Afro-evangelical critique, Byang Kato – referring to the traditional religious beliefs of his own Jaba people of Nigeria – writes:

With the coming of Christ, all other revelations come to an end. It is most unlikely that either Jaba or any other non-Christian peoples have received a direct revelation from God...There is neither redemption nor evidence of direct divine revelation to individuals in Jaba religion.

He then concludes,

There is emphatically no possibility of salvation through these religions. But... many theologians today are trying hard to elevate these non-Christian religions to the same status as Biblical Christianity... ‘African theology’ gives that impression.36

Veritably, statements such as these cannot just be dismissed merely as conservative jargons. Even if this Barth-Kraemer-Kato stance in its most conservative sense does not appear appealing or sophisticated enough to the modern mind, its call for doctrinal purity and “back-to-the Bible” are still starkly challenging. If contemporary theology in Africa is to have any meaningful impact on the poor in spirit, and the spiritual authority to overcome the forces of death and decay, these challenges have to be taken seriously.

EATWOT disagrees with this stance. In its New Delhi (1983) Final Statement, it contends that the Sacred Scriptures and traditions of other faiths are also “a source of revelation for us”; and this

34 See the “Final Statement” in Irruption of the Third World: Challenge for Theology, 202f.
35 Ariarajah, “Interfaith Dialogue,” 312. Among the dissenting voices from H. Kraemer for example, are A.G. Hogg; H.H. Farmer, T.C. Chao and others.
36 Byang Kato, Theological Pitfalls in Africa, 44 and 45 respectively.
consideration of divine revelation “enables us to see that the concept of the ‘people of God’ should be widened to include not only believers of other faiths but the whole of humanity.”

Another difference in the Christian soteriological orientation towards other faiths is the distinction between Protestants and Catholics. While Protestant missions tend to be Christocentric, that of Roman Catholic is Ecclesiocentric. Protestants place emphasis on the need to believe in Christ by responding to the gospel message as a way of salvation. Although the Protestant attitude to other faiths is not entirely negative, it tends to be neutral at best on the question of salvation outside the response to Christ.

For Catholics, salvation is a free gift of God offered in Christ to all who have faith in Him. But this faith is expressed by receiving baptism and becoming part of the church. The church is therefore the sacrament of the saving work of Christ available to all humanity. Roman Catholic theology is able to provide for the possibility of salvation for those outside the church. For instance, those who lived before Christ, and those who for no fault of theirs never heard the gospel, Catholic theology has developed a concept of “implicit faith” or “faith by intention” so that no one is excluded in the church. Thus:

Salvation offered in Christ is mysteriously available to all who seek to fulfill the will of God; it is possible to be incorporated into the sacrament of the paschal mystery, the church, by intention.

All these different positions doubtlessly challenge the African theological community, whose constituency consists not just of Catholics and Protestants, but also, of evangelicals and ecumenicals.

**Conclusion**

Africa today is a multi-cultural and multi-religious society. As such, our very survival depends on how we learn to live and walk together in harmony with our non-Christian neighbours or, drift apart and destroy ourselves and others. In inter-religious dialogue and praxis, we learn how to live and walk together with our neighbours – how to struggle together; face the crises of poverty, oppression, injustice, racism, and sexism together; face diseases, death, and mourn together; and how to celebrate life together. In all this togetherness, we also articulate and convey that which is deepest in our lives and our hearts – that which has been the source of our inspiration, empowerment and resilience in the face of death and decay – namely, our faith which has guided all our actions.

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39 Ibid. 313. These thoughts were developed by the French Cardinal Jean Danielou and the German theologian Karl Rahner in the 1960s following the spirit if Vatican II.
INTERFAITH DIALOGUE IN CHRISTIAN THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION IN NORTH AMERICA: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Heidi Hadsell

Introduction

Most Christian theological educators in the West, until very recently at least, were not thinking about, nor were they trained in thinking about interfaith issues in theological education. It was the Bossey students (the pastors, priests and lay people from all over the world, enrolled in programs at the Ecumenical Institute of the World Council of Churches) in the late 1990s when I was director there, who taught me the critical importance of interfaith relations in Christian theological education.

When I went to the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey, I had experience with North American ethnic and cultural pluralism and I was convinced of the importance of theological education responding to this ecumenical pluralism as it prepared people for Christian ministry or for other kinds of Christian leadership. What I was not prepared for, nor had I really thought much about, was the proper response of Christian theological education, in a post-colonial, post missionary age, to the religious other as a Buddhist or Hindu or Muslim or Jain. (Judaism was a bit different, both because of the Christian origins in Judaism, and because the United States had, at least by the time my generation was being socialized, developed a national, religious discourse that included both Christians and Jews and we learned to see ourselves as a nation with a “Judeo-Christian” orientation and composition.)

So, it was the students at Bossey that opened my eyes to the importance of understanding and engaging in relationships with persons of other faiths. It took a while for me to realize that Western theological education had a big challenge on its hands; it still does. The world is religiously plural, our countries and cities are religiously plural, even our families are increasingly religiously plural, and for the most part, we are not teaching our emerging leadership to think about the opportunities and the challenges contained therein.

My interest in other faiths and in interfaith relations was also provoked through my work in my discipline of Christian social ethics. In the same way that my interest in ecumenism was heightened when I realized that I could not teach a class in, say, Christian economic ethics, without considering Christian thought far beyond that produced by own denomination, I eventually concluded that the same was true of the social thought of people from other faiths. The world has grown sufficiently small, the problems that we share across the globe sufficiently large and in common, that we simply must think together and learn from each other across our religious and other divides. While plural in so many wonderful ways, morally the human family is one. We can think separately about our moral challenges, and we do. But, to use the image of Michael Walzer, we must also learn to think together and to build commonality in ‘thin’ ways across the ‘thickness’ of our own cultural particularities and traditions.1

Why Now?

One might well ask the question as to why Christian theological education in much of the West is seemingly starting so late in thinking about the role, the place, and the commitment to interfaith relations

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1 Walzer, Michael, Thick and Thin: Moral Argument at Home and Abroad (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame, 2002).
and dialogue in theological education. After all, other religions have always existed, so why is it only now that many Western theological educators are taking note and raising the theme of other faiths in Christian theological education? What did they do in the past in this respect, and why are past practices and assumptions being re-thought?

There are of course a number of ways to answer these questions. One must recall that some institutions of theological education have long included relations with and thought about other faiths in their academic programs, especially in parts of the world where religious pluralism has long been an accepted fact of life. These are institutions and experiences from which the rest of us can thankfully learn. It is not surprising for example that The Rev. Dr. Stanley Samartha who was the first Director of the interfaith program at the World Council of Churches came from India, and thus from a context in which religious pluralism was a lived reality about which Christians were thinking every day.

Until half a century ago or less, many Western, Protestant seminaries, if not most, did indeed take into account the fact of other faiths, but they did so through the lens of the mission movement, which, for the most part, viewed interaction with peoples of other faiths primarily as an opportunity for conversion to Christianity. People of other faiths were thus mostly not viewed as equal, though different, conversation partners. Indeed, for many Christian seminaries in the West, the conversionist perspective, or something similar to it, is still the dominant orientation to peoples of other faiths. For the ones which have moved away from this perspective over the last decades, some have transformed their mission programs into programs on, for example, global Christianity. For others, the question of new kinds of relationships with people of other faiths often simply went unasked or it was addressed in ad hoc ways.

It is only relatively recently at least in the West, that the Other – in the sense here of the person from another religion- has become a major theme of interest in philosophical or theological thought. Over the last decades many of us learned from philosophers like the Jewish philosopher Emmanuel Levinas, that much of Western philosophical and theological thought itself had clear equivocations and major lacunae in its thinking about the Other. The awareness of the equivocations and lacunae, along with the fact that this poverty of thought, and distortions of thought about the ‘Other’ helped lead towards the holocaust and other acts of violence against whole groups of people, have led some Christians to re-think their relationships with and their thought about peoples of other faiths.

In addition, over the last 50 years the world has changed substantially, and while perhaps in some societies, one was once able to view the religious Other as very distant, today the religious or cultural or ethnic Other is in every city, town and village, and often right next door or across the street. Independently of how one feels about it – whether one is a pluralist in the sense of advocating pluralism as healthy and good for human societies or not – the pluralism in all of our societies today, of many kinds, is an empirical fact which is impossible to deny.

**Contextual Elements for Interfaith Dialogue in Theological Education**

There are several especially relevant broad elements that help make up the context of Western Protestant theological education (which is itself by no means uniform), that bear keeping in mind as we think about the growing interest in other faiths and relations with peoples of other faiths. The first element is one I have already named: pluralism. The growth of secular thought, institutions and people, the shrinking of the world, the proliferation of religions that immigrants and former colonial subjects bring with them to new

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2 There are of course a number of Christians who have been thinking about this theme for many years, including, naming only a few: Jane Smith, Mark Heim, Hans Ucko, Paul Knitter, and Wesley Ariarajah.

national homes, the permanent presence of the second and third generations of what in some places were originally foreign workers, have changed Western societies permanently.

This plural context puts new questions before us as citizens, as members of churches, as theological educators. Is it possible today to prepare someone well for Christian ministry, without teaching them about the practices and beliefs of other religions in our midst? How do we give our emerging Christian leadership guidance in order perhaps to unlearn some of what they once learned, in order to help them think in an informed and disciplined way about how to think theologically, morally and practically about the religious Other? How should Christians assess and understand their moral responsibility to and relationships with the religious Other?

Another contextual element is the changing face and place of Christianity in Western societies. Often, not only has Christianity changed over time – in the United States for instance, becoming more evangelical and less attached to historical forms of Protestantism – but the presence and weight of Christian institutions and the total number of Christians in Western societies is greatly diminished compared to 50 or 100 years ago. This new situation has led on the part of some, to the re-thinking of the assumptions of Christian hegemony, and to the growing awareness that the taken for granted dominance of certain basic Christian values and practices in Western societies is often no longer accurate. The demise of Christian hegemony in the West is something that has been talked about for some time now, and theologians such as Douglas John Hall have helped us to see that although some might grieve the passing of an era in the West which thought of itself as a Christian era, there are, if Christians can learn how to be just one voice among others, real opportunities for Christian witness and contribution to the wider society in a new non-hegemonic identity and role.

An additional broad contextual element that asserts itself when Christian theological education begins to tackle interfaith questions is political. This element varies dramatically from place to place, and moment to moment. But the fact is that at least in the United States, and in other Western countries in their own way, the carefully constructed wall that separates religion and politics into their own separate realms is shifting, and is considerably less solid, more permeable and more contested than it has been for decades. Today, it is often the case that religion and politics cannot be separated, even in the West, and especially perhaps by those religions for which this separation has always been at best, artificial. The changing nature of the relationship between religion and politics in the West means that institutions of theological education that have begun to engage in interfaith education of some kind, find themselves in unaccustomed territory, facing issues and conflicts in the society, the institution and in the classroom for which they are often ill prepared. Inevitably for example, given the war in Iraq and Afghanistan, and subsequently the fraught relationships between some Christians and some Muslims in the United States, the mere existence of a Christian-Muslim program at Hartford Seminary is seen by some as an overtly political statement.

While I have briefly mentioned some of the larger contextual elements relevant for interfaith dialogue, every specific place and institution will have local or regional elements to think through as well. The presence of communities of faith of other religions will, for example, be different in different areas. Some areas will have communities of Hindus, or Buddhists or Muslims, to whom they may relate, and other areas will not. Additionally, our regions and our cities have their own histories of relationships between religious communities which will also influence what choices any given theological institution may make about interfaith dialogue in its institution.

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Why Interfaith Dialogue?

With ethnic, cultural and religious pluralism an empirical fact in all of our Western societies, Christian communities have the opportunity to react in a variety of ways. They may for example, react by attempting to reassert Christian religious hegemony, or they may choose to concentrate on the uniqueness of Christian identity and the protection and fostering of Christian practices and values, as many communities do, or they may choose to react by engaging the pluralism around them, including the religious pluralism.

There are arguments and reasons for each of these approaches. The engagement of pluralism and the choice to construct a dialogical relationship with peoples of other faiths, while maintaining one’s own beliefs is, many adherents of interfaith dialogue in theological education argue, the approach closest to the open spirit and radical inclusivity which the Christian gospel teaches. There are solid and important theological reasons to teach interfaith relations in our Christian seminaries. People of other faiths are literally our neighbors and developing good relationships with them is a form of Christian love. Christians are called to be peacemakers. Surely the development of respectful, dialogical relationships with others is an important form of peace making. In addition, scripture cautions Christians to be humble in the claims they make about knowing God. Peoples of other faiths have their own experiences of God, their own ways of expressing these experiences, and through them Christians may come to know and understand aspects of the divine in fresh and helpful ways.

As we have seen, there are practical reasons as well to engage in interfaith dialogue, since our towns and cities are religiously plural and increasingly the families and circles of friends or people in our churches are similarly religiously plural. Pastors and priests need to have a solid grounding in Christian theological thought about other religions, the beliefs and practices of other religions, and the guidelines of other religions regarding such issues as marriage between people of different faiths. In other words, as Wesley Ariarajah has long taught us, religious diversity as it is lived in our communities and in our families is an inescapable issue for Christian ministry. In a religiously plural context, part of ministry is helping the congregation think through the elements of that context, and the opportunities and challenges contained therein.

There are of course many other reasons to engage in interfaith dialogue, and thus many other reasons to teach the skills and practices of interfaith dialogue in Christian theological education. As mentioned above, the world has grown sufficiently small and inter-related, and the challenges common to humanity sufficiently complex and intertwined, that one reason to engage in interfaith dialogue is to lay the ground work necessary for faith communities to be able to work together on the great issues of our day.

An additional reason for Western Christian theological education to engage in interfaith dialogue and to develop good interfaith relations is that other faith communities seeking to insure the wellbeing of their own communities, and also seeking to integrate into Western societies through the development of their own religious institutions and leadership, need our support and our cooperation. Through the development of good relationships and cooperation with people of other faiths, Christian communities are not only choosing a positive and helpful path, but they are teaching others through their examples, to develop their own positive relationships with these faith communities.

Finally, practically anyone who has engaged in interfaith dialogue will agree that interfaith dialogue is intrinsically valuable in and of itself. To dialogue with, to get to know, to learn more about the neighbor

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5 See for example, S. Wesley Ariarajah’s book, *Not Without My Neighbour: Issues in Interfaith Relations* (Geneva: WCC Publications, Risk Book Series, No. 85, 2006) which is used in the required dialogue class at Hartford Seminary, in part because he makes the point about the importance of interfaith knowledge in Christian ministry, so well.

6 Hartford Seminary has for example the only accredited program in Muslim Chaplaincy in the United States. It is very popular program, since Muslims in the United States are eager to develop their own leadership for prisons, universities, hospitals and the military.

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from another faith tradition is simply an enjoyable human activity, and all the more so as it liberates one from the fear that comes with ignorance of the unknown.

In the last several years in the United States, and probably elsewhere, the inclusion of people from different faiths in institutions of Christian theological education, and the teaching of interfaith relations and dialogue is increasingly popular. I think one reason for this popularity is that the inclusion of other religions, or dialogue with other religions, is increasingly viewed as a potential and welcome source of institutional revitalization, one that may help seminaries reverse decreasing numbers of students and decreasing funds, both of which come with the loss of place and power of mainline denominations. That interfaith dialogue is an opportunity that some students eagerly seek in Christian theological schools, is an indication perhaps that for a new generation of students, interfaith relations are already a lived reality, which they expect to find represented in theological education.

**What Kind of Education for Interfaith Dialogue?**

Different faculties of theology and different seminaries will choose their own ways to include interfaith dialogue in their curricula; ways that are appropriate to their histories, theologies and the goals of the institution. At Hartford Seminary, having learned many lessons from its long term interest in and commitment to the study of Islam which began in the 19th century and which today is represented by the Macdonald Center for the Study of Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations, there was a joint decision in 2001 by the Board of Trustees (an ecumenical group of Christians, Muslims and Jews) and the faculty, to identify dialogue, especially interfaith dialogue, as a major educational mark and pedagogical value of the institution. One of my colleagues describes this decision in this way:

> "As historical commitments and constituencies have merged with the more immediate geographic context, dialogue has become a formally recognized and foundational focus of HS explicitly stated in the Seminary’s board and faculty adopted mission statement. But more than this, given the diversity of the student body – local and international – dialogue is both a practical necessity (to get along with the incredible diversity of students who will be in one’s classes) and a pedagogical opportunity (a capacity that a student can use to learn from the diversity of one’s peers). HS is one school whose logo tag line cuts to its core educational experience: *Exploring Differences, Deepening Faith.*"

This institutional decision, much discussed and considered, provided the impetus for faculty to begin to rethink some of their courses and pedagogical approaches so that they were in alignment with and supportive of this major institutional commitment. The growing numbers of Muslim students, the addition of a Jewish faculty member who came to teach not only Judaism but interfaith skills and peacemaking, also gave individual faculty members the incentive to think through their contribution to the growing interfaith conversation at the Seminary. In short, what we have found at Hartford Seminary is that interfaith dialogue requires an institutional commitment and significant, long term and widespread institutional learning that extends far beyond the required course in dialogue. We have learned a lot from our own efforts and from others doing their own work in interfaith dialogue, and there is no doubt that we have a lot more to learn.

One direct result of the institutional commitment to dialogue was the creation of the course entitled “Dialogue in a World of Difference,” and the decision to make this course required for all Master’s level students. The course is intended to insure student acquisition of the basic tools and knowledge of dialogue, which they will use in their studies and which will help prepare them for religious leadership. The dialogue course also socializes students into the kind of learning that takes place at Hartford Seminary. It is learning that is dialogical in a wide variety of ways and learning that is interested in and respectful of difference. In

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7 Roozen, David and Hadsell, Heidi, eds., *Changing the Way Seminaries Teach* (Hartford: Hartford Seminary, 2009), 182.
the course, the students practice this kind of dialogue, they develop a common stock of knowledge about
dialogue, and they learn a kind of a common language that they will use in other courses, and of course,
they get to know each other and to form friendships across their religious differences.

In thinking about this course, the faculty decided that students need to acquire basic knowledge in
several distinct areas in order to be active and informed participants in interfaith dialogue. The first area
pertains to the basic tools and knowledge of dialogue. The second area is related to the acquisition of the
necessary knowledge about one’s own tradition to engage meaningfully in dialogue. As a graduate school,
we expect that students enter with solid knowledge about and familiarity with their own religious tradition.
In addition, the student must acquire sufficient knowledge about the tradition with which he or she is in
dialogue with in order to interact meaningfully. During their studies, we require students to get to know
another tradition through study of scripture, theology or ethics of that tradition.

The dialogue course is taught annually by three faculties, as much as possible one from each of the three
Abrahamic faiths. Part of the content of this course is the teaching of and the reflection on the “rules” for
dialogue which various faith traditions have developed. Typically, since most of the students in the course
are Muslims and Christians, with often a small number of Jews, and often several who do not identify with
any particular faith tradition, there is ample opportunity in class to engage in dialogue, using these “rules”
in small groups, one-on-one, the whole class together and so forth. In this way the students learn the
practice of dialogue, which of course one learns best through engaging in it. The students also have the
opportunity to observe the professors as they engage each other in dialogue, as well as engaging other
faculty who come in to lecture on various topics. Recently, after a discussion between two faculty – one a
Muslim, the other a Christian, students commented that they – the faculty – needed to take the class and
learn the skills of dialogue!

Additionally, and again in the spirit of experiential education, students are required to attend religious
services in another faith tradition. They are taught ahead of time the basic methods of sociological
participant observation, and they write reflection papers based on their visits. Recently a Turkish Muslim
student commented to me with delight that he had been to a nearby Russian Orthodox Church and that the
space seemed somehow familiar, since so many of the grand mosques of Turkey were once Orthodox
churches. Students are also asked to attend religious services in their own worshipping community,
studying it with the same basic sociological methods, and thus attempting to gain sufficient distance from
their own practices that they are able to view them with a critical and fresh eye.

The broad area of conflict, conflict resolution, conflict transformation, religion and peacemaking, and
religion and conflict, is also introduced in the dialogue course. This is an area which adds to the skills
necessary for the engagement of the Other as an equal, respected, dialogue partner. While this is an area
introduced in the dialogue course, further courses in this area are available for students to take later in their
studies.

The other major area necessary for dialogue pertains to the content of the religious traditions
themselves. Here, the dialogue course relies on the faculty teaching the course, as well as other faculty –
Muslim, Christian, Jewish – who come in to lecture in the areas of ethics, scripture, theology, and history
from the perspective of their disciplines and their religions. The faculty lectures often suggest elements that
are propitious for interfaith dialogue that are related to their disciplines and their traditions, as well as areas
and ideas which are or seem to be, inherently difficult for dialogue, or which represent genuine obstacles
for dialogue.

Since the course is not just teaching about, but also engaging in interfaith dialogue, the makeup of the
students and the professors in the course is important. Each time the course is taught, it has a different
student composition, so the course itself is, accordingly, somewhat different. In a recent semester, in
addition to the North American students, themselves religiously and ethnically diverse, there were students
from Egypt, Iran, Indonesia, Nigeria, the Philippines, Palestine, South Korea, and Turkey. The presence of

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Shi’a students as well as Sunni students on this list, and the presence of various kinds of Protestants as well as Catholics, underlines another dynamic that is present in the dialogue, which is that of the dialogue within faith traditions and not simply between them. And often students find that the differences within their own traditions are harder to accept and to deal with than those between traditions.

Invariably students finish the course with both a deepened sense of and knowledge about their own tradition, and a respect for and interest in the tradition of the other. As a faculty member teaching the course, I am often left wondering how we ever teach our own traditions well without the presence of those from other traditions, with which to compare and contrast, who come with fresh perspectives and pose new questions, and whose very presence helps to keep each religious group honest about its own tradition, and thus requires each to avoid the temptation of hubris and self-congratulation and the blindness that goes with it.

**Internal Challenges**

If interfaith dialogue is as beneficial and as relevant as we at Hartford Seminary think it is, for the preparation of religious leadership today, one must ask the question as to why more institutions do not offer it in their curriculums. There are different ways to answer this question. First, there is the very real difficulty in finding space in what is usually an already over-crowded curriculum, and the presence of many other competing ideas as to what should be added if space were available.

Also, there is the obstacle related to the fact that interfaith dialogue and other interfaith areas are new to much of theological education, and thus most faculty in the West are not generally trained in nor feel capable of teaching such a course. The addition of new faculty is often not possible given finite financial resources, and again, were it possible, there would be several competing suggestions as to the additional disciplines that are needed for which faculty should be hired. Even the addition of interfaith dialogue as one course requirement necessitates significant faculty cooperation, since faculty must agree to teach it, and often must be sufficiently flexible to adapt their knowledge and discipline so that it may add something to the interfaith conversation.

Students too can be a challenge to Seminary interfaith efforts. Often students come to Hartford Seminary eager for interfaith study and encounter. But there are other students who are there in order to study either Islam or Christianity, and they may not in the first instance understand why they must take this dialogue course, since they are sure that is not why they came to seminary. Most of the time resistant students understand the benefit of the course immediately once they are in it. Other students sometimes only come to acknowledge its benefits later in their studies or even some time after they have finished.

Today, Hartford Seminary’s commitment to dialogue extends to life outside the classroom as well. Currently we have 6 student houses in which students (national and international) live across religious traditions, thus practicing living in a daily way the dialogue they learn in classes. And recently, a generous donor gave an entire building adjacent to the campus to the school. This building is named an interfaith building and is used for that purpose.

**External Challenges**

If limited resources, faculty training, and competing ideas of what is missing in the curriculum are some of the internal challenges to the inclusion of interfaith dialogue in theological education, there are plenty of external challenges as well. A primary challenge is one that is very close to home, since it comes from people and institutions within our own faith traditions that do not understand or do not share the theological orientation that views interfaith dialogue as a faithful and important Christian practice. Here, the burden is on the school to carefully and consistently interpret what it is teaching in interfaith dialogue, and why it is
doing so – both theologically and practically. It is also very helpful to involve the skeptics in some of the activities and work of the school so that they see directly what the students and faculty are doing, and so that they continue to feel included in the larger community of the school.

Often the underlying fear of our faith communities stems from fear of the loss of familiar and established identities, and, for Christians in the West today, this fear includes the awareness of and resistance to the loss of religious dominance. However, many Christians, once they get involved, find that building bridges and relationships with people of other faiths is so compelling and joyful that it more than compensates for whatever negative feelings they may experience related to having to learn how to be just one faith among many.

Another challenge is that often our Christian faculties and institutions do not know local people of other religions very well, and clearly one can’t dialogue with the other one has never met. Since we have lived in our religious silos and educated our students accordingly, and because the history of our interfaith relations has been so replete with conflict and mutual hostility, the relationships that we do have are often full of mistrust. Thus seminaries have work to do to prepare the way if they want to engage in mutual interfaith dialogue. They need to get to know the religious communities in their midst, and to develop respectful relationships between equals, before they can expect cooperation in interfaith dialogue and teaching. This is a process which takes time, and which may mean confronting mistrust and painful memories from bad relationships in the past, though often this getting to know you process is one which everyone is eager to have happen.

The inclusion of interfaith dialogue as a lived practice and not simply as something we talk or teach about, implies that the addition of new institutional partners and relationships, which takes time, care and effort to nurture. This is especially true when other faith communities send their students to Christian institutions, which is an act which reflects deep trust and friendship. Communication too may be a challenge since the long established patterns of communication (and financial support) between theological education and Christian denominations are not a pattern that can be duplicated with other faith traditions. Rather new patterns of communication and accountability must be created and lived.

A related challenge is that on important issues some of the communities which relate to the institution may not agree. For example, many, though by no means all of the Christian denominations with which Hartford Seminary relates, advocate for gay, lesbian and transgendered ordained religious leadership. This advocacy is not shared by most Muslims nor is it shared by many Christians, especially from overseas, who come to study Christian-Muslim relationships at the Seminary. The institution intends and attempts to include all regardless of this substantial disagreement, and does so by emphasizing the importance of and the place of dialogue about just such issues inside the institution.

Similarly, during difficult times such as the recent war in Gaza, political and national sentiments which at other times recede into the background, sharply divide people, who then find it very difficult to remain in dialogue with each other, even about other issues. Here too, the Seminary is at pains to as much as possible not take sides, so as to continue to provide for all a safe place to have the debate. Often this approach works well. At other moments, people on all sides of a given issue seem unhappy with the stance of the institution and undoubtedly there are a few who decide that this institutional stance is unsatisfactory and untenable.

While religion and politics are indeed mixed in complex ways, and while conflicts in the wider world will inevitably continue to rock the boat at least occasionally inside the Seminary, the conflict seems to underline the importance of protected space for learning, even about difficult issues, inside the institution; space which is protected from politicization and from activists, however valid their cause, who would like the institution to support only their goals and values. The conflict also underlines the wisdom of the choice of dialogue as a common commitment and value, across all the differences that separate the various communities and individuals which Hartford Seminary serves.
What We Learn From Experience in the Ecumenical Movement

Ecumenical theological education contains many of the characteristics that I have outlined above, and interfaith dialogue has a lot to learn from the decades of ecumenical teaching and learning. Human beings learn from difference. As in ecumenical education, one result of learning from and about the other is a sharpened sense of the specificity of one’s own religious identity and faith tradition, so that, provoked by the contents of the course or class discussions, students are often eager to know their own tradition more profoundly.

Christians frequently ask me if our work across religious lines doesn’t “water down” the Christian content of our courses, or encourage some of our students to convert. This is a concern expressed not only by Christians, but also by Muslims and Jews. Christians often express a similar concern about ecumenical learning that involves people from various Christian traditions. Our experience with interfaith learning is precisely that of our experience with ecumenical learning. Students learning together both learn about and learn to appreciate and respect another tradition, and they learn also about their own tradition and its uniqueness.

As in ecumenical learning, interfaith dialogue involves those who want to talk theology and doctrine, those who want to talk spirituality, or practices, and those who want to get down to the moral tasks at hand in society, working together on justice issues with peoples of many faiths. As is the case in ecumenical circles, it seems wise to acknowledge these different interests and thus to construct ways of dialogue that allow each of these interests to flourish, rather than defining dialogue so rigidly that only one form or goal is recognized.

Another lesson the ecumenical movement can teach is one mentioned above, which is the critical importance of interpretation of what one is doing and why. The congregations and faith communities from which the students come and to which they will return need to understand the importance of interfaith dialogue, and also understand how they will directly and indirectly benefit from their leaders’ involvement. This is especially the case when relationships between faith communities are or have been hostile, and thus have encouraged people to wonder why one would talk to “them” who they see as an enemy.

The growing interest in interfaith dialogue, which to many in the West seems fresh and new, may obscure for some the ongoing need for ecumenical dialogue, since compared to their differences with peoples of other faiths, Christians, however different they may be from each other, have so much, so profoundly, in common. Interfaith dialogue may indeed change the ecumenical conversation between some members of the Christian community, creating new alliances and commonalities between some and opening up new fissures between others. New interfaith relations may open up new ways to have ecumenical conversations, but they should not replace the ecumenical conversation.

Interfaith relations and dialogue is a growing topic in global ecumenical conversations. I have already noted how much we in the West have to learn from Christians in places like India, where religious pluralism is a long lived and long thought about fact of life. I think too of many conversations I have had with Christians from certain parts of Africa for example, who insist that the interfaith enthusiasm in the West is naïve, unhelpful to the relations African Christians have with peoples of other faiths around them, and doomed to failure. There are of course, many Africans who do not agree with this assessment. The point is that those interested in interfaith dialogue in the West need to be in conversation not just with peoples of other faiths, but with Christians such as the Africans or Indians who speak from specific experiences.

The construction and the nurturing of this Christian conversation so that it is multi-faceted and ongoing, is just one way those involved in and responsible for ecumenical education at the WCC, along with those responsible for interfaith relations, can be helpful. In this way they can help ensure that as we think through and embark on various forms of interfaith dialogue in our Christian institutions of theological education.
education, we are learning as much and as deeply as we can from each other, and drawing upon ecumenical relationships across the Christian family that have been built over many years.

**Bibliography**

Personal Background

In 1975, I went to India as a theological teacher, at the Tamilnadu Theological Seminary in Madurai. The challenge to make this journey came from an Indian Christian friend who put it prophetically that I would give something, but learn much more, that would transform my future ministry in Britain. This was to be particularly in the inter faith ministry. TTS, as it became known, was at that time hardly known outside India. Ten years later it had become a byword for contextual theological education. It was an extraordinary experience for me, as a young faculty member, to come from a world where my training had been in a good but very conventional British theological college, to serve in TTS. My own training had been strong in pastoral care and liturgy, in doctrine and European church history. The bible in particular was studied with all the modern tools of biblical criticism, but little attempt to apply such learning to the rapidly changing European or world context. Most pertinent for this article, apart from Judaism, which was studied as a backcloth to New Testament studies rather than as a contemporary faith, other religions might not have existed.

Here at TTS, I learnt that ‘Action-Reflection’ was not just a slogan, but could be a reality in theological education. I learnt that context was manifold - social, political, religious, cultural. I learnt that Christian theology had to be considered within a multi faith world something most have only become conscious of in Britain since 9/11 and the London bombing, known as 7/7. I learnt that the poor, of whatever faith, were not just the beneficiaries of Christian aid, but our partners in the gospel. I learnt of the deep implications of caste, at a time when the word Dalits (a self designation by those formerly known as ‘untouchables’ or ‘Harijans’) was unknown, and when western romanticism about Hinduism only touched the surface of the picture. I learnt that religions other than Christianity had the right to be evangelical, and I witnessed the power of Islam in this respect, as I researched groups of Hindus, but also Christians, who had converted to Islam.

I learnt too of a model of theological education where mission was not an add on extra, but a dimension running through the whole curriculum, with evangelism balancing social justice and inter faith dialogue. I learnt that the seminary community itself was a laboratory of this gospel, not in isolation, but because it was deeply engaged with the world outside, as a learning and acting community. I was assigned to prison ministry, when most faculty members were expected to involve in a project. There I learnt of the power of the gospel to change lives, and of the complexity of enabling a congregation of life prisoners, two thirds Hindu, to learn of a forgiving God, but also to celebrate Eucharist together, where only a minority were baptised. Anglican ring fencing of this sacrament fell away.

I learnt that theological education was there, not just to serve the church as it is, but to challenge the church as to what it might be. This kind of theological education goes along with, and is inseparable from a new approach to theology, and to work this through within a multi faith context was the biggest challenge of all. The lessons I learnt from the TTS experience during its formative years, has shaped all that I have tried to do in Britain (see my book, published by the WCC, in 1999, Does Theological Education make a Difference?) A prayer that I quote in this book is worth repeating, by the TTS founding Principal, Sam Amirtham, Lord we are not what we ought to be, we are not what we could be, but thank you Lord, we are not what we were.
I returned to Birmingham, where I was given the opportunity to mould a course of ordination training, the West Midlands Course, based at Queen’s College. Interfaith questions permeated the whole course-within biblical studies, theology, church history, pastoral studies, ethics, mission. I then became Principal of the College of the Ascension mission college at Selly Oak (1990-2000) where I soon realised that interfaith questions, and in particular, Muslim-Christian relations, were central to most of the dozens of contexts from which students came. Whatever the theological position of a participant, it needed to be developed within inter religious parameters. In Birmingham, I wrote another WCC publication *Encounter in the Spirit* (1989, 1991), which illustrates how a long standing dialogue group involving local Muslims and theological students can be an excellent vehicle for training them, both in knowledge of Islam, but also in learning to communicate simply their faith.

I moved to Leicester in 2000, and I return to this contemporary experience later. During this last decade, I was also the English representative on the Ecumenical Churches Committee for Relations with Muslims in Europe, which gave me a wide overview, and I soon learnt that what can only have limited validity is generalisations across this one very diverse continent. I was part of the formation of the national Christian-Muslim Forum, and co-chair of the Hindu-Christian Forum UK.

With this background, which illustrates how learning happens, I offer the following reflections.

### Historical Development

Questions of theological, missiological and practical engagement with the reality of a multi faith world, were for a long time largely confined to contexts outside Europe, to local Christians and missionaries in those countries. India and China were centres for obvious reasons, where Christians were a small minority, living amongst a range of faiths. Their willingness to engage, to reflect theologically, and to allow themselves to be changed, a hundred years ago or more, while remaining faithful to their Christian calling, are studied to great effect in Kenneth Cracknell’s book, *Justice, Courtesy and Love*. In some ways they went through the kind of broadening journey experienced a century later by some in Britain and Europe. Many missionaries, of course, did not change, and remained rooted in the kind of narrow exclusivism they brought from Britain. So today, while many have become sensitive, from whatever church tradition, to the difference living in a multi faith world in Britain has made to our thinking and mission, others have not changed. What is clear is that it was those most committed to mission and engagement, who were most changed. This is reflected well in Wesley Ariarajah’s doctoral study of the multi faith dimensions of the Edinburgh Mission Conference of 1910. While affirming the evangelisation of the world in one generation, he shows how, within the book entitled *Hindus and Christians*, there was a great range of theological thinking, and intense engagement with the issues involved in this deep encounter with Hinduism within the ‘mission field’. Many followed during the next hundred years, the majority Indian, but also missionaries from Britain such as CF Andrews, Verrier Elwin, those involved with the ashram movement, Lesslie Newbigin (from a rather different perspective) and more recently Roger Hooker and others.

As regards Islam, Henry Martyn (1781- 1812) long before this, can symbolise an extraordinary, if short, encounter with the Muslim world, in India, Arabia, Persia and Turkey, as a very early CMS missionary. He expected to be used to be employed by God to strike at the heart of Hinduism, and to observe ‘the downfall of Satan’. In fact, he found himself in North India, deeply fascinated by Islam, and began to read everything he could pick up ‘about the Mohammadans,’ as he translated the Bible into Urdu. He reached Calcutta in 1806, and died in 1812, but in these few years, began a tradition of studying Islam that became a passion amongst some missionaries. How can we relate constructively to a religion of which we are in complete ignorance? He engaged a Mulvi to help him, and read voraciously, as he engaged in dialogue. He inspired a tradition of training of future missionaries in Islam, undertaken by the new CMS missionary

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college, when it was opened in 1825. The equivalents in the 20th century were giants such as Temple Gairdner and the still very active Kenneth Cragg.

From the time of the opening of the Selly Oak College in the first decade of the 20th century, training for mission included training for relating with people of other faiths, particularly in the decades when India and China were open mission fields. It was a natural place for the Centre for the Study of Islam and Muslim-Christian Relations to be established in the 1970s, and in the later 1990s, a Centre for Asian Religions, with a strong emphasis in both cases on dialogue. It was the place where Gandhi decided to stay, on visiting Britain, at the Quaker college, Woodbrooke. At the same time, lecturers such as Newbigin emphasised a strong Christian mission motivation for mission. Intra Christian dialogue was intense, and much enriched by participants from around the globe coming to study.

The Period after 1970

The first Hindu temple in Birmingham opened in the middle 1970s, in a converted URC church, and I attended here as part of my missionary training in 1975. There were 144 temples recorded in the UK in 2005. These include the very impressive Swaminarayan Temple, in Neasden, North London, peaceful Bhakti Vedanta (ISKON) near Watford, and the Balaji Temple near Birmingham, a beautiful replica of the Tirupati Temple, in South India.

Following up such prominent mosques as the Central Mosque in Birmingham, and Regents Park mosque, mosques began to multiply ‘tenfold and a hundred fold’, some large and purpose built, others converted churches, or house mosques. There are now over 1000 in the UK, about 35 in Leicester. Sikh Gurdwaras became significant in the landscape of cities, most notably the vast institution on the Soho Road in Birmingham, and the new one in Southall. Buddhist Viharas and communities meanwhile multiplied, including many in the countryside. There are 14 different communities in Birmingham.

In other words, presence has become clearer. So also the external context has changed greatly. Since the end of the cold war, with the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, inter religious issues have begun to dominate world affairs and the media, and the need for information, dialogue and understanding become an obvious imperative, even as Marxist-Christian dialogue has receded, almost into oblivion. All this had happened before 9/11, but has clearly enormously increased since then, with Islam and Muslims being the favourite topic of the media, the press, politicians, and serious writing. At the same time, social conditions in some British northern cities, with large Muslim populations, led to an intense response, in terms of helpful social action and church engagement, but also an awareness of the anti Islamic rhetoric of the far right British National Party.

The government now wishes to engage faith communities in regeneration, at least officially, and the quest for ‘Social cohesion’ is now at the forefront of local and national objectives. The issue of asylum seekers has become a major electoral issue, and there is a general feeling that asylum seeker equals Muslim (this is 70% correct). The so called War on Terrorism easily becomes seen as War on Islam, and British participation in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, ambiguities related to Israel/Palestine, and difficulties about taking a firm stance for human rights, are linked with the alliance with the USA, still strong even after the departure of Tony Blair and George Bush.

In response to this, more and more clergy have to engage with the issues, for good or ill, and often feel very ill equipped to do so. Lay people live with much of this, day to day, in their professional or neighbourhood contexts, but do not have the opportunity to reflect about the changes that have come about, as Christianity appears to be declining before their eyes year by year. Typical is an article in the local Leicester paper pre Ramadan, which highlights this impression or stereotype, as it focuses on white converts to Islam, and the ageing and reducing church. That this decline is caused by many other factors, and that conversions to Islam are only a very small statistical figure (perhaps 20,000 in the whole country,
a figure given by a prominent white convert), is ignored. There is an urgent need to increase the confidence of Christians, lay as well as ordained.

Training Developments

There was a move forward in theological colleges in the 1980s, in response to major Asian immigration. This time saw the publications of a pamphlet, *Blind Leaders for the Blind*, by Kenneth Cracknell and David Jennings, which strongly linked together race and faith, and was in the form of a tract against the blindness of contemporary theological training institutions. 1984 (second edition 1986) saw the publication of a more substantial book, *Theology on Full Alert*, by Kenneth Cracknell and Christopher Lamb. This came out around the same time as the important Church of England synod report, *Theology of Inter Faith Dialogue*, which brought the four principles of dialogue, derived from the WCC guidelines, into official prominence, rather than confining them to a group of specialists. The emphasis was on an inclusivist approach, though all positions are given a hearing. The influence of Vatican II on inter faith theology can be discerned. *Theology on Full Alert* consists of a discussion of the issues facing colleges an courses, discussion of curriculum, eighteen testimonies from practitioners and students, clear suggestions about how to involve students in training, and a number of recommendations to different bodies. It outlines *the theological necessity* of a change in approach.

Progress was made in some training institutions, largely depending upon who was teaching in those places. When they moved on, continuity became difficult, with a lack of experienced teaching staff, either in this specialist area, or amongst other specialisms but who had a feel for the importance of this field, and who were prepared to work at it.

The Present Context and Challenges

Three events have made a considerable difference to this field. 9/11 has had a profound effect on all aspects of our life, as seen above, and the London bombings (known as 7/7) in 2005, had an equal effect. The second is the disturbances in several northern cities in summer 2001, involving poor Muslims and disaffected young indigenous groups, which made government and local authorities see, at least in theory, an imperative to address the issues of urban cities. Faith could no longer be ignored, alongside other factors. And thirdly the census of 2001, which not only revealed the religious diversity of the British population, but also the large number of parishes where the other faith component was significant: up to one thousand where it is more than 10%, and 550 with over 25%, or over (this has much increased since then, with immigration, a generally lower age profile of Asian communities, and with demographic trends leading to a wider distribution of more affluent people of faiths other than Christian. In the 2001 census, there were recorded approximately 1,600, 000 Muslims, 560,000 Hindus, 400,000 Sikhs, 250,000 Jews, 135,000 Buddhists (many of them converts) in the UK, and most of these figures have gone up significantly since then.

This has led to the ongoing Church of England initiated Presence and Engagement programme, with its intention of creating a network of such parishes, and to enable reflection theologically, ecclesiologically, missiologically and practically, on what it means to be church in such contexts. This also takes place against the background of an increasing profile for Muslim-Christian relations, through such initiative as the Building Bridges scriptural dialogues, convened by the Archbishop of Canterbury, the formation of a national Muslim-Christian-Forum, and the publication of *A common word*, the very significant letter of 138 Muslim scholars to the Pope and other world church leaders in 2007. There is also a lower profiled Hindu-Christian Forum of the UK, as well as the long established Council for Christians and Jews.
This has all highlighted the need for training and reflection, at all levels of engagement. There is an urgent need for more specialists, who can move with ease in this field, and offer support, as inter faith advisers and academics. Though colleges and courses remain significant, other levels of training, for authorised lay ministries such as readers, pastoral assistants, evangelists, and for lay people in general are important. They are asking questions: This is probably potentially the most divisive issue within the church, apart from issues of human sexuality, and they need the tools to think for themselves about it. Sector ministers are of increasing importance, since their interaction is often higher at a daily level, within universities and colleges, prisons, hospitals, the armed forces, the police, than within the parish ministry. And it is often Christian teachers who are most exposed to the questions involved, where proportions of children of other faiths is often more than in the population as a whole. For example, in Leicester, the proportion of people of other faiths than Christian was 36% in 2001 (now 41%, City Council estimate) but the proportion of school children was 49%, and is now well over 50%. Those working with young people, and young people themselves also need to be given confidence to engage in inter faith dialogue, as well as to work together within our society.

The St Philip’s Centre (for Study and Engagement in a Multi Faith Society)

This is one of two Centres established under the above Presence and Engagement initiative, and I am its founding Director. The other is in Bradford, in a very Muslim-Christian context, where there has been a history of difficult community relations. There is also a Presence and Engagement Network (PEN) in London, with a Secretary whose task is to provide information and inspiration to the four Dioceses which are part of Greater London.

St Philip’s was established in 2005. Its sole patron, the Archbishop of Canterbury, instills the inspiration and practical help through his Inter Faith Officer acting as consultant to the Centre. It is ecumenical, with trustees from Anglican, Methodist, United Reformed, Roman Catholic and Baptist churches. The staff has grown from a half time Director, and PA, to having 8 and a half staff, from Anglican, Methodist, Quaker, and Reformed churches, and also two Muslims and one Hindu. In addition, and key to the Centre, are around 100 occasional resource persons from all faiths, who are called up for particular assignments. In 2005, the Trustees affirmed the following statements:

- **Our Vision** is for a centre rooted in the multi faith context of Leicester, which will assist in equipping Christians and churches for ministry, service and mission in such a context.
- **Our Mission** is to enable Christians and churches to be a confident Christian presence in a multi faith world, prepared to share their own faith, to learn from other faiths, and to assist all in promoting the common good.
- **Our Values** are rooted in the gospel of Jesus Christ, with its deep commitment to the love of God for the whole of creation, including the whole of humanity. The grace of God, and the presence of the Spirit are revealed in Scripture and through the church, but are not limited to Christians; we recognise therefore the various contributions that people of other faiths make to our understanding of the ways of God.

With these in mind, the work has focused on five main areas:

1. Offering training courses to Christian groups, including lay people, licensed lay people such as lay preachers, pastoral assistants, evangelists; ordinands, those in continuing ministerial education, specialist workers such as chaplains in hospitals, prisons, universities and colleges, and senior leaders. The latter include Bishops, Archdeacons, Deans, and the equivalents in each denomination. These courses are now focused on *learning pathways* in each category, depending upon the context they work in.
2. Here, I mention the lay training course *Unfamiliar Journey*, of which 25 have been completed. This is a six or seven week evening programme, where five weeks will be in a parish or ecumenical group, when the focus will be on learning about dialogue, considering Biblical material, look at the demography of the area, and the challenges within the context and beyond. Two evenings will take place in the worship centres of two faiths, usually a mosque and a Hindu temple. The latter part of the course will focus upon how such encounters have enabled reflection on Christian faith. They will also consider questions of spirituality, mission, and pastoral care, in the light of what has been experienced. There is a follow up course *Deepening the Journey*, which will involve exposure to another faith or faiths, or going more deeply into biblical or other material or as negotiated with a group.

3. Offering training and consultancy to the public sector, including those involved in education, the police, the health service etc. This is a work of Christian mission. Information, or what is called now religious literacy, and appropriate practical training is given around issues. Classes take place in the church, and many find themselves in a world that is very new to them. The demand may be there to learn about Islam, but they learn also about Christianity. There are courses too called PREVENT- where the aim is to be alert to issues of violent extremism, but also to be able to distinguish between the vast majority of Muslims who are moderate and committed to common citizenship, and the tiny proportion who can be radicalised and become dangerous.

4. Exposure visits take place either for those from Leicester to visit other cities, or in receiving those from overseas, particularly mainland Europe, who come to learn from a model that seems to work well- numerous groups have come, particularly from Sweden, Denmark and Norway, and have returned and made changes in their own context.

5. Engaging directly in dialogue on a regular basis. The Centre has run a Muslim-Christian dialogue group now for 9 years, meeting every month, and a similar one for Muslim and Christian women. There are other groups for Hindu-Christian dialogue, for Sikh Christian encounter, and a Family of Abraham group involving Jews, Christians and Muslims. Out of these groups have come fund raising dinners for common charities, locally or internationally, and sporting events (Imams and clergy cricket and football contests, a weekly evening for women to engage in indoor sport etc).

Pioneer courses run in De Montfort University, where the Centre is now a partner institution. These include an MA in Inter Religious Relations. There is also a 12 week course for medical students in Religion and Belief, Health and Wholeness, of Leicester University.

**Endnote: Some recent quotations which offer challenging questions for discussion in theological education:**

- Archbishop John Senthamu, at his inauguration sermon in York Minster, said, ‘Christians, go and find friends who are Buddhists, Hindus, Jews, Muslims, Sikhs…not for the purpose of converting them to your beliefs, but for friendship, understanding, listening, hearing. Christians, our priority for making disciples is amongst the 72% who are in the last census said they were Christians.’
  *Do you agree?*

- Archbishop Rowan Williams, in a lecture at Birmingham University, said, ‘The Christian is struck and challenged by the fact that outside the visible fellowship of faith, lives are lived which look as though they are in harmony with the Christian universe-…….We have to see how very other our universes are; and only then do we find dialogue a surprise and a joy as we also discover where and how we can still talk about what really matters most- holiness, being at peace, and what truly is.’
  *Are these three topics the right basis for dialogue?*
• From *Generous Love*: ‘We will maintain our presence among communities of different faiths as we celebrate Jesus as the way, the truth and the life, for us and for all people. We will channel our energies into connection, communication and reconciliation with other faith groups as we open ourselves to the energies of the Spirit.’

*How to give Christians the confidence to do this?*

• ‘Muslims are now part of the West, so the discussion is not between ‘them’ and ‘us’, but between ‘us’ and ‘us’, among ourselves, with our common humanity. Talk of ‘clash of civilisations’ in this context is not only dangerous and irresponsible (for the false line it perpetuates), it is also foolish…Muslims living in the West may not agree with certain material motivations in the West or the way the family is being neglected, and on these issues they may come together with many of their fellow citizens of Christian and other faiths and non-faith backgrounds. Muslims living in the West may take issue with the current state of social and international justice, and they would again stand with the majority of their fellow citizens. On concerns about the environment, again Muslims would stand with the people’, Dilwar Hussein (*Emel*, July/August 2004).

*Are Muslims to be our allies, or ‘the other’, as we live and work together as Christians and Muslims, and is our education to be aimed towards such unity rather than division?*

• Jonathan Sacks, Chief Rabbi of UK, wrote the book, *The Home we build together*. Here he writes of *integration without assimilation*, as the model that should be worked for, as people of all faiths have an equal stake in working for a Britain, or Europe, where all contribute. This should replace the models of ‘guests’ or of ‘multiculturalism’, which are flawed, the one leading to insecurity, the other to potential ghettoisation.

*Is this what we should be working towards in theological education?*

• From *A common word between us and you*, ‘Muslims and Christians together make up well over half the world’s population. Without peace and justice between these two religious communities, there can be no meaningful peace in the world……the basis for this peace and understanding already exists. It is part of the very foundational principles of both faiths; love of the One God, and love of the neighbour. These principles are found over and over again in the sacred texts of Islam and Christianity.’ The Archbishop of Canterbury commented, ‘To your invitation to enter more deeply into dialogue and collaboration as part of our faithful response to the revelation of God’s purpose for humankind, we say, Yes! Amen.’

*Examine the whole text as a possible basis for study in theological education!*

**Bibliography**


Anglican Communion Office, *Generous Love*, 2008 (also on its own web site, and links through www.nifcon.anglicancommunion.org

Presence and Engagement web site of the Church of England – www.presenceandengagement.org.uk

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Introduction
The Ecumenical Disability Advocates Network (EDAN) is a Project of the World Council of Churches within the Unity, Mission, Evangelism and Spirituality Programme through which the work on theology and disability as discussed in the paper has been carried out. It was established after the WCC 8th Assembly in Harare, Zimbabwe, in 1998 on the realization that WCC needed to find ways of ensuring that there was a sustainable structure to ensure that disability concern remains on the agenda. The 2006 Porto Alegre, Brazil 9th Assembly affirmed the work of the EDAN as a priority in the WCC for the following seven years. EDAN operates as a decentralized international network with its coordination base in Nairobi under the auspices of the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC). Its main purpose is to carry forward the WCC vision on work with persons with disabilities, and to provide a model of church through advocacy for participation, inclusion and active involvement of persons with disabilities in all aspects of spiritual, social and development life in the church and society.

It was the observation of the very first EDAN Consultation in Nairobi at the end of 1999 that if long term impact in influencing the church in providing space for the expression of persons with disabilities in its spiritual, social and development life was to be achieved, there was need for a multi-dimensional approach to the concern. Firstly, ways had to be found to ensure that the leadership of the church was engaged in discussing disability as a vital part of the witness and mission. Secondly, as the foundation for the continuation of this process, it was necessary to focus on the training of the ministers who would lead the churches.

Disability Discourse with the Churches
It was seen to be important to initiate a discourse among the church leaders about engaging with disability as a vital part of the church’s witness and mission. To this end a theological statement was developed as a basis for discussion with the guidance and full participation of the WCC Faith and Order team. The main purpose of this statement was to help member churches to engage with disability as a theological concern, and as part of their life and mission. It was prepared as both an awareness-building and an advocacy document. This process had of necessity to take center stage in the work of EDAN because of its importance in influencing the WCC governing organs and member churches.

This interim statement - “A Church of All and for All”\(^1\) - was described as a stage on a continuing journey. It was a product of close to three years process involving reflection, discussion and consultation with a wide range of individuals with disabilities (many of whom were ordained ministers or students of theology), parents of disabled children and by others who experience life alongside people with disabilities. The process was very much enriched by the assistance given by the Faith and Order Commission.

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The WCC Central Committee in August 2003 received the statement, and after intensive study and deliberation accepted it as a WCC statement. It commended the statement to all WCC member churches for study, reflection, feedback and action. EDAN received many comments about it, and a need has been expressed that a study guide be produced to accompany it. Since then the statement has been produced in, among other languages, English, French, German, Spanish, Portuguese, Swedish and other Eastern European languages. The Arabic translation is one of the latest.

The statement is ‘interim’ in that it is part of an ongoing process or continuous journey in search of a theological understanding. It points to the fact that we will have a different way of raising theological perspectives tomorrow than we do today. The main purpose of an interim statement is not to impose one understanding of disability, but to enable us to engage in an ongoing conversation. It is the process in itself that is valuable. It can be liberating both for the churches and people with disabilities.

It is an invitation to the church to journey toward that radical place where all are welcomed at God’s banquet table. It is not a comprehensive document, but offers pointers and insights on major theological themes. It has very distinct sections on commonalities and differences, the hermeneutical issues, Imago Dei, healing and forgiveness, giftedness and the concept of a Church for All. These sections have raised fundamental theological principles on which disability issues need to be viewed in light of the entire process of being church.

The section on commonalities and differences underscores the need to consider the fact that people with disabilities are individuals with specific characteristics and not a homogeneous group that should just be seen in terms of provision of assistance and care. The hermeneutical issues section underscores the fact that disabilities need not just be viewed either as loss or as punishment for sin, but that they should be viewed as part of the human diversity and plurality of God’s creation.

One over-riding theme in the statement is that of the creation story as reflected in the section on Imago Dei. The section underscores the fact that it is not our intellect or our physical being which reflect the image of God in us. If this were the case, it would disprove the bible when it says “we are all created in the image of God”. We exist in a fragile world in which we are all part of the whole that reflects God’s image. When God created the entire world, he saw that it was good. Thus, the notion that God’s image has to do with our intellect or physical being is therefore a negation of his purpose. Christ’s own body was broken on the cross, and that resulted in our salvation. In whatever state of being we are, we are wonderfully made, and made in the image of God.

The healing section differentiates between healing and cure. The gospel healing stories are seen not merely as restoration of the body, but more of the individual’s restoration in and into society. They are seen as an act of making them human and thereby reintegrating them into community life. When we create an inviting environment and provide space for full participation and active involvement of people with disabilities in the church life, we are participating in Christ’s healing ministry.

The giftedness section highlights the fact that all of us, those with and without disabilities are part of one church and each has gifts and talent to contribute to being church. Gifts and talents with no home in the church of Christ are incomplete. The section on “A Church for All”, which is the last in the statement, highlights the necessity to accommodate the needs of all in worship, social, development and political life of the church. In worship, the statement points out that it will be necessary to consider the needs of different categories of disabilities. Good lighting, appropriate acoustics, thought-through seating arrangements, sign language interpreters and accessibility not only to the building but also the pulpit all need to be considered in a ‘church for all’. This will be a church that welcomes and accommodates everyone, accepting their varying gifts and talents irrespective of the differences that may otherwise threaten to set us aside from each other.

It is hoped that the statement will go some way to demystifying some of the discourse on disability, thus motivating churches and communities to think more imaginatively about creating communities that
encourage and facilitate the full participation of all people, including individuals with disabilities, in the spiritual and social life of the church.

The second dimension of the work with persons with disabilities has been that of intervention at the stage of the training of church ministers. EDAN partnered in this process by the Programme of the World Council of Churches on Ecumenical Theological Education (ETE). The Reference Group of EDAN met in August of 2000 together with both ETE and Faith and Order. The group made recommendations on ways of exploring how to introduce Disability Discourse into theological institutions and through them to churches with the Interim Statement. The starting point was for EDAN to begin discussions on this subject with selected institutions.

As the group observed, there was a need to focus on theological institutions as the most suitable foundation through which the churches could best be engaged. The introduction of Disability Discourse in theological institutions has been found to be a vital component in terms of engaging the church with the issue. The group recommended that though it is important to include courses in the curriculum that specifically address the needs of persons with disabilities and prepare students for ministry to and with persons with disabilities, it is vital that the voices of people with disabilities should be heard in all courses, throughout the curriculum.

Beginning with the small select group, ideas were collected on developing a specific focus on awareness, advocacy and pastoral theology in such a way that it is relevant to persons with disabilities. A four days workshop, co-sponsored by ETE, was organized in Nairobi, Kenya, in August 2004. The participants included one representative from each of the five select key institutions which were:

- St. Paul’s United Theological College, Limuru, Kenya.
- United Theological College of West Indies, Kingston, Jamaica.
- Stockholm School of Theology, Stockholm, Sweden.
- Asia theological seminary, Philippines.
- Lutheran Senior Seminary, Brazil.

This small group was particularly concerned that women and men, who are being trained to work in churches, lay training centers, theological and ecumenical institutions, should be well prepared and equipped to address the pastoral, theological and ethical concerns that are voiced by people with disabilities. As one participant put it: “The problem is not that we have people who are deaf, mute and blind (and with other disabilities) among us, rather the churches and church-related institutions are usually deaf, mute and blind towards our concerns and needs.”

Despite the talk about contextual and ecumenical theologies, these institutions are yet to be inclusive, sensitive and relevant to people with disabilities, their families and their care-givers (part-time or full-time depending on circumstances) in the church and the society. Even when it is asked who is missing at the ecumenical table, rarely do is it remembered that people with disabilities are not represented. During the conversations participants agreed that theological institutions and lay training centers must be challenged to address this important and urgent subject. Theological institutions are called upon with exponential force to produce ministers capable of addressing the complexities of modern life. The key question then, was “What does our curriculum require in order to equip clergy to embrace all of God’s creation?”

**Ministerial Formation**

In addressing the subject of theology and disability, it is necessary to bear in mind that people with disabilities are a marginalized group around the world. Whether inadvertently, or in a subtly deliberate way, these people are discriminated against in societies and churches. Their human rights and their dignity are not respected. This should not be acceptable to the church which is called to be an example of an open and inclusive community. As the churches hear God’s calling, that they all may be one, any form of
People with Disabilities and Theological Education

discrimination with excludes people from participating fully should be unacceptable, whether within the church or in society itself. On the contrary the churches should be an example for society of a different way of fellowship, a new way of being together -- as God’s people. Sadly this is seldom the case. Instead of hearing God’s calling to be a reflection of the values of the kingdom to come - God’s kingdom - the churches are more often a reflection of the values of the surrounding societies.

This call for a conversion of attitudes within the churches highlights the need for the churches to look at themselves and answer some serious, self-critical and disturbing questions, as observed by Fritzson and Kabue.2 How is the church responding to God’s call to see all people as equal, in relation to people with disabilities? Are Christian communities fully including people with disabilities? Or are they discriminating against them in any sense? Are the gifts and contributions to the community of those who are disabled valued and honoured? In what way does the church need to change its ways in order to be able to say that people with disabilities are not discriminated against and that they are capable of participating fully in the lives of their churches?

In order to answer these questions people with different ministerial responsibilities in the churches need to spearhead an awareness-raising process in churches of the plight of people with disabilities in their communities. From this the process of change should start.

According to Fritzson3, the first task for people serving in different ministerial roles in the church, and those training for the ministry too, is to identify who the people with disabilities are, and to ask them about their needs and the ways in which they feel they could and would like to contribute to the mission of the church.

Fritzson points out in this article that in the introduction to the United Nations Standard Rules on equalization opportunities for persons with disabilities, there is a distinction between the term disability and handicap. It says: The term “disability” summarizes a great number of different functional limitations occurring in any population in any country of the world. Physical, intellectual or sensor-impairment, medical conditions or mental illnesses may disable people. Such impairments, conditions or illnesses may be permanent or transitory in nature. The term “handicap” means the loss or limitations of opportunities to take part in the life of the community on equal level with others. It describes the encounter between the person with a disability and the environment. The purpose of this term is to emphasize the focus on the shortcomings in the environment and in many organized activities in the society, for example, information, communication, and education, which prevent persons with disabilities from participating on equal terms.

So the churches can ask themselves: In what respect are our communities’ environments the cause for people with disabilities to become people that have different forms of handicaps? How are we to change our way of being so people with disabilities can feel that they are not handicapped in terms of participating in the life of the church? The aim should be to make the church environment as accessible an environment as possible accessible when it is open for people with disabilities in every possible respect.

In order to explore this concept of accessibility, Fritzson gave four different dimensions of accessibility which he mentioned as physical, social, ethical and spiritual dimensions of accessibility for people with disability.

a. Accessibility in this respect is often seen as a purely physical concept. Accessibility for people with disabilities is equated to physical accessibility. For some this is limited for example to the ability to access somewhere by wheelchair. Here it a question of ramps, lifts, wide doors and toilets, etc. These are all very important issues but the questions concerning people with disabilities’ physical access are much more varied. There needs to be concern for hearing aids for persons with hearing impairment, concern for good lighting for persons who are visually impaired. There is a need to look at the way written materials are


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presented to ensure that everybody read the information, seeing if for example, information needs to be
given in larger or bolder typefaces or provided in Braille. These are just a few examples how churches need
to reassess their physical environment in order to see how truly accessible they are to all. It is not possible
to give a complete list here.

b. To see the accessibility of our social environment as we should, we need to ask ourselves how we as
individuals and communities encounter people with disabilities. For a long time and as is still the case in
many parts of the world, disability is something that people are ashamed of. It is seen as a condition that
should be kept out of sight, something that many people do not want to hear of. Disabilities are stigmatized
in different respects. This results in isolation and hence many persons almost never encounter people with
disabilities, so that when they do, they feel uncertain or uneasiness, and do not know how to cope with the
unfamiliar situation. This is nothing to be moralized over - people have the right to feel uncomfortable in
new situations and everyone has the right to be a beginner at something new - but this feeling of uneasiness
is a problem whose source we need to address with a clear mind, and tackle it in an adequate manner.

We need to remember that it is not only people encountering people with disability that feel this
uneasiness but it is also felt by the people with disabilities themselves, and by their relatives. This can
become a major problem that has at times led to people with disabilities choosing not to go to public
gatherings including church meetings. This is why the question of the social environment is a major
concern on how accessible the churches are for people with disabilities. The churches need to ask
themselves the question as to how they should deal with this problem. As mentioned earlier, being angry
and having a moralizing attitude does not help. The place to start is by helping people to acknowledge their
uneasiness and discomfort when encountering people with disabilities, and then to help them to overcome
it.

To achieve this it is important to create places where people with and without disabilities can encounter
one another in a relaxed manner. At such meetings people with disabilities can share their experiences,
their struggles, their joys and their hopes, in ways that will help those without disability understand that in
fact all have much in common.

c. The third dimension of environment that needs to be looked at in order to make churches accessible
for people with disabilities is the ethical dimension. Questions need to be asked about whether all human
life is seen as valuable or not. People with disabilities can experience this differently from those without
disabilities. In order to meet people with disabilities on an equal basis, people without disabilities need to
acknowledge their prejudices. Some people with disabilities live life with either explicit or implicit
messages given to them that their life is something that would not have happened if everything was as it
ought to be. Holding views like this, people without disability can never encounter people with disabilities
in a fully equal manner. Their understanding of the value of a disabled human life needs challenging until it
is equal with that of the value of human life that is not disabled. In turn, this will challenge the traditional
ways of encountering persons with disabilities within the church. In churches there can be a tendency for
people to feel a need to be good, and to do good deeds, and people with disabilities in the church can be
viewed as possible targets for the outworking of this need. However, this can lead to people with
disabilities being treated as objects rather than as equal individuals.

So, the church needs to work thoroughly with the ethical dimension of environment to ensure a change
to a fully inclusive understanding of the value of human life. This will place those with disabilities on an
equal level with those without. With this new understanding of the value of human life the church will find
a new understanding of God, because the understanding of human life is always related to the
understanding of the image of God.

d. The fourth dimension of accessibility, which is the spiritual or the theological dimension, calls for a
process to be explored where churches change their way of being together in order to create an
environment where people with disabilities do not have to experience a handicap. Such a process can
change people’s understanding of church, of themselves as the people of God and, eventually, of God’s
own self. This process will have consequences for the way people worship together, the way they interpret
the scriptures, and the way they see each other as gifts from God to the whole community. For instance, the
process should examine how it preaches or educates people in Bible studies about stories on the signs that
Jesus did where people experienced healing. In particular thought needs to be given to how these passages
are talked about in ways that does not exclude those with disabilities and their life experiences.

Disability is an ordinary part of the human experience. Its naturalness within life is almost universal to
the point that if one lives long enough, the experience of disability is ushered through in the aging process
alone. As Nouwen⁴ suggests, the absence of disability within the corpus of theological disciplines is all the
more striking. People with disabilities have certainly been present throughout the history of time. Why then
has theological method been historically silent about the subject of disability? Perhaps it is that disability
reminds us so vividly of our vulnerability.

When people with disabilities interact with others in educational settings, a transformation of
environment, culture, and curriculum will necessarily occur. Theological schools therefore should not
address the issues involved in welcoming students with disabilities simply because they are forced to do so
by the law or denominational mandates or as a result to pressure by advocates, but rather because it is in
consistent with their theological purpose (Birch, 2003). Whatever the nuance of a particular setting or
tradition, theological schools are in the business of providing for and equipping the ministries of the whole
people of God. If, on reflection, a portion of God’s people have been pushed to the margins, denied full
access or left out altogether, then we have failed at our task.

Introducing Theological Discourse on Disability

Theology is a discourse carried out by able bodied people for the able bodied and so disability is not a
theological category and as a consequence there is very little material available to draw from. Theology’s
silence toward the human experience of disability limits the opportunity for both reflection and presence.
This silence poses barriers for people with disabilities in terms of achieving admission, participation, and
voice within theological education. Engaging meaningfully and profoundly with people who have
disabilities requires that theological educators initiate dialogue within the theological setting. This dialogue
must include people with disabilities, and not simply be about “them”.⁵

As is often the case, the defining pressures of theological education are not initiated by theological
schools or generated by the church. Rather, they are emergent in the life of culture where the church and its
theological schools find their rightful habitat. This redefinition of social relationships, which touches every
phase of public reality and which therefore intrudes into our most intimate sense of self, will inevitably be
viewed as a mix of promise and threat.

EDAN’s approach to target deans of studies in select institutions as the nuclear for developing further
the idea has had some success. Together with these deans of studies from different regions of WCC, EDAN
has been able to come up with a draft curriculum, flexible enough for adaptations in different settings. St.
Paul’s United Theological College in Limuru, Kenya (now St. Paul’s University), took a lead in
introducing the curriculum, and since then the idea has been taken up in Asia, Caribbean, Latin America
and the Pacific. All the institutions which took part in the initial Limuru Consultation have now introduced
disability studies as either an integrated subject or as an independent examinable module. In addition, some
work has been going on in the United States of America through the American Associations of Theological


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Schools (ATS), and articles on theological education and disability have been published in their journal Theological Education. Some work has also been done through the Centre for Religion and Disability.

There are different ways of introducing Disability Discourse into theological education:

**Team teaching**

There is a shift in the education system across the whole world. Theological education is no longer a prime area of study as indicated by dwindling enrolments and declining student numbers. With it, funds for the study are diminishing too. Theological institutions need to look for new ways of boosting student enrolment. There is a need to liberate ourselves from contextual theological challenges. Theological education needs to be able to cater for persons with disabilities. We need theology from the framework of the people. Theology should be liberatory but it has failed to protect the vulnerable and therefore we need to re-construct our theologies. We need theology that is compassionate and caring.

In India two colleges affiliated to South Asia Research Institute of the Senate of Serampore College (University), Bangalore, have introduced a Disability and Theology course. This is a team teaching course where students have been encouraged to do research while faculty write papers on the subject. Through it the institutions have acquired more literature in this particular field.

**Infusion**

Infusing theological curriculum with education about the human experience of disability adds an important **qualitative** dimension that many often cite as missing or incomplete. In this cooperative perspective, people with disabilities fill a needed and valuable role within the community of faith – they have a place at the table (Webb-Mitchell 1994). Indeed, people with disabilities embody in human form a revelation of God that the able-bodied need to discover.

The faculty of United Theological College of the West Indies (UTCWI) has become engaged in teaching disability and theology through infusion method by including disability in various disciplines such as studies in Missions and Missiology and also in Christian Education. Some faculty members have also included issues on disability in the role of the church in Public Education. Others have used narratives and stories of persons with disabilities in Pastoral Care Counselling to challenge the attitudes of the students. UTCWI has taken steps to include organisations of persons with disabilities in its public lectures and this has gone a long way towards sensitization of ministers in training.

Infusion should not be seen as a competing strategy, but rather as another option, as it avoids a search for a single lecturer and initially minimises adjustments to the current curriculum and minimises the costs for the early introduction.

A truly radical approach must challenge the existing and persistent barriers that hinder persons with disabilities as students. It is the presence of persons with disability in both formal and informal interactions that provide the space for relevant theological formation, and this means a change in theological institutions admissions processes to encourage those with disabilities to apply for theological education.

**Insertion**

St. Paul’s University has successfully taught the course as a one semester, examinable module for the last four years in a row. The college provides a uniquely suitable setting for the engagement of theological education and disability as it brought its treasured heritage of theological study tradition to be enriched with its embedded commitment to ecumenism, dynamic leadership and its desire to engage in real.

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7 See: www.religionanddisability.org/AccessToTheologicalHigherEducation.html.
8 Wati Longchar 2007.

*Handbook of Theological Education in World Christianity*
practical issues in their current manifestations. The approach in Limuru was to have different lecturers who could create an environment for an interactive experience for students with the intention of encouraging encounter, investigation and reflection in the range of issues in disability. The approach was to deliberately seek to engage students in theological dialogue with persons with disabilities, and to participate to whatever extent possible in the real-life experience of their everyday lives.

The course has received a most encouraging response from the students. Many have engaged the issues at a very personal level and have related the concerns to their local congregations and pastoral context. Students have grappled with the sometimes controversial theological issues raised with keen effort and sharp insight. It is hoped that as this course is received, criticized, refined and contextualized, it will be of significant benefit in the many, varied regions of the world.

The Jamaica Theological Seminary in Jamaica has developed a syllabus on Introduction to Disability for 3 credit hours per week over 2 semesters. This course is an introduction to issues concerning disability. As such, it embraces a variety of perspectives and themes on disability. The delivery of the course is enriched by the participation of persons with disabilities and persons who work in the area of disability. It is both academic and practical, engaging cognitive, affective, and behavioral domains. The course goal is that participants will experience increased awareness of disability issues and attitudinal changes, where necessary, towards these issues and towards persons with disabilities, with a view to becoming disability advocates.

The course is an adaptation of the original course outline produced for St. Paul’s United Theological College, Limuru, Kenya, with ideas borrowed from the adaptation made by United Theological College of the West Indies (UTCWI).

**Development of Materials on Disability and Theology for Theological Institutions**

ETE and EDAN have had an ongoing discussion to introduce the disability discourse in theological institutions with a view to instituting awareness and encouraging advocacy for the inclusion and full participation of persons with disabilities in the life of the church at the stage of the training of the church ministers. However, it has been discovered that there aren’t enough reading materials in these theological institutions and that there is therefore a need to develop materials on disability and theology.

The first resource material development writers’ workshop was held in 2007 when ETE, EDAN and Association of Theological Education Institutions in South East Asia (ATESEA) organized a theological writer’s workshop on “Doing Theology from Disability Perspective” from May 22-27, 2007 in Manila, Philippines. Thirty writers were drawn mainly from theologians, persons with disabilities and disability experts from the South. Each of the writers was given a topic to research and a paper to prepare in accordance with his or her expertise and experience. The articles presented ranged from practical concerns to personal experiences, to deeper theological issues such as theodicy, liberation and Imago Dei. Thirty papers were presented to the workshop in total, and then critically analyzed, and the writers then given time to go and make improvements. An editorial committee was formed to put the papers together and the result of all this work was the publication of two volumes of a theological resource book on theology of disability for use in theological colleges and churches.9

The second resource material development writers’ workshop was jointly organized by ETE and EDAN Hosted by Conference of Latin America Churches (CLAI). It was held in Quito, Ecuador from March 25-30, 2008. A total of 48 people participated, of which 35 were people with disabilities and the rest were theologians, biblical scholars and specialists in the area of disabilities. The conference provided

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opportunities to share different experiences: biblical and theological reflection on the one hand, and testimonies from persons with disabilities on the other. The writers prepared their papers ahead of time, circulating them to all the participants, who read and passed back their comments. The resulting book has been printed in Spanish and is in use in Latin America, and the editorial team is now in the process of translating it to English.

The third resource material development writers’ workshop was jointly organized by ETE and EDAN and hosted by St. Paul’s University, Limuru, Kenya. The meeting was held in Mombasa, Kenya, from June 24-28, 2008. The writers’ workshop brought together 22 participants who included theologians, biblical scholars, persons with disabilities and persons working in the field of disability. They came together to produce resource materials for use in theological institutions that are implementing the disability studies curriculum. The aim was to use St. Paul’s University as an entry point and platform to introduce the disability discourse into the theological institutions that are the production centers for ministers of the gospel. The purpose of the workshop was to have the participants critique the papers that had been prepared for inclusion in the resource book which was designed for use in theological institutions and churches in the region when training pastors in disability issues. The editorial team under the leadership of St Paul’s University are in the process of preparing the final manuscript.

Conclusion

People with disabilities desire to celebrate the rights and obligations of their faith just like everyone else. The connection is just being made that the absence of education about disability at the seminary level has a limiting effect on the participation of people with disabilities in congregations. Infusing disability education into the graduate theological curriculum is bringing a great new awareness to people’s thinking, faith, and knowledge of God. Perhaps the most beautiful (and largely undiscovered) country is the emerging landscape where people with disabilities offer theological education new revelation about what it means to be the people of God. The kingdom of God is like a man who prepares a great banquet, and when the usual list of guests cannot attend, the summons is issued: go find those who are made to reside outside the gate: the blind, the lame, those with disabilities so that the kingdom of God may be made manifest.

Appendix: One Example of a Curriculum on Disability Issues (St. Paul’s University, Limuru Kenya)

1. Title: Introduction to Disability Issues – Towards an Inclusive Church and Society.
2. Description:
   This course explores new ways of embracing an inclusive understanding of the body of Christ by incorporating the experiences of disability. The course will particularly focus on biblical, theological, cultural and practical issues involved in the ministry to, with and by people with disabilities. Emphasis will be given to the role and place of persons with disability in the church and the community at large for the realization of genuine inclusivity.
3. Purpose
   The purpose of this course is to create awareness in issues of disability and to engage in critical reflection and praxis on what it means to be made in the image of God and living with disability; and also the implications this has for our understanding of God.
4. Duration: To be determined by the implementing Institution
5. Methodology

Field trips, mentoring, verbatim in fieldwork, lectures by resource persons, immersion learning, case studies, role-playing, class discussions, films, video etc.

6. Learning Outcomes
   By the end of this course the student should be able to
   a. Critically analyze existing traditional values, prejudices, considerations and practices towards a reconstruction of the socio-cultural construction of disability issues and formulate appropriate theological, pastoral and practical responses.
   b. Explore and integrate theological, practical and pastoral issues with special reference to disability concerns and directly engage in active advocacy actions in their community (addressing legal, ethical, human rights, spiritual issues, etc.)
   c. Engage in critical reflection on congregational issues through bible studies, accessibility assessment, liturgical worship, sermons, training and advocacy for leadership with a view to full inclusion of persons with disability
   d. Critically assess the traditional understanding of God and particularly explore what it means to be in the image and likeness of God and yet having a disability.

7. Course Outline
   The course will be divided into five parts including an introduction, four major sections, and a practical dimension or a project.
   a. Introduction to disability Studies
      - Introduction to disability issues e.g. hermeneutics, definition of terms, appropriate language, concepts and applications of miracle, healing, wholeness, etc.
      - Theology and persons with disabilities
      - History and persons with disability; disability movements, etc.
      - African understandings of disability, exclusion and rejection, roles, etc.
   b. Disability: Theological and Spiritual Considerations
      - The doctrine of creation; the sovereign and perfect God and the imperfect creation; commonality and difference; made in the image and likeness of God; God and justice
      - Theological and biblical views of disability; sin and suffering; body and soul; disability and ‘wholeness.’
      - Belonging and the body of Christ; death, resurrection and eternal life
   c. Disability: Pastoral and Ministerial Considerations
      - People with disabilities as members of the family of God; their gifts and role/place.
      - The role of the church in creating appropriate facilities, pastoral responsibilities, embracing all members
      - How to create ways to better include people with disabilities and their family into congregational life and practice.
      - People with disabilities and cultural practices.
      - People with disabilities in the history to the church.
      - Exploring biblical and cultural views for healing, hospitality and integration.
      - African ways of dealing with disability issues
   d. Disability: Legal and Ethical Considerations
      - Human rights; advocacy
      - Affirmative action; opportunities and empowerment
      - The state, society and human experience of disability, violence, gender etc.
      - Participation (active involvement) and inclusivity.
      - Disability and issues of economic empowerment, poverty etc.
      - Resources and services for people with disability
   e. Project: Practical Dimension on the Human Experience of Disability
Projects could be carried out on various aspects of this curriculum e.g. on the church’s role and responsibility, practical applications for including people with disabilities in the life and work of the church, disability advocacy groups; etc.

8. Evaluation/Assessment
- Exams, assignments, continuous assessment tests, projects, fieldwork, and practical participation.

9. Resources
a. Primary
- Resource persons e.g. persons with disability, members of disability advocacy groups, institutions, students of disability issues etc.

b. Secondary
- Recommended books, films, magazines, journals etc.

Suggested Reading:

Bibliography


[www.religionanddisability.org/AccesstoTheologicalHigherEducation.html](http://www.religionanddisability.org/AccesstoTheologicalHigherEducation.html)
MAINSTREAMING HIV AND AIDS IN THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

Ezra Chitando

Introduction

One of the key requirements of theological education is that it must be contextually relevant. Relevant theological education addresses the life settings of the learners and equips them with skills to respond to the felt needs of their communities. Theological educators therefore have the responsibility of ensuring that the courses they teach speak to the existential realities of the learners. While there is indeed scope for abstract reflections, these should not be at the expense of tackling real life issues.

For theological institutions in sub-Saharan Africa, the HIV and AIDS epidemic represents one of the most pressing existential issues. The epidemic shows no sign of slowing down and accounts for millions of deaths in the region. It has therefore been vital for theological institutions in the region to mainstream HIV in their programmes. Notable progress has been achieved in this regard, although much more creativity is required. This article provides an overview of the quest to mainstream HIV and AIDS in theological programmes in Africa. It proceeds to explore some areas that require further reflection if theological education is to equip African religious communities to respond effectively to HIV and AIDS and other emergencies.

Disrupting Business: HIV & AIDS and Theological Education

Africa has produced some of the most notable names in church history and theological history. Kwame Bediako undertook an impressive analysis of the contribution of North African theologians to the quest for identity, and explored how their insights could be appropriated in the contemporary period. With most commentators agreeing that the centre of gravity of Christianity has shifted decisively to the south in general and Africa in particular, it is incumbent upon African theologians to demonstrate that African Christianity has attained theological maturity.

Following the attainment of political independence in the 1960s and 1970s for the majority of African countries, African theology attained a degree of respectability. Pioneering African theologians were keen to ensure that Christianity in Africa reflected an African ethos. Many theological institutions taught courses on African theology. The views of the pioneers of African theology remain informative and their ideas continue to inform the discipline. At the heart of African theology was the conviction that the African context was primary to all academic endeavours. Theological institutions in Africa were to play a major role in mobilising their communities in making Christianity relevant to the African context.

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Despite the commitment to contextualisation, African theological institutions were found wanting when the HIV epidemic broke out in the mid 1980s and had its effects felt in the 1990s. As millions of Africans succumbed to AIDS, African theological institutions were characterised by passivity and inaction. To a very large extent, lecturers in these institutions failed to rise beyond ordinary members of society and provide theological insights into the meaning of the epidemic. This was unfortunate as many theological institutions contributed to the shame, silence, secrecy and stigma that characterised earlier (and current) responses to the epidemic.

The theological paralysis that accompanied the entry of HIV and AIDS on the African scene must be understood against the background of the struggle by the churches to speak openly about human sexuality. Due to historical and cultural factors, the churches in Africa in particular have struggled to articulate coherent and convincing views regarding the status of human sexuality. Unfortunately, negative views have tended to have an upper hand. Consequently, many church leaders associated the impact of HIV and AIDS with God’s punishment to a “sexually loose generation.” They were not equipped to provide life giving interpretations of sexuality in the context of HIV and AIDS. Theologians were equally at a loss regarding the most effective method for addressing this theme.

It is significant to acknowledge that although there was (and there remains) worrying silence on the interface between theology and HIV and AIDS, there were some organisations that were keen to make a contribution. The Medical Assistance Programme (MAP) International began working on the HIV/AIDS and theology curriculum in the mid 1990s. Peter Okaalet, one of the leading scholars in this area, notes that there were three main challenges associated with the mainstreaming of HIV and AIDS in theological education. First, there was the question of where to fit it in the context of traditional areas of specialization. Second, there was the challenge of who would teach it. Third, the students were not keen to take up classes on HIV and AIDS due to the stigma associated with the epidemic.4

The themes raised by Okaalet are important in reflecting on the mainstreaming of HIV and AIDS in theological education in Africa. While the World Council of Churches (WCC) has popularised the mainstreaming of HIV and AIDS in theological education through its Theological Consultants and Regional Coordinators, there is still a lot of work to be done before theological institutions in Africa (and indeed elsewhere) become “HIV competent.” Musa W. Dube5 led the way by holding numerous national and regional training of trainers (TOT) workshops in various parts of sub-Saharan Africa. There is now a growing appreciation of the need to take the epidemic seriously in the teaching, research and extension work of theological institutions. However, as Okaalet notes, the lack of training in the area of HIV and AIDS on the part of lecturers at theological institutions is a major drawback. Save for those who graduated recently, most of the lecturers did not benefit from having lectures on HIV and AIDS during their own training. As a result, many of them do not feel adequately equipped to address HIV and AIDS in their teaching.

The challenge of a “packed curriculum” remains a pressing one. The theme of HIV and AIDS has many complex dimensions. It is difficult to do justice to it if only a few hours are devoted to it within the curriculum. Furthermore, there are other competing interests that need attention. Lecturers and administrators at theological institutions are therefore faced with the challenge of allocating adequate time to HIV and AIDS within an already congested curriculum. However, given the urgency of the situation, it is clear that there is no other option available. Leaving students to graduate without having equipped them with the relevant knowledge and skills to tackle the epidemic would constitute the height of irresponsibility.

Although stigma remains, it is fair to say that there has been appreciable progress in addressing it. Many theological institutions now have policies that clearly stipulate that one’s HIV status will not be considered when decisions regarding enrolment and employment are being made. While students were hesitant to take up courses that dealt with HIV during the last decade, now there is greater openness and even eagerness to acquire knowledge regarding responses to the epidemic. Especially in East and Southern Africa, there is now an acceptance by students that we are a world living with HIV and AIDS. Consequently, students are more willing to take up courses that address the epidemic.

After the earlier neglect of HIV and AIDS, many theological institutions in sub-Saharan Africa have now mainstreamed it in their curricula. They have sought to be contextually relevant by ensuring that they students are introduced to the epidemic during their studies. Some institutions, like St Paul’s University in Kenya, also strive to train those who graduated without benefiting from courses that address HIV and AIDS through postgraduate programmes. One can safely say that the epidemic has succeeded in disrupting business in African theological institutions.

**Theological Responses to HIV and AIDS in Africa: Achievements**

Can anything good come out of Africa? This is a major question, given the overly negative image that Africa endures in the global media. Images of pain, disease and death tend to have an upper hand when it comes to the portrayal of Africa. The HIV and AIDS epidemic has reinforced these images. Some critics even think that Africa is cursed.\(^6\) However, Africa’s response to the epidemic calls for a serious rethinking of the stereotypes of Africa as a diseased and dying continent. The resilience and creativity that Africa has shown in responding to the epidemic must be commended. African theologians have contributed to this positive response to the epidemic.

**Publication**

One of the major challenges facing lecturers who want to mainstream HIV and AIDS in theological education is the shortage of resource material. One is not encouraged to mount a course when there is very little material that is relevant to the course. How are students going to do their assignments? How are class discussions going to be exciting when there are no interlocutors? How do members of staff undertake further research and make staff presentation when they have no conversation partners? Although there is still a long way to go, African theologians have begun to publish theological reflections on HIV and AIDS.\(^7\)

The Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians (the Circle) has emerged as the single biggest group of writers who have consistently published on theology and HIV. The Circle has interrogated patriarchal oppression and women’s vulnerability to HIV. It has highlighted the abuse of culture in women’s subordination and supporting violence. The Circle has passionately dissected the interplay between culture and women’s silence. Furthermore, many Circle authors have shown how cultural practices perpetuate women’s marginalisation in society. Many Circle publications have highlighted the need for church and society to heed women’s cries for liberation. They also call upon women to be silent no longer and work towards their own liberation.

That women are disproportionately infected and affected by the epidemic has become quite clear in sub-Saharan Africa. It is therefore not surprising that it is African women theologians who have played a prominent role in reflecting theologically on the epidemic. Margaret Farley writes:

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women are the primary caregivers for the sick and the dying, and women are also at greater risk than men when it comes to infection and death. Most women are infected by their spouses, but young girls are also more likely to be infected than young boys. In situations of military conflict, women are targeted for sexual abuse and hence infection. Many factors compound this disproportionate risk and injury, but most of them come down to the ways in which African women and girls are socially subordinate to and dependent upon men (not so different a story from other parts of the world).  

African women theologians are leading the way in terms of providing theological reflections on HIV and AIDS. They have demonstrated a lot of creativity and commitment in their response to HIV. Using cultural hermeneutics, feminist analysis, postcolonial hermeneutics and other strategies, they have provided valuable material on theology and the epidemic. There is now a body of literature on religion, gender and HIV in Africa that lecturers in theological institutions can utilise in their teaching and research. Whereas previously African women theologians were hardly visibly on the African theological scene, it is no longer possible for serious scholars to ignore them. Isabel Apawo Phiri, one of the prominent Circle members, clarifies the key concerns of African Women’s Theologies (with whose context the Circle has pursued the theme of HIV and AIDS). She says:

African women theologians use the global feminist theories that identify patriarchy as a cause of women’s oppression and apply them to analyse all the sources of African Theology. By so-doing, it treats all the sources of African Theology with suspicion because of their potential to accommodate patriarchy. It emphasises the need for liberation of African women from the multiple expressions of sexism, classism, racism, colonialism, and imperialism. While African women theologians share with African male theologians all the other forms of oppression, it is the oppression from sexism which is unique to women’s experiences.

Theological education in Africa in the time of HIV and AIDS needs to take African women’s reflections on the epidemic seriously. It is now clear that African women’s theology has moved from the periphery to the centre, if the sheer volume and consistency in publication is anything to go by. Theological education in Africa can no longer pretend that the only theologians of note are male practitioners. No. Not any more. Names like Mercy A. Oduyoye, Musa W. Dube, Isabel A. Phiri, Madipoane Masenya (ngwan’a Mphahlele), Sarojini Nadar, Nyambura J. Njoroge, Musimbi R. Kanyoro and others MUST now become an integral part of reading lists.

Perhaps the question emerges as to why the HIV and AIDS epidemic appears to have motivated African women theologians to publish with such urgency. How have they influenced theological education in Africa? While African male theologians have not been visible in the response to HIV and AIDS, African women theologians have ensured that the epidemic features high on the agenda of African theological education. It seems to me that the key issue is existential: African women theologians experience the epidemic in much more direct way than African male theologians. As women, they are more vulnerable to HIV and AIDS than men. As a result, they write with greater commitment and engagement than African male theologians. This has seen them publishing widely on the epidemic.

Alongside the publications by the Circle, there have been other reflections on the epidemic by various authors. Space considerations preclude the possibility of reviewing these herein. Nonetheless, it is vital to note that if previously there were very few theological reflections on HIV and AIDS, there is now an

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appreciable body of literature on this topic. This provides lecturers in theological institutions with material
to use in their teaching and research. The call to mainstream HIV and AIDS in theological education has
had the positive result of encouraging publication in this area.

Innovation in teaching
The HIV and AIDS crisis has prompted lecturers in theology and religious studies to be innovative in order
to address the challenge more effectively. Whereas previously the “talk and chalk” approach used to
dominate, the epidemic has forced theological educators to explore other approaches. In order to present
the reality of the epidemic to students, some institutions invite people living with HIV to give their
testimonies to students. This has the advantage of removing HIV and AIDS from the category of the
remote and impersonal to that of the immediate and personal. Students come face to face with people living
with HIV and realise that there are real people facing the epidemic.

Whereas previously the lecturer was considered an adequate resource person, the HIV and AIDS
epidemic demands that more experts visit the lecture room if students are to have a rounded view of the
epidemic. Medical specialists, social scientists, development workers and other specialists are now required
to come to the lecture room and share their insights with students. Furthermore, core teaching has become
popular as lecturers from various disciplines take turns to reflect on the epidemic. The overriding concern
has been to “offer their students contextually relevant skills and tools.”

In order to equip students to respond effectively to the epidemic upon graduation, some institutions are
ensuring that their students undergo community immersion programmes and undertake exposure visits.
Working in slums and remote rural communities allows students to come face to face with the reality of
HIV and AIDS. In such contexts, they encounter the poverty and raw suffering that many people living
with HIV experience. This empowers students to return to their lecture rooms with zeal and realism. Upon
returning to their lecture rooms, students are likely to have a greater appreciation of the necessity and
urgency of responding to the epidemic.

The HIV and AIDS epidemic has forced theological institutions to be more innovative as they seek to
ensure that their graduates have the necessary knowledge and skills to tackle the epidemic. The use of
DVDs, cassettes, songs, plays and other strategies has increased as lecturers hope to bring the reality of the
epidemic home to students. It is fair to say that the epidemic has brought some refreshing approaches to
teaching.

Collaboration
The shortage of HIV and AIDS “specialists” has meant that there have been more exchanges of members
of staff between different theological institutions than was the case previously. This has facilitated an
exchange of personnel and ideals, alongside promoting ecumenical sharing. More significantly, students
have also travelled from one institution to another as they seek to increase their levels of HIV and AIDS
competence. The movement of staff and students in theological institutions through workshops and
consultations on HIV and AIDS has promoted ecumenism at a time when denominational competition in
theological education remains a major issue.

The epidemic has also contributed to the thawing of relations between state funded departments of
religious studies and theological institutions affiliated to churches. John S. Pobee had noted earlier that, “In
some countries there is an undeclared war between University Departments and Seminaries, with the
former often looking down on the latter.”

11 John S. Pobee, “En Voie: Theological Education in Africa,” in J. S. Pobee and J. N. Kudadjie, eds., Theological
Nigeria and Zimbabwe. In an effort to assert their autonomy and highlight their academic profile, university departments of religious studies have traditionally regarded theological institutions as “younger brothers/sisters” who need mentoring. Often, this superiority complex is without foundation as theological institutions have had better funding and exposure.

Participating in TOTs on mainstreaming HIV and AIDS in theology and religious studies has brought lecturers in theological institutions and university departments of religious studies together. Collaborating in research and publication efforts focusing on HIV and AIDS has also contributed to mutual understanding. In most instances, external partners like the Ecumenical HIV and AIDS Initiative in Africa (EHAIA), a programme of the WCC, encourage the participation of lecturers from secular departments of religious studies and those from theological institutions. This has contributed to collaboration between lecturers from diverse backgrounds.

**Influencing Theological Education Outside Africa**

Given the impact of HIV and AIDS in Africa, it is often difficult to remember that it is in fact a global epidemic. Although it is concentrated in sub-Saharan Africa, the epidemic has touched literally every part of the globe. Having faced the full effects of the epidemic much earlier, African theological educators and their institutions have led the way in mainstreaming HIV and AIDS. In particular, theological institutions in India have appreciated the insights of their counterparts in Africa and have adapted the HIV and AIDS curriculum to meet their own needs. Lecturers at Union Biblical Seminary in Pune, India have written:

> In closing let us mention that we should commit ourselves to understanding the severity of the calamity and the urgency to meet it within the domains of educational efforts. As educational institutions and people interested in upgrading relevant theological education, it is time for us to get involved in training our leadership to respond to the challenging cry of millions of people dying of AIDS.12

Regrettably, many theological institutions in Europe and North America are yet to mainstream HIV and AIDS in their curricula. While this might be understandable on the basis that their contexts are not overwhelmed by the epidemic as is the case in Africa, there is need to acknowledge that HIV is a human challenge. There is therefore need for theological educators in different contexts to understand its implications and propose solutions. Refusal to do this might perpetuate the notion that issues that affect the Two-Thirds are not regarded as “human enough” by those operating from more powerful contexts. Nonetheless, it must be acknowledged that African theologians have pioneered in reflecting on the theological and ethical ramifications of the epidemic.

**Mainstreaming HIV and AIDS in Theological Education: Some Proposals**

The foregoing sections have drawn attention to the achievements of African theological educators in their response to HIV and AIDS. Appreciable ground has been covered in this area. These achievements become more meaningful considering the severe odds that lecturers in African theological institutions have to grapple against in their quest to provide quality theological education. In this section, I seek to suggest some areas that need further reflection as theological institutions in Africa endeavour to become “HIV competent.”

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HIV and the interfaith encounter

Africa is characterised by a radically plural religious market. Alongside African Traditional Religions, Christianity and Islam (each of these has its own internal variations), one also finds Buddhism, Chinese religions, the Baha’i faith, Rastafarianism and others. All these religions do have a contribution to make to the response to the epidemic. Unfortunately, many theological institutions in Africa have not invested in reflecting on religious pluralism. They appear to have left this topic to external “experts”.

The HIV and AIDS epidemic challenges theological institutions to reflect on the need to collaborate with Islam in particular. Granted that there have been limited publications on Islam and AIDS, it remains crucial to explore how the epidemic provides an opportunity for practical interaction between Christians and Muslims in prevention, treatment, care and support. There is need for theological institutions to grant ample time to this theme, especially in those contexts where the Muslim population is significant. This includes countries like Nigeria, South Africa Kenya, Tanzania, Malawi and others. Danny McCain argues that in a country like Nigeria, it is vital for Christians and Muslims to join hands to stem the tide of HIV and AIDS.

Theological education in Africa must empower graduates to promote interfaith collaboration in the face of HIV and AIDS. Alongside collaborating with Muslims, graduates must also acquire skills to enable them to dialogue with traditional religious leaders. Too often, theological institutions have not paid attention to the vital role that traditional religious leaders play in society. Young graduates from theological institutions have been indoctrinated to believe that they do not have to interact with other power brokers in society. The reality of HIV and AIDS requires that graduates be equipped with the relevant knowledge and skills to dialogue with traditional religious leaders. This is vital to ensure that harmful cultural practices are undermined.

Greater commitment to gender transformation

It remains worrying that many male administrators and lecturers express deep seated reservations concerning “this gender thing” during workshops and conferences on mainstreaming HIV and AIDS in theological education. It would appear the earlier misgivings regarding gender have not gone away. The opposition remains fierce, with some charging that what African women theologians are doing is “not theology.” To reinforce and practicalise their opposition, such administrators will not hire competent women to teach in their institutions. This is unfortunate, given the progress that African women theologians have made within the last two decades.

The era of HIV and AIDS demands that theological education becomes an avenue for achieving gender transformation. This must be reflected in the recruitment and retention of staff and students, as well as in the teaching and community work of the institution. In particular, male students should graduate with a new appreciation of the need to forgo the patriarchal dividend. Theological education during our time requires that issues of masculinity receive emphasis. In many cases, male church leaders retain power over women and children. It is therefore vital to challenge their assumptions and values while undergoing theological training. This must be intentional. There is a need for theological institutions in Africa to unleash thousands of male cadres who are willing to work for gender transformation.

Gender transformation will occur when male graduates of theological education are willing to critique sacred texts and cultural traditions for gender bias. They must be willing to be agents of change in their community by forgoing privileges that accompany male religious leaders. Simultaneously, theological institutions must empower their women graduates not to retreat into shells of conservatism once they get

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their certificates. This will ensure that they will become actively involved in the struggle for gender transformation.

Investing in creativity

It is unfortunate that HIV and AIDS quickly induce fatigue. It is an epidemic that has been with us for close to three decades and some activists are now feeling that the same issues are being hammered on. This creates a sense of frustration and suggests that there has been very little progress in the response to the epidemic. This challenge is also being felt in the teaching, research and publication in the area of theology and the epidemic. There is therefore an urgent need for lecturers to continue to invest in finding novel and interesting ways of teaching about HIV and AIDS.

There is a need to explore new ways of teaching about HIV and AIDS without the students feeling that “they have heard it all before.” Furthermore, there is also need to do the same in the area of research and publication. Critics might feel that one already knows in advance what a publication on theology and the epidemic will say: highlight women’s vulnerability, call for compassion, demand that the church acts, etc. While such criticisms are harsh, it is necessary to concede that it has been difficult for scholars writing and teaching in this field to focus on new themes.

Conclusion

The sheer impact of HIV and AIDS in Africa has forced theological institutions to respond to it. Although it has been difficult to mobilise theological institutions to reflect HIV and AIDS in their teaching, there have been commendable gains in this regard. African theological educators have sought to ensure that graduates of their institutions go out into the world with contextually relevant knowledge and skills to respond to the epidemic. Many theological institutions have introduced HIV and AIDS to their students. They have tried to acquire the latest information relating to this fast moving epidemic. They have also researched and published on the epidemic, been innovative in their teaching and have promoted collaboration. However, there is room for further improvement. Theological institutions must continue to innovate and ensure that the topic of theology and HIV does not become monotonous to students. They must be motivated by the words of Father Michael Kelly, a Jesuit priest who has dedicated his life to the struggle against the epidemic: “We will turn the tide. We will overcome this evil.”

Bibliography


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Part I: Theological Education in Global Context: Issues and Themes


Introduction
Theological Education by Extension (TEE) has been in existence for over forty years. It has and continues to be an effective method of making sound theological education available to various categories of church leaders and general members. It is one of the most creative efforts in transforming theological education to respond to the challenges faced by the church. There are currently TEE programs in every continent with the most programs in Latin America, Asia and Africa.

This paper seeks to give an overview of Theological Education by Extension within the context of wider forms of diversified theological education, focusing mostly on Africa where it is arguably the fastest growing form of theological education, with new initiatives to make the method accessible to the churches who are faced with the most pressing challenges of rapid growth, insufficiently trained ministers, and insufficient resources to train more ministers to match the growth of the church.

Beginnings of the TEE Method
The TEE method of theological education started as a creative response to a growing crisis in the Presbyterian Church in Guatemala in the 1960s. Among the challenges that the Presbyterian Church in Guatemala was facing was the inability of its only seminary – Seminario Evangelico Presbiteriano de Guatemala – to train enough ministers to cope with the ministerial needs of a rapidly growing church. The church did not have the resources to increase the capacity of the seminary which according to reports had only managed to produce 10 trained ministers in its first 25 years of existence. Most church leaders who were serving in the rural congregations had no training, yet could not leave their families to go to the residential college. Even if they were able to leave their families, the college could only train a few people at a very high cost. Further, pastors trained in seminary developed expectations of a “professional” salary, though minimal, and majority of the churches were too poor to meet those expectations. As a result even those among the limited number trained could not all be employed by the church. According to reports, only about 10 could be hired by bigger churches. The seminary was increasingly discovering a change in the attitude and theological approach of those being trained which made it difficult for them to fit back in the community that had sent them to college. This was a compound problem which required a radical response, and the seminary found the solution in decentralizing the seminary. Tutors from the seminary began to prepare courses and go out to where the people were. They established centers where students would come together once a week and have a session with a tutor from the seminary. The tutor would help them review the lesson of the previous week. Using the same text books as those used at the seminary, the tutor would then introduce and give input on the next lesson and give the students work to do at home for the following week. This new approach meant that the seminary could reach more students within their setting, reduce on costs, and also deal with the problems of uprooting the students from their context which brought about the problem of changing their theological
approach. While in 1962 the seminary could only enroll 6 students, with the new approach the enrollment increased to about 200 students.

**TEE as a Growing Form of Diversified Theological Education**

From Guatemala, the TEE method quickly spread to other parts of Latin America, and later to Africa and Asia, where churches were facing similar problems with regard to theological training. There was an upsurge in TEE programs during the 70s to 80s, in almost all continents. Ross Kinsler in his book *The Extension Method in Theological Education: A Call to the Renewal of the Ministry* records significant growth of TEE in Africa, Asia, Latin America, North America and to some extent Europe. But in many cases this growth was not sustained, leading to a noticeable slowdown in progress or collapse of some of the programs. “Most of the programs which never became institutionalized remained most vulnerable and susceptible to collapse”¹ But also those programs that were denominational rather than ecumenical tended to face the danger of slowing down and/or collapsing all together. Examples of these can be cited in Africa where, for example, the TEE Program in Congo DR under the Anglican Province of Katanga first collapsed because of the civil war. Efforts to revive it soon after the civil war faced severe challenges because it was only based in one church, and therefore the decision by the Bishop to divert resources meant for TEE to other seeming needy areas could not be challenged by anyone. In Tanzania the TEE Program for the Mennonite Church in Lake Diocese was discontinued because a decision was made to concentrate resources in the residential theological college. Several years later there are efforts to revive the TEE program because the diocese needs to train 800 leaders and pastors, but the theological college which caters for the Mennonite Churches in East Africa cannot admit more than 4 students from each diocese. In Burundi, the TEE program initiated by the Free Methodist Church, was discontinued in 1994 in preference for the one started by the Anglican Diocese of Bujumbura which was receiving funding from Trinity Grants Program. This has put the sustainability of the program in serious question. In Zambia, the first TEE program started in 1970 under the Brethren in Christ Church, has drastically slowed down, while the ecumenical TEE program which was started nine years later (in 1979) has grown from two churches to nine churches, and from only being present in two major districts to covering the whole country though largely catering for the training of lay leaders.

In 1994 Fremont and Sara Regier in their report on a Research Project of Africa Nonformal Theological Education² cited some of the challenges which may have led to the decline of TEE. They observed that,

> Much of what is called TEE is a far cry from the classical Ross Kinsler model. TEE originally came out of an era of popular liberation movement in Central America stressing bottom-up theology. Much of the TEE training content in Africa is more top down. What is called contextualization (making the training relevant to the particular situation and environment) is too often little more than putting African wraps onto Western thought. Often weekly TEE seminars, intended as facilitated discussion and application sessions, become teaching or even preaching. In too many cases the local TEE program is not really owned by the local church...Some TEE programs are so strongly focused on evangelism that the equipping hardly occurs.³

Two aspects about these evaluative points:

² By non formal theological education, they meant organized educational programs conducted outside the formal school and higher education system, and by definition, this included many TEE initiatives.

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One is that even though they were mainly focused on Africa, they reflect the situation in other regions as well. For example, in Asia where there is the Institute of TEE in Nepal (ITEEN), an evaluation report much later in 2003 reflected the following:

For too long Theological Education by Extension has been frustrated and handicapped by a number of factors;
- The educational technology and methodology of classical TEE including its discipline and administration has been too often misunderstood, ignored or been inadequately taught in Bible Colleges and missionary training establishments.
- There remains confusion still among many donor agencies and accreditation organizations as to what actually is TEE and what it is not.
- Enthusiasts have rushed into TEE without adequate preparation, realistic funding or proper administration.
- Programmers have failed to build up from grass root levels.4

The second is that these points, though seemingly negative, were made with the hope of helping revitalize TEE, which was still viewed as an important element in the training of clergy and leaders for the church. Both reports quoted above included very positive affirmative notes. The Regiers made “a call for African church leaders to reflect upon the strengths of TEE, to accept it as a meaningful alternative to formal residential studies, and to work to address the challenges and difficulties TEE programmes sometimes face.”5

The ITEEN evaluation report also ended with the following affirmation:

The ITEEN program in Nepal is a refreshing and encouraging example of what can be achieved through a very carefully planned and realistically funded TEE Program – a programme that is nationally owned and exceptionally well managed. The evaluation team is certain that this low-cost “grass-root” ITEEN programme is absolutely relevant to the discipleship and leadership training needs of the majority of the economically poor but far growing churches of Nepal.6

The TEE Method and Content

Though sharing the philosophy of long distance or open learning form of education, TEE is not just like any other long distance education program. TEE has added distinctives that make it a special training program. The TEE method emphasizes three elements, absence of any of which renders the program not a real TEE program. The three are (1) an element of self study, (2) group study under the guidance of a tutor, and (3) opportunity to put in practice what is being learnt. Ross Kinsler one of the pioneers of TEE in Guatemala offers a succinct and apt description of these three elements as they evolved in the early years of the over forty years of the existence of TEE.

“TEE began to develop a distinctive educational design out of pragmatic necessity and along the way discovered very important components for any effective learning system, theological or otherwise, but especially appropriate for grass roots ministerial formation among local church leaders. In Guatemala, since our students were local church leaders, heads of families, mostly employed in secular jobs or subsistence farming, scattered over large areas, we could only plan to meet with them once a week or twice a month at locations accessible for them, though some travel for them and more for our faculty was often necessary. Since those meetings could only last for two or three hours, we had to use that time for

5 Sendegeya and Spencer, Understanding TEE, 37.
discussion and debate, not for lectures or monologue. This in turn meant that the students had to be able to get the basic course content (cognitive, affective, practical) on their own in preparation for each group meeting. So we devised basic self-study materials for the relevant “academic” levels and cultural contexts. The third component, in addition to daily individualized study and weekly or bi-monthly group discussion, was on-going, practical testing or application of the substance and issues of the course material in the students’ local ecclesial and social contexts.

At an opportune moment Ted Ward, an educator at Michigan State University met with leaders of the TEE movement and articulated a basic curriculum design that matched our experience and facilitated the communication of the TEE concept. We call this design “the rail fence analogy.” It refers to the three basic components mentioned above, and it focuses on the combination and balance of these three components. One rail represents on-going daily or weekly individual home study with appropriate materials and assignments. The other rail, parallel to the first rail, is the ongoing practical application or testing or utilizing of the material being studied in the local church and/or community. The third element, represented by posts holding up, in parallel, the two rails, is the weekly or twice monthly group meeting, with a local or visiting facilitator, to review, clarify, and discuss the material studied and to share experiences with that material in their local context. There are two critical questions regarding this analogy. One is the purpose of the fence, which will determine its size and strength, whether it is meant to keep horses or dogs or chickens, etc. The other is how best to combine and balance the three elements. If the posts are widely separated or too frail, they will not be able to hold up the rails. If the rails are too heavy or too thin or wrongly spaced, they may be unable to fulfill their function.”

As would be noticed and clearly exemplified by the rail-fence analogy, the three components are interdependent and together make TEE a stable and effective method of training. The Ethiopia TEE, one of the first TEE programs to be established in Africa, uses the traditional three legged African stool, which is very stable with the three elements as the legs, to illustrate the stability of TEE as a method of diversified theological education.

But most challenging of the three is the self study because it is dependent on the material produced. The study material has to be in a long distance study format and must conform to the objective of TEE of offering cognitive knowledge but also pointing to the practical application and leading the student to have effective personal reflection and application to one’s context. The material ought to be professionally well written. “If the materials are confusing or abstract or simplistic or if group meetings are too widely separated or irrelevant or boring, students will be discouraged, and many will drop out. When the three basic educational components are ideally combined and balanced, participants are constantly challenged to work effectively toward their mission, the church’s mission, God’s mission.”

Why is TEE a growing method of theological education and why should it be encouraged? In response to this, there are at least three out of the many key aspects, especially in Africa:

Viability

The issue of viability of theological education in general has been one of constant concern. But the focus in the concern of viability has often been “financial viability.” The issue of viability is much broader. Konrad Raiser points out that “A viable form of theological education and ministerial formation will…aim at preparing leaders of Christian Communities who are able to inspire new life, to renew and transform the institutional identity of the church”.

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7 R. Kinsler (ed), Diversified Theological Education; Equipping All God’s People (WCIU Press, Pasadena, California), 26-27.
8 Kinsler, Diversified Theological Education, 27.
One of the reasons that lead to a search and development of the TEE method was that the then existing forms of theological education became inadequate and therefore not viable. It was because of this, as we saw in Guatemala, that the theological educators opted to seek other alternatives to make theological education respond to the challenges of meeting the numerical demand for ministers, as well as the need to train ministers whose theology was tuned to their context because it was developed within their context. Through the over forty years of existence TEE has shown to be a viable means of theological education.

Yeow Choo Lak, talking about financial viability of Ecumenical Theological Formation, points out that besides the decline in resources of the churches in the North which often provide grants, the model of ministry and training also tends to be expensive. Ministers or priests or pastors “are required to undergo full time training, a prerequisite for ordination. A full-scale apparatus (Campus, faculty/teachers, library, office staff, kitchen and ground crew) is needed to provide such an education.”

Lak then justifies this by arguing it would be more costly to have poorly trained or non-trained pastors or ministers. But the choice is not between having the seminary education and not having theological education at all. TEE proves an alternative financially viable opportunity for ministerial training.

TEE is more financially viable compared to residential theological training. It costs much less to train a bigger number of church leaders and workers through TEE than through residential or seminary training. But as Adrian Chatfield points out, this does not mean TEE is cheap. The development of TEE material which we earlier emphasized needs to be of high quality can be quite costly. But this cost is often one off and indeed goes a long way because once the material is produced it is used over time. Because of the nature of the course material, essential revisions are made from time to time in the process of use. In some cases this misunderstanding that TEE is cheap and does not require much resources is overstressed and leads to the collapse of a program.

Secondly it is “contextually viable” and easily adaptable. This is important in dealing with our rapid changing context, which often requires retention of the fundamentals but varying of the method, approach or key players in order to address the relevant areas and issues. It is also important when you are dealing with a highly dynamic subject like theology, which, as we have seen earlier, ought to bring transformation and renewal in the church. TEE gives an opportunity to train church leaders and church workers who will be able to apply their theology to their context because they have the privilege of being trained within that context. TEE is also flexible as a training method that moves “from outside to the inside” bringing theological thought and reflection from those people on the fringes of what is regarded mainline theological centers, namely seminaries and theological schools. It is these people on the fringes of society, as experience has proved, who are mostly affected by the forces of death and dehumanization in society, which is among the key things theology must respond to and address.

Accessibility

TEE is a very accessible method of education and formation. Ross Kinsler in the introductory chapter to the book *Diversified Theological Education*, points out ten accesses: Geographical, Economic, Cultural, Ecclesiastical, Gender, Race, Class, Different abilities, Pedagogical, and Spiritual. A number of these ways in which TEE offers greater accessibility than other forms of theological education are quite familiar and already alluded to, but like many components of TEE these accessibilities are often combined. It is the ecclesiastical, economic, class and pedagogical accessibility of TEE that made it open to the African Instituted Churches where most of the leaders did not have access to formal theological training. “In November 1978, 20 leaders from eleven from African Instituted Churches (known also as African

Switzerland) 55.


*Part I: Theological Education in Global Context: Issues and Themes*
Independent Churches) in eight countries across the continent met in Cairo, convened by Bishop Antonious Markos of the Coptic Orthodox Church of Egypt. The meeting established the Organization of African Independent Churches (OAIC) to support and nurture these churches in a variety of ways. In 1980, they initiated the TEE program under the leadership of Agustin and Rosalio Battle. The programme, continental in nature, has produced more than 60 TEE texts in Swahili, English and French.11 The coordinator of TEE Programming for the OAIC, Rev. Helena Hooper, was later to become the first chairperson of the All Africa TEE Association formed at the second All Africa TEE Conference in Livingstone Zambia in 2006 as one effort of revitalizing and strengthening TEE programs in Africa.

The accessibility of TEE has been enhanced where the program has taken on an ecumenical approach. In Zambia, when the program started in the Brethren in Christ Church, despite the need in other churches, the program remained confined to one church in their Bible school. Almost ten years later, the current ecumenical program was initiated with the help of TEE College in South Africa by two churches with a commitment to an ecumenical approach, and thirty years later the program has nine member churches. Although the program is mainly aimed at training lay leaders, it has started by special arrangement to also train pastors in some of these member churches whose pastors do not have access to proper theological training because they do not have a theological college or seminary of their own and these pastors do not have the required academic qualification to go to available theological colleges. In Botswana, the TEE College has given access to theological training to African Independent Churches who are not even members of the OAIC. In Canada, theological education has been made available to the First Nations People through TEE12

TEE dares to open quality theological learning to ordinary members of the church, and in this way also opens the church to the critical theological thought and reflection of the ordinary members. It is this aspect that makes the method a key factor in real ecumenical collaboration and also a vehicle through which the church can respond to the pressing needs of our time, as Ross so well articulates in the second part of this article.

Class accessibility also deserves a brief comment here. At a time when academic education has become a preserve of the powerful and financially able and, therefore a class factor, many people who would otherwise make good church ministers and leaders miss out on good theological education either because they cannot afford to go to seminary and/or because they do not have the academic qualification to enter seminary. This is not to say academic requirements are not important but in a situation where academia is still so much the banking system and unfairly controlled largely by the ‘haves’ and powerful in society, the church ought to think of ways of providing theological education that is academically flexible, which can accord many a chance to develop their God given potential. Here Paulo Freire’s creative thoughts about education (the educator and the learner) come into play. TEE does not necessarily compromise on quality but ensures quality at every level. Though a lot still needs to be done in this respect, there is evidence that TEE makes theological training accessible even to semi-literate or illiterate church leaders and members. In their research project, Fremont and Sara Regler discovered that “In efforts to meet the enormous demand for leadership training in Africa, a beautifully diversified variety of non-formal theological training programs has been devised. These range from the classical TEE extension model to “residential” TEE programs where the TEE material and study/discussion format are used as a full time residential study course. They include programs for non-literate learners and for post secondary level students”13 The TEE training officer in Zambia often reports having had to take a day extra in the training program because he had to conduct an oral test to a number of trainee tutors who are not able to sufficiently read and write and

11 Sendegeya and Spencer, Understanding TEE, 34.
yet have the skills to adequately facilitate a class. One such case was in an Angolan refugee camp where he was preparing church leaders about to be repatriated back to Angola.

The TEE College in South Africa and TEE Zambia are experiencing another break through to do with taking theological training “beyond prison walls.” They have a program of conducting regular TEE Courses in prisons. Some of these prisoners graduate and upon release from prison join the ministry or become active trained lay leaders, others even establish their own churches. This experience was shared at the All Africa TEE Conference generating interest from other TEE programs. Follow up discussions will be done at the next All Africa TEE Conference to see if this effort of making TEE accessible to this group, which is perhaps one group that needs theological training most, can be extended to other countries.

TEE study material is often criticized as being too basic and therefore inferior. The danger in response to this criticism is to go to the other extreme of upgrading the program to the higher level in such a way that it leaves out those at the lower level completely. Because of its flexible nature, the TEE program should be increasingly made accessible even to those who require advanced or even specialized theological training, who have the capacity and yet are unable to access it in seminaries and theological colleges for reasons already alluded to. But the situation should not be either/or, nor should one be done at the expense of the other, to maintain the important character of accessibility in TEE. Ross Kinsler advises that whenever you upgrade be sure to also downgrade so that no one is left out.

Sustainability

TEE is a very sustainable method of theological education. A close look at most of the theological colleges and seminaries today, reveal that at the centre of the struggle is the sustainability of the program when the funding has been reduced or withdrawn. I must hasten to add that this is to some extent a challenge also to some TEE programs especially those which have been initiated and funded by mission partners. Some such programs have collapsed because funding has been withdrawn or the mission personnel have gone back to their countries of origin. But such cases are fewer with regard to TEE than to formal seminaries and colleges. TEE does not usually carry with it the heavy administrative and structural requirements of the seminary or theological college. To be complete, the seminaries need to include libraries, dormitories or student housing, kitchen or catering facilities, etc. These often become possible at the start but become a burden in terms of the running and maintenance costs. These in their standard form are not a necessity for TEE to run properly. Most necessities like housing, feeding, etc., are taken care of because the students do not leave their home; if they do, it will only be for a few days or weeks within the year. The course material is prepared in such a way that it is self contained and reference books are minimal, cutting out the need for expensive libraries. The major expense as noted earlier is in the preparation of the course material, which, if professionally done, will provide the required cognitive input and also lead the student to undergo meaningful reflection that facilitates new learning and formation.

To talk about the need to focus and pay attention on TEE without neglecting other methods is important and has examples to justify. One case in point is what has been referred to earlier in Tanzania Mennonite Church, Lake Diocese, where a decision was made to close TEE so that the funding could be focused on the Theological College. This seems a very innocent and justifiable move, especially for a church seeking to train ministers to cope with the rise in academic demand in the church. But the result is that the seminary could only train at the most 4 people from any given diocese per year and even that requires much more to train one person than it requires in TEE. The result is that now there is effort to restart TEE because in one diocese there is need to train 800 people within a period of three to four years...is this possible? From experience it is possible through the TEE method. Not that the seminary should be closed, this is not a question of either/or but both, in order to meet the multi faceted theological training needs of the church.
One of the significant aspects of TEE is that it challenges the western styles or models of education or schooling which have permeated even theological education and are held as the standard model because of the traditions inherited. As Norman E Thomas points out,

The powerful drive for schooling among people in developing nations too often results in acceptance of the traditional schooling paradigm as norm for ministry formation. After all, we have the weight of tradition behind such models as the monastic discipline of the Middle Ages in Europe, the University based training of clergy, and the denominational seminary model begun in North America. But these are not the only viable models.14

TEE exists in different structural forms. The first category are those linked to established theological schools or faculties as in the case of Serampore College (India), Guatemala, Brazil, Angola, Ethiopia, Canada. These tend to be more stable because they usually would have a wider structural support of the University or Seminary and would benefit from the availability of a pool of trained lecturers already employed by the University or Seminary. The only challenge is that of flexibility in terms of adjusting the syllabi or curricula to respond to emerging needs. The second category are those that exist as TEE Colleges or Institutes on their own, such as South Africa, Botswana, and Nepal. The advantage of these is that they also have a structural base, but one of their own and therefore with the freedom of adjusting according to TEE demands. The disadvantage is the threat that comes when financial support reduces making it difficult to support the structure which cannot easily be done away with because it is part of the program. Such was the source of severe struggle at Kgolagano TEE College in Botswana where a drop in grant support from partners led to severe reduction of tutors and therefore students. The third category are those that exist as church or ecumenical programs not necessarily taking on the structure of a college but a program with a director or chairman, such as Zambia, Zimbabwe, Kenya, Tanzania. The advantage of these is the flexibility to adjust program and financial wise, but that also becomes a disadvantage in that without a very strong structure the programs easily collapse when faced with weak financial and moral support from churches.

New Initiatives

The holding of the World Council of Churches Assembly in Harare, Zimbabwe in 2001 led to a fresh commitment of the Ecumenical Movement to accompany the church in Africa in responding to their many challenges. The process dubbed “The journey of hope” had among its focus a move to review the whole process of theological education in the continent. In 2002 a “Journey of Hope” Conference was convened by the WCC ETE Program, in Kempton Park, Johannesburg, South Africa. The conference brought together different key players in theological education institutions and organizations, among them, TEE program people from Mozambique, Angola, Zambia, Botswana, Kenya, South Africa, and Uganda. The interaction among these TEE people revealed lack of collaboration among TEE programs which would benefit from mutual collaboration and support. This realization led to the affirmation of the need to strengthen and make available to as many countries the TEE method of theological education. The process that followed led to the holding of the first All Africa TEE Conference in Mukono Uganda, in 2003 under the coordination of Uganda TEE.

At the Mukono Conference it was realized that most of the TEE programs had both slowed down drastically and only existed in name or had collapsed all together. On the other hand, the need for TEE programs was quite clear, churches were growing rapidly, resources to fund theological colleges,

seminaries and theological faculties were drastically reducing. Concerns about the levels and quality of TEE were expressed but it did not downplay the relevance and need for effective TEE programs. So the effort was directed to find ways of supporting and reinforcing this method of theological training. The conference resolved among other things to start a TEE Association which would serve as a forum for jointly addressing some of the issues affecting TEE. Right from the start there was a deliberate decision to move slowly but surely, focusing on the core reasons for the Association and to avoid huge structural set up that would require lots of resources to run. A continuation committee composed of seven people from different sub regions was constituted. Uganda TEE was requested to give a chairing role. Further, a decision was made to start planning for the next All Africa TEE Conference in Zambia in two years time (2005). The Director of TEE Zambia was given the task of coordinating the forthcoming conference, which it was hoped would formalize the Association.

The continuation committee provided a good contact point and brought the needs of TEE to visibility, such that when the Ecumenical HIV & AIDS Initiative in Africa (EHAIA) was considering special training of trainers for special groups which are key in contributing to the realization of the goal of an HIV/AIDS competent church in Africa, TEE was also identified as one such group. A Training of Trainers course was conducted at Limuru Conference Centre in 2004. The reorganization efforts were at an early stage and therefore contacts were difficult to make, but a good number of TEE representatives were trained. At this workshop a major decision was reached to request EHAIA to produce an HIV/AIDS sensitive Theological Syllabus for TEE programs in Africa. Up to this point one had already been produced for residential theological schools and seminaries, but this request was in recognition of the uniqueness of TEE method. Further request was made that because of the nature of TEE programs modules be developed for the major parts of the syllabus, which would serve as a resource and starting point for the TEE programs. EHAIA responded positively to this request and set in motion a process to produce the material which was published on CD Rom in 2008

The process of organizing the All Africa TEE Conference and raising the necessary resources for the same proved more challenging than was thought, so the conference could not be held in 2005 but in October 2006. The Conference brought together 34 TEE Practitioners from 15 different countries which included India, Holland, and USA. The conference objectives were:

- To consolidate the efforts for initiating a network of TEE programmes in Africa leading to the formation of Association of TEE in Africa (ATEEA)
- To formally launch the HIV/AIDS curriculum and HIV/AIDS sensitive modules for TEE, and to explore ways of popularizing and effectively using these tools in all TEE and other related programmes in Africa
- To initiate collaboration between TEE programmes in Africa and those of other continents through TEENET15
- To collectively evaluate and assess the progress on the publication of the book Mission by the People of God, which is a follow up to the book Ministry by the People of God published by the WCC in 1975.16

Almost all these objectives were addressed and at the end of the conference the program focus and direction of the new association were adopted as follows:

1. **Standardization of curricula and materials throughout Africa:** While TEE Programs differ from country to country in terms of target group, course format and specific course content, there

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15 TEENET is an International Association of TEE Programs. In 2004 a steering Committee of TEENET representatives at a meeting in Vancouver opted not to have an International TEE Conference but to allow the one planned for Africa to take place with a request that some TEE participants from other continents be invited to the conference.

16 See background to the publication of this book in the second part of this chapter.
are however certain elements which are critical in making a TEE Program. In order to maintain 
the integrity of TEE and to maintain there is need to specify common general elements which 
should characterize a TEE curriculum or course.

2. **Contextualization of TEE programmes and the medium of teaching**: E.g., the use of 
vernacular in instructions, and local practical examples.

3. **Accreditation of TEE Courses**: The issue of Accreditation of TEE programmes is very 
important, but it requires time to research the most effective way of doing it. The Executive 
Committee of AATEEA is mandated to look into the issue of how TEE could get accreditation. 
But for the meantime, each country can enquire about what their accrediting bodies require and 
work towards getting the accreditation.

4. **Increase and encourage collaboration between the TEE and the residential theological 
training programmes**: It is quite apparent from the work of most TEE programs that the 
collaboration with Residential Theological Colleges and seminaries is critical. Over the years, a 
lot has been done both to open discussion and to sustain this collaboration. There is need to 
continue this effort for the mutual benefit of both programs.

5. **Translation of materials from Anglophone to Franco-phone and Lusophone and vice-versa**: 
Because this is a complex and expensive project which needs to be done properly so as not to lose 
the effectiveness of the course material, AATEEA should facilitate joint work and fundraising for 
this project. Local TEE programmes are encouraged to translate the materials into vernacular 
languages.

6. **Identify and train writers in TEE method of learning, who can also utilise creative local 
methods of writing**: Work towards organizing at least one training workshop or two sub-regional 
training workshops before the next conference.

7. **Continue and strengthen work on gender awareness**: We see gender issues as an important 
cross cutting topic in our theological education and it should be integrated into TEE programmes, 
to create awareness and affirmation. We also need to have programmes which train women to be 
trainers.

8. **Pilot test the HIV & AIDS curriculum and modules**: The Ecumenical HIV & AIDS Initiative 
in Africa (EHAIA) curriculum and modules that have been written should be tried out over a 
period of 6 months and additions and recommendations from regions made to the Coordinator. 
Reasonable portions of the curriculum and one or two selected modules should be translated into 
French and Portuguese so that TEE programs in Portuguese and French speaking countries can 
also participate in this critical process.

9. **Encourage the writing of TEE Course Materials in such a way that people become 
increasingly involved in socio-economic issues in their own communities.**

10. **Encourage enhancement of diversified theology**: By encouraging research into local 
Theologies, Liberation Theology, Theology of Prosperity, etc., to enable TEE students to respond 
effectively.

11. **Find ways of encouraging ownership and sustainability of TEE programmes by local 
churches**: E.g. include TEE in their annual budgets, students pre-paying for the materials before 
the programme begins; fund raising by the churches to offset the cost of logistics. There is also the 
need for leaders in the church to change their attitude when it comes to giving out funds for TEE 
as they look for donors, therefore also creating a sense of dependency.

12. **Encourage use the information and communication technology in TEE work**: Where possible 
look at ways to empower people to be computer literate.

13. **Initiate and encourage Dialogue and collaboration with the Pentecostal and Charismatic 
Churches in TEE studies**

Relevance of any given form of education or formation or even any institution is often brought into 
question when the context for which it caters changes. The far reaching changes in the world today and the
demands that these changes make on the church call into question the effectiveness and relevance of our theological training or theological formation methods. TEE as we have described it this far is not only a financially efficient method for training clergy and church leaders, or a way of reaching out to those who because of their family situation or academic level are not able to go to residential seminary, but it is a distinct method that can enable effective engagement of church members to theologically and effectively respond to the key challenges facing our world today and in so doing making the church a relevant institution in carrying out God’s Mission.

Concluding Remarks

Evidently there is need for the church to give priority to the theological formation of local leaders, especially those who have traditionally been marginalized, because they are the ones most apt to follow the way of Jesus and most able to understand and respond to the challenges and the needs of holistic salvation. The relevance of the TEE/DTE in this part of the mission of the church has been raised but so has been the fragility of this essential form of theological education which requires continued reflection and effort to sustain.

One other aspect which needs to be raised as a critical point for the survival and effectiveness of TEE/DTE to the mission of the church is the continued discussion regarding better collaboration between TEE and Residential Theological Seminaries and Colleges:

The either/or (Seminary or TEE) debate has been raging for many years. In most cases it has magnified the notion that TEE is in conflict with seminary training and one cannot exists where the other exists. There are certainly major differences as well as advantages and disadvantages on either side, but rather than generate conflict, such differences can be good discussion points to enable the improvement of each form of theological education and in most cases a healthy integration of the two. From the TEE perspective this is what has led to the use of the term “diversified” theological education, a term that enables the exploration of “the reality and the potential of emerging, diverse approaches to theological education,” irrespective of where these approaches are being discovered and applied. Progress has been made in this regard, to the extent that “two global TEE conferences concluded that TEE and traditional residential training programs were not mutually exclusive.” But still a lot more effort is needed in this area. MacKenzie, in his contribution to the recent book on Diversified Theological Education, uses the term “Sharks” for barriers that prevent progress in TEE, and the first and major shark he identifies in his context is the power of traditional educational institutions to eliminate extension programs. He notes that there is a systemic element in academic institutions which often makes it difficult to grasp the significance of local community theology.

As part of this discussion it must always be borne in mind that the very genesis of the TEE method was the seminary. The method was developed not as a substitute but as a complement, to address those challenges that could not be addressed by the seminary. Yet TEE could not do that task in isolation. The key elements or aspects in TEE must be also in the seminary and vice versa. So the two methods of Theological Education in various diverse forms can be linked without much conflict for the development of the church.

17 Kinsler R. Diversified Theological Education, 7.
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Serampore College and Its B.D. Curriculum - A Historical Note

Mission heritage during the colonial period

Serampore College was founded by William Carey, Joshua Marshman and William Ward in 1818, at Serampore, or Fredericknagore, then a Danish Settlement in the Bengal region of India. In 1827 the college was incorporated by a Royal Charter by King Frederick VI of Denmark with university rights and immunities and the power to confer degrees. In 1845, on the transfer of the Settlement of Serampore from Denmark to Great Britain, provision was made by the British Government in the Treaty of Purchase for the continuance of the chartered rights, immunities and power of the College. In 1910 and the subsequent two to three years, a re-organization of the College was effected. Bachelor of Divinity (B.D.) and Licentiate in Theology (L. Th.) were the basic theological education programs of the Serampore system from the beginning of its re-organization in 1910. The B.D. Degree was considered as the highest theological degree molded on the pattern of London and Oxford Universities where they were considered to be a research degree. In 1915 the Convocation of Serampore College was held and the degree of Bachelor of Divinity was conferred for the first time under the Charter of Incorporation of the College.

In 1918 the Bengal Act No. IV of 1918, called the Serampore College Act, was passed by the Bengal Legislative Council. On the basis of this Act, the Council of Serampore College was enlarged and the Senate of Serampore College was constituted having representatives from various Christian communities in India, its members being appointed by the Council. In 1919 when the Senate first met to organize the curriculum of L. Th., it stipulated the following core subjects: Biblical Studies, New Testament Greek, English Language and Literature, Logic, Natural Science, an Indian Vernacular, and Psychology. The B.D. Curriculum covered the following subjects: Old Testament, New Testament, Christian Theology, History of Religion, Church History, Philosophy of Religion, Moral Philosophy, a Classical Language, Liturgiology, Pastoralia, Vernacular language and English Essays.

After 20 years, the Senate appointed a Curriculum Study Committee in 1939. At its session in 1940, the Senate clarified the purpose of the B.D. program, stating that it “connotes a general training in theology, both intellectual and practical, undergone by students who have previously taken a university course in

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1 Paper originally written under the title: Curriculum Development in Theological Education – Urgencies Priorities: The Example of the Senate of Serampore College India and its Exercise in B.D. Curriculum Revision, 2006-2009 – A South Asian Theological Education Endeavor. The texts in this section are largely extracted from the official Regulations Booklets of the Senate of Serampore College. For example, Regulations Relating to the Degree of Master of Theology (M.Th.), Serampore: Senate of Serampore College, 2007 revised reprint of 1998 edition, 1-2. The texts are almost the same in all the regulation booklets.


3 Ibid. 4.
Arts or Science, or who have successfully prosecuted a course of preliminary studies regarded by the Senate as equivalent to a university degree in Arts or Science. Some principles of the curriculum were also evolved:

1) The subjects in the curriculum for the B.D. degree shall be divided into three groups: A (Compulsory units), B (Optional units), and C (Ministry oriented units);
2) A certain standard of proficiency shall be required from all candidates in the following five branches: Old Testament. New Testament, Christian Theology, History of Religion and Church History;
3) Every branch in the curriculum was classified under major and minor categories on the basis of the number of years a subject was studied. A subject studied for three years was counted as 3 units, two years as 2 units, and one year as 1 unit.
   a) The total number of units required for the B.D. degree was nineteen; twenty-one was maximum;
   b) The total number of units that were assigned to the compulsory subjects were: OT (3), NT (3), CT (2), HR (1) and CH (1);
   c) Remaining nine, ten or eleven were selected from two optional groups. These optional groups had, in addition to the major ones, such subjects as Moral Philosophy, Classical language, Vernacular Studies, Psychology of Religion, Pastoralia, Liturgiology, Religious Education, Rural Church, and Indian Culture.

Within this structure, the curriculum for the degree had the following Preliminary Foundational Courses: Old Testament, New Testament, English – Text and Composition, Vernacular – Text and Composition, Psychology; Outline of World History, or NT Greek, or one Classical language other than Greek, or Elements of Science.

The Advanced Courses were: Old Testament (without Hebrew – 3 units; with Hebrew – 5 units); New Testament with or without Greek; History of Religion; Church History; Philosophy of Religion, Moral Philosophy, Classical Languages and Liturgiology; Pastoralia, Religious Education, Psychology of Education, Rural Church and Indian Culture; Vernacular Studies; English and Vernacular Essays (later developed into thesis, project and translations).

The heritage maintained in general in twentieth century independent India

In 1949 the location of the Council of Serampore College was transferred from London to Serampore. In the same year the program of the degree of Master of Theology was instituted. In 1962, the Senate introduced two more degree programs: Bachelor of Religious Education (B.R.E.) and Master of Religious Studies (M.R.S.). At the 1969 Senate meeting, it was resolved to upgrade the L.Th. Diploma program to a four year Bachelor of Theology (B.Th.) degree course. In 1983 it was made a three-year program. In 1985 the Senate introduced a program of continuing theological education for pastors and Christian workers leading to the degree of Master of Ministry (M.Min.). In 1989 the Diploma in Christian Studies (Dip. C. S.) was introduced for the benefit of people of all faiths. In 1989 the degree of Bachelor of Christian Studies (B.C.S.) was introduced to provide laity with an in-depth understanding of Christian faith and deepen their commitment to service in the context of their vocations. At the same time the B.D. external studies program was discontinued. In 1997, the Senate introduced the degree of Doctor of Ministry (D. Min.) as a professional doctoral degree for pastors and others engaged in Christian Ministry.

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4 Ibid.
5 Ibid.
6 Regulations Relating to the Degree of Master of Theology (M.Th.), 1-2.
Introduction of higher theological degree programs broke the reputation and halo that was created around the B.D. degree.\(^7\) It was unfortunate that the 1930 Senate decision to make L.Th. and B.D. independent of each other was done away with. Particularly when L.Th. was phased out and the B.Th. Program was introduced, it created much confusion since two degrees at bachelor level were introduced without much clarity in defining their relationship with one another. It is for this reason that some exemptions were introduced for B.Th. graduates pursuing B.D. or B.C.S. programs, in terms of years of study and number of papers to be done. Moreover a residential program (B.Th.) was linked with an extension program (B.C.S.). Besides, the structure and content of the B.D. and B.C.S. programs were basically the same. A further confusion was created when the B.C.S. graduates (mainly laity who had done extension studies) were allowed to study the M.Th. (residential program for B.D. graduates) and D. Min. (program for pastors and others in full-time Christian ministry).\(^8\)

The Registrar of the Senate observes that the principle, content and nature of the B.D. curriculum as adopted in 1940 remained the same for the Serampore system for many decades. With the increasing demand for introducing new fields, new subjects and branches were added from time to time at the expense of the foundational and advanced courses, thereby reducing the depth of study on the one hand and over-burdening the student on the other. The 1991 revision divided the B.D. curriculum into three sections – compulsory (foundational), optional and inter-disciplinary courses. It required 26 papers and a thesis (or 2 papers in lieu of thesis) for the completion of the B.D. degree. Branch-wise the subjects were divided as follows: Old Testament-3; New Testament-3; Theology and Ethics-4; History of Christianity-3; Religion and Society-3; Christian Ministry-3; Communication-1; Social Analysis-1; Inter-Disciplinary-3; Options-2 for thesis writers and 4 for others. Of these, twelve papers were examined by the Senate while fourteen papers (plus thesis/ two courses) were examined by the college. Prior to doing the required credited B.D. papers, candidates have been expected to study some methodological and foundational introductory courses including passing the elementary examination in one of the biblical languages, under the category of non-credited essential papers. So also, Practical Work/Exposure has been intended to be an integral non-credited requirement of the total teaching and training program.\(^9\)

The 1991 B.D. regulations maintained that the B.D. degree course is “designed to equip persons for essential functions and ministries of the church in India who could commend their faith with relevance in the context of a pluralistic world. It aims at an integrative and interdisciplinary approach among the biblical, theological, historical and religious fields with involvement in practical aspects of life and ministry in the regional, social, and cultural aspects of the sub-continent. It also ensures adequate grounding in the discipline of linguistics for study of basic texts and provides hermeneutical tools and skills for understanding and interpreting the context of ministry.”\(^10\) While in general the curriculum still followed the earlier model, some of the papers did explicitly reflect concern for theological training within the contemporary context from a liberation perspective. For instance the study of the Pentateuch was entitled, “Witness of Israel to Liberation – A Study of the Pentateuch”, and the study of Old Testament prophetic literature was called, “Vision and Mission of the Prophets”. Then again papers on Dalit Theology, Tribal Theology, Theology of Human Development, Indian Christian Theologians, Christian Response to Other Faiths, History of Christianity among the Dalit and Tribal People of India, Communication for Social Change, Understanding Indian Society, etc. were introduced, though many of them were optional papers. So also among the Inter-Disciplinary papers, subjects such as “Women in

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\(^8\) Ravi Tiwari, “Initiating Revision of Curricula”, 3.  
\(^9\) Ibid. 4-5.  
Religion and Society”, “Creation, Ecology and Human Responsibility”, “Human Rights”, etc. were introduced.

The Urgency and Priorities of B.D. Curriculum Revision in the Twenty-First Century

The process

In 2002 the Committee on Academic Administration of the Senate noted that the process of revision of the B.D. curriculum needed to be started. However the process gathered momentum only in 2004 when a Concept Paper was circulated by the Registrar, and affiliated institutions and interested individuals were invited to respond to the same. The Senate then went on to organize three regional consultations in Delhi (September 4-5, 2006), Kolkata (September 7-8, 2006), and Kottayam (October 5-6, 2006) followed by a national consultation in Mumbai (October 24-25, 2006). Representatives of the Council and Senate of Serampore College along with representatives of its Board of Theological Education, members of the Boards of Studies, representatives of affiliated theological institutions (including administrators, faculty and students), leaders and representatives of churches, scholars from secular fields and special invitees participated in these consultations. The discussion was carried on in a special seminar on curriculum revision prior to the annual meetings of the Board and the Senate at Shillong in February 2007. A Core Committee was then formed to look into all aspects of the curriculum revision. This Core Committee worked on its own and subsequently with the Working Committee of the Academic Council (earlier known as Committee on Academic Administration) after which consultations were held with the members of the Boards of Studies in Bangalore (August 4-6, 2008) and Chennai (October 6-7, 2008). A new Core Group consisting of representatives from different branches of B.D. studies was constituted to carry the work forward. The new Core Group met in Chennai on January 15-16, 2009. The Working Committee of the Academic Council then appointed an Editorial Committee to give final shape to the new curriculum. The Senate in its meeting in Madurai during February 2009 resolved that the new curriculum be implemented from June 2010; those colleges who so desired could even start adopting the new curriculum from June 2009 for the first year and second year programs of the new curriculum. The Editorial Committee has been engaged in the process of giving final shape to the curriculum and will hopefully be able to complete its work by the end of August 2009.

The urgent need of curriculum revision

Curriculum revision is necessary in view of the changed and changing contexts of the church and society at large. Several trends and forces are affecting the lives of the people such as globalization, propelled by its ideology of free market economy that is controlled by economically powerful, urbanization and its evils, the neglect of the agricultural sector, the growing gap between the poor and the middle and rich classes, lack of enthusiasm for multi-lateral ecumenism and the rise of denominational confessionalism, the politicization of religions and communalization of politics, nationalistic and militant ideologies, rigidifying of group identities, rising individualism, increasing alcoholism and drug addiction, concerns for the rights and dignity of the marginalized communities, movements for justice and peace, electronic media including worship services on cable TV and sensational tele-evangelistic programmes, on-line education and virtual classrooms, etc. Therefore a curriculum, which seeks to give direction and shape to academic, professional and individual/communitarian spiritual formation, with a view to facilitating renewal in the church and effecting transformation of society, needs to take these contextual challenges into account.

Curriculum revision is also necessitated on account of the deficiencies, difficulties and ambiguities in the present curricula, especially when seen in the light of the present day needs, issues and challenges. The western theological education system arising from a monoglotic, cognitive, rational and denominational theological discourse has largely influenced theological education in India. While we have certainly benefited from it, we need to realize that the present day Indian multi-religious, multi-cultural, and political socio-economic context is not the same as that of the west from whom we borrowed the system. Furthermore, the weaknesses of the western system have surfaced in terms of its difficulties and failures in building up the Christian community and equipping it for an authentic life of witness in terms of witness, service and fellowship in the present day challenges of urbanization, industrialization, individualism, secularism and the de-sacralized perception of reality.

A genuine desire and the concerted quest to be relevant to the context in India have resulted in the introduction of new departments and new courses within the Senate system as mentioned earlier. However such an arrangement has led to a proliferation of courses and compartmentalization of disciplines (branches) resulting in the students being overloaded with more work, and theological colleges having the administrative burden of sustaining a large number of departments. Besides as, noted earlier, there is considerable overlap between the course content of the B.Th. and B.D. programs, and also between the residential and external study programs. Candidates can even move from a residential program to an external study one and vice versa, when they engage in higher studies. Furthermore, the evaluation system which is largely written-examination centered also has its limitations; moreover the nature of interdisciplinary and integrated courses requires a different set of evaluation criteria. At the same time theological teachers need to enhance and update their pedagogical skills.

Priorities in curriculum revision

Objectives of the curriculum revision

Four oft-repeated adjectives qualify the objectives of the curriculum revision during the first decade of the twenty-first century: meaningful, relevant, manageable, effective. Curriculum revision is not an exercise in revision for revision sake. During the past 19 years the language of discourse and articulation has undergone change, the volume of publication of theological literature has expanded, and a cross century generation with its complex character of rational and postmodern tendencies requires a theological curriculum and an ecclesial life, faith and witness which are meaningful. Curriculum revision should not only make knowledgeable sense, but it should also go beyond campus musings and intellectual stimulation to address issues of the times, analyzing them, giving rise to mature perspectives in responding to them, and committing, equipping and empowering theological students and churches accordingly. In short, the new curriculum should ensure a wholesome balance of academic learning, ministerial orientation, missional commitment, ecumenical inclusiveness, practical training and individual and collective spiritual formation.

15 Ibid. 7.
16 Ibid. 8.
The endeavors, to make theological education up to date and relevant, require qualified teaching faculty, skilled administrative personnel, and adequate infrastructure. In other words, theological institutions should be capable enough to manage such ventures. Since the cost of living in general and the expenses involved in theological education in particular are steadily and at times rising steeply, the new curriculum should be financially viable. The new curriculum also has to be effective. It should facilitate purposeful and constructive changes in the life and work of the theological community and the church.\textsuperscript{18}

\textit{The issue of methodology: the text-context dialectic}

For the larger part of the twentieth century, most theological institutions in India have been following the traditional methodological framework and principles of theological education. The emphasis has been on the priority of text over context. The words of the Bible, and the patriarchal socio-cultural structure of biblical times, have been considered to be primary. The heterogeneous contemporary contexts and their challenges have been regarded as being secondary and therefore subject to the dictates of the biblical texts and their contexts. A corollary to the phrase, “priority of text over context” is the authoritative primacy given to the denominational biblical hermeneutics and theological doctrines propounded by mission bodies as they set up their respective theological institutions in India. The fear of being branded as “heretic”, has made Indian Christians for long to conform themselves to the content and form of theological education as imparted by western missionaries, churches and universities. We have in general refrained from engaging in efforts to contextualize and indigenize theological education.

In opposition to the traditional practices of theologizing, during the 2006 consultations, a significant number of participants have advocated that contextual theological formation should be the framework of theological education. Within this framework, they have asserted that the experiences and struggles of the subaltern people groups such as the dalits,\textsuperscript{19} the tribals/tribal,\textsuperscript{20} women,\textsuperscript{21} the poor and other marginalized sections of the society\textsuperscript{22} should constitute the foundational basis of theological formation.

\textsuperscript{19} While the majority of the Christians in India are dalits, Busi Suneel Bhanu critically observes that “a majority of the Serampore affiliated institutions as well as their sponsoring churches are yet to recognize the voices of the marginalized, let alone incorporate and integrate them into ministerial formation as well as the work and witness of the church”. Busi Suneel Bhanu, “Revisioning of Curricula: the Place of Dalit Theology”. Paper presented at the Regional Consultation on Curriculum Revision, Kolkata, September 7-8, 2006, 1.
\textsuperscript{20} Tribals constitute another major segment of the Church in India, particularly in North East India. So far, the perspectives and practices of non-tribal Christians have pre-dominated theological education. The contexts, views and ways of life of the tribals need to be due space in the new curriculum. cf. Ezamo Murry, “A Brief Presentation on the Northeast Concerns”. Paper presented at the Regional Consultation on Curriculum Revision, Kolkata, September 7-8, 2006, 3.
\textsuperscript{21} Though the Senate of Serampore College has established Women’s Studies as an independent branch in theological education at the post graduate level, women’s concerns are not adequately integrated into the theological education program in terms of perspectival content, encouragement of women students, and recruitment of women as teachers in theological institutions. Churches likewise do not render theological, ecclesial justice to women. Limatula Longkumer, “Women and Women’s Studies Concerns in Curriculum Revision of the Senate of Serampore College”. Paper presented at the Regional Consultation on Curriculum Revision, Kolkata, September 7-8, 2006, 1-2. Ivy Singh calls for replacing “the pro-men theology with a theology of liberative praxis, and non-hierarchical, non-privatistic in its ecumenical vision. It moves from patriarchy to partnership which recognizes the full humanity of women together with men as people of God called to work for dignity and genuine community based on love, understanding and right relationships”. Ivy Singh, “Draft Paper” presented at the Regional Consultation on Curriculum Revision, Kolkata, September 7-8, 2006, 2.
\textsuperscript{22} T.K. John proposes, “The least, the last, the most deprived, the most de-priced and deformed, need to be the starting point of the focussed organized effort at knowing the Indian peoples. From the effect to the cause, from the particular to the universal, has to be the journey of the learner in the Kingdom of God in India. The dalits, the tribals, the women
However some of the participants in the consultations expressed their concern that the perspective of rooting theological education in the people’s experiences and struggles is fraught with the danger of reductionism – reducing the gospel to a sociological expression – and the danger of theological exclusivism. While not denying the importance of addressing the context of economic poverty, social injustice, religious and cultural plurality, the suffering of the subalterns, etc., they emphasized that theological education should be rooted in Christian faith traditions.

In the context of the debate on the priority of text or context, other voices have called for an integrated approach. Theological education should be a bonding and blending together of the text and the context, a transformative interaction between guidance from the Word of God and the situational needs and challenges of the people. It is characterized by faithfulness to the gospel of Jesus Christ along with committed responsibility to the church, academia and the world at large. In this process the text and the context have to mutually influence theological education and ministerial formation. Thus a dialogical text-context dialectics will have to be cultivated. The relationship between text/theory and context/practice will always have to be a two-way traffic. Context and practice are informed by textual hermeneutics and theoretical commitments, while the understanding of the text and the articulation of theories are influenced and enriched by contextual, practical experiences.

The structure of the new B.D. curriculum

During the consultations on curriculum revision a range of suggestions was made. At one end was the view that the present branch-wise or disciplinary divisions be retained. There would thus be branches in Old Testament, New Testament, Theology and Ethics, History of Christianity, and so on. It was argued that such a structure with its emphasis on a thorough grounding in each discipline is very essential for theological education and ministerial formation. At the other end of the discussion on structure was the view that the conventional branch-based model does not do justice to the South Asian context, particularly to the concerns of the subalterns (dalits, tribals/avadis, women, the poor, people living with disabilities, etc.). Hence there should be a paradigm shift from the Branches/Disципes approach to Contextual, People-Centered and Issue-Oriented Learning. There were others who advocated a middle path suggesting that the discipline-structured approach and a flexible issue-based approach need to be integrated in the curriculum revision. In the light of the discussions the proposal is now to introduce a new concept of clusters of disciplines which would facilitate integrated and inter-disciplinary approaches in learning. Hence the following structures are formed:

Cluster I Biblical (Old and New Testament) studies with languages
Cluster II Studies in Theology, Social Analysis and Ethics
Cluster III Historical-Missional Studies
Cluster IV Religion, Culture and Society

of these sectors, and then of the other sectors, the homeless and the landless, with the immensity of their problems and poignancies of the people forced to be in such situations, should ignite the theological jijnasa in the hearts of the students that knock at the portals of our centres”. T.K.John, “A Journey in Indian Christian Theological Method and Content”. Paper presented at the Regional Consultation on Curriculum Revision, Delhi, September 506, 2006, 12.

Included among the marginalized sections of society are people living with HIV/AIDS, and human beings living with disabilities of various kinds whom the church and society are guilty of not providing just-care. cf. Wati Longchar, “The Need for Theological Education Transformation in India”. Draft Paper presented at the Regional Consultation at Kolkata, September 7-8, 2006, 4.


Cluster V  Ministerial-Communication Studies

During the course of five years the students would be expected to study three types of subjects: foundational, advanced, and regional/local specific. Such an approach would ensure that the students are grounded in the essentials of theological learning and are also simultaneously rooted in the contextual concerns of the times. It would also ensure that the required number of courses is done as well as grant freedom to the colleges to offer extra courses which the colleges think are relevant or important in relation to their respective contexts or ecclesial traditions. Concurrent and Intensive Field Education (practical work) will also be an integral part of the learning involving both faculty and students. Field education will be given credit, not merely in terms of number of grades, but also in terms of hours and diversity of work done: rural, urban, church-related, inter-faith, social action/reform movements, etc.

Spiritual-ministerial formation in theological education

In the light of the sharing of church leaders and representatives during the curriculum revision consultations, it was time and again emphasized that theological education is not simply a matter of equipping students with information; it is also important to facilitate commitment formation and character transformation in the life of the student. Knowledge and skill are not adequate for equipping the student and committing him/her to the realization of God’s purposes on earth, the reign of God. Information and transformation must be integrated. Furthermore the curriculum should not simply be content with facilitating the theological and ministerial formation of students as individuals but should also aim at the cultivation of a team spirituality of mission and ministry among the students. They are to go out as a body of disciples working together in solidarity for giving expression to the gospel of Jesus Christ. This sense of responsibility and togetherness in mission has to be cultivated. To this end the college faculty is responsible for nurturing a holistic spirituality of knowledge, faith and action, for practicing collegial spirituality and serving as exemplary role models and mentors.

However for relevant theological education to be effective, yet another level has to be attained. It has to edify, continuously recommit and empower the local congregations. The laity should be enabled to fulfill their role as light in the world and salt of the earth. The theological education of residential B.D. students and the theological education of the local congregations should therefore go hand in hand. If they are on different wave-lengths, then the transformation and empowerment of the people for God’s purposes will not be attained.

Conclusion

The above discussion on the urgencies and priorities of curriculum development in theological education resonate well with the Vision and Mission Statement of the Senate of Serampore College as articulated in the Constitution adopted in 2005:

We believe that the Triune God has offered the possibility of renewal of life and hope for the entire creation in and through Jesus Christ, and that as an instrument of God, the church is called to be involved in God’s mission of liberation, reconciliation and community building among all peoples through varied forms of ministry.

Set in the midst of people of other faiths and ideologies as well as situations of life-negating forces, we are called upon to equip the whole people of God to respond to the contextual challenges critically and creatively by being faithful to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

In (the) light of this faith and self-understanding, we seek to equip ministers, leaders, scholars and the whole people of God to be committed to creative discernment of and active participation in God’s liberative mission in the world at large and in South Asia in particular.

Handbook of Theological Education in World Christianity
Prelude

The editors of this huge volume have expressed an unequivocal commitment to “difference in writing.” In order to reflect the status questionis of (global) theological education, it is necessary, they say, to reflect, if not exemplify, such difference which has come to be one of the critical markers of our world in the 21st century. Even as I gesture toward some quixotic theological affirmation of difference, there is no doubt that difference can no longer be avoided – if one is reaching for relevant theological education.

Difference, in my view, is a condition of possibility for (global) theological education – but whose theological education; and for what purpose?

One answer may lie in how one understands the relationship between theological education, its curricula, and the transformation of our world – the three underlying concerns of this essay. Neither a journey into difference or into (global) theological education can be achieved unilaterally; only in conversation, comprehensively and constitutively understood, can it be done. In other words, difference, conversation, and purpose are co-constitutive.

This essay, then, in its form and content, structure and process, is an attempt at reaching for genuine conversations: conversations among different locations and perspectives in theological education, among theory and practice, among bodies of texts and notes of texts – conventionally or unconventionally produced and reproduced, among (non-expert) educators and (expert) non-educators, among readers and texts, among traditions and innovations, between pasts and futures enacted in multiple presents, between time and eternity, permanence and change.

My hope is that this essay will be read, experienced, and critically evaluated in the spirit of these conversations.

Text/Context: The Normative and Public Character of Theological Curricula

One of the important, though by no means globally unique, features of graduate theological education in the US and Canada, is its accredited character. While accreditation is an ongoing, dynamic and evolving practice, it has always been associated with judgments about quality, and is the primary structure and process for determining quality assurance in North American higher education.1 It is true, of course, that theological education in this part of the world is not exhausted by accredited baccalaureate and graduate theological education, embodied, for example in the work of the Association of Theological Schools in the US and Canada (ATS), the Transnational Association of Christian Colleges and Schools (TRACS), and the Association for Biblical Higher Education (ABHE). In fact, some of the most interesting, not to mention innovative and relevant, forms of theological education are occurring below the post-baccalaureate level: seminary-based certificate programs in cooperation with local religious communities, chaplaincies, and church-based or sponsored programs – across denominations and ecclesial families – as well as

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independent institutes and programs, some of which are housed in theological schools. Such programs are not only addressing the theological needs of specific communities, but they also, by their existence, are challenging the very nature and boundaries of accredited graduate theological education. In the US and Canada the majority of schools offering accredited graduate theological degrees belong to ATS which accredits these institutions through its Commission on Accrediting.2

The Commission’s standards governing the theological curriculum are articulated in ATS Commission Standard 4, “The Theological Curriculum,” which defines the theological curriculum as “the means by which teaching and learning are formally ordered to educational goals.”3 Embedded in the understanding that theological schools are communities of faith engaged in activities of “theological scholarship” defined in terms of learning, teaching, and research, the theological curriculum seeks to “cultivate habits of theological reflection, nurture wise and skilled ministerial practice, and contribute to the formation of spiritual awareness and moral sensitivity” (ATS Commission Standard 3). Commission Standard 4 understands the overarching educational goal as “the development of theological understanding,” or the “aptitude for theological reflection and wisdom pertaining to responsible life in faith.”4 This includes the intimately interwoven goals of deepening of spiritual awareness, growth in moral sensibility and character, gaining an intellectual grasp of the tradition of faith communities, and the acquisition of the abilities requisite to the exercise of ministry in these communities.

Reflecting an abiding commitment to diversity, Standard 4 goes on to state that:

The emphasis placed on particular goals and their configuration will vary, both from school to school (depending on the understanding of institutional purpose), and within each school (depending on the variety of educational programs offered). The ordering of teaching and learning toward particular sets of goals is embodied in the degree programs of the school and in the specific curricula followed in those programs. The theological curriculum, comprehensively understood, embraces all those activities and experiences provided by the school to enable students to achieve the intended goals. More narrowly understood, the curriculum is the array of specific activities (e.g. courses, practical, supervised ministry, spiritual formation experiences, theses) explicitly required in a degree program. In both more comprehensive and the more narrow sense, the entire curriculum should be seen as a set of practices with a formative aim – the development of intellectual, spiritual, moral, and vocational or professional capacities – and careful attention must be give to the coherence and mutual enhancement of its various elements.5

The degree programs offered by ATS member schools, all of which ordinarily presuppose a baccalaureate degree fall into several categories. The first graduate theological degree is of two kinds: those that are oriented to ministerial leadership and those oriented to general theological studies.6

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2 The purpose of ATS is: “to (i) promote the enhancement and improvement of theological schools in the United States and Canada and to advocate on behalf of theological education, (ii) provide a continuing educational forum for administrators and faculty in theological education, (iii) conduct applied research regarding issues and practices of theological education to contribute to the development of theological education, (iv) communicate with member schools and the broader public about theological education, and (v) provide a continuing venue to convene schools to consider issues regarding theological education, relationships among theological schools, and the relationships of theological schools to other educational institutions, associations, and ecclesiastical and governmental authorities.” As of January 2010, there are over 250 member schools in the association.


4 Ibid.

5 ATS Commission Standard 4, section 4.1.2.

6 Basic degrees oriented to ministerial leadership include the Master of Divinity, the Master of Arts in Religious Education, the Master of Arts in ____ (e.g. Counselling), and the Master of Sacred Music. Basic degrees oriented to general theological studies include the Master of Arts, Master of Arts (Religion), Master of Theological Studies. The specific features of these degrees programs are described in Standard 4, section 4.2.1 and 4.2.2.
Advanced programs which normally pre-suppose the first theological degree are of two kinds: those that focus on advanced ministerial leadership and those that are oriented toward theological research and teaching. The Commission on Accrediting requires that all approved degrees articulate the: i) purpose of the degree, ii) primary goals of the program, iii) program content, location, and duration, iv) admission and resource requirements, and, v) educational evaluation. While these degree program standards are specific to each degree, and while the content of the standards are context-specific, they nevertheless provide a common framework and “understanding of the kind and quantity of academic work involved in a degree program undertaken at member schools.” These standards “provide for a common public recognition of theological degrees, to assure quality, and to enhance evaluative efforts.” While the quality of the degree programs cannot be guaranteed by the standards as such, the framework that they provide, the practices that arise from their shared interpretation, and the willingness of the member schools to submit to its authority, allow for public space without which there can be no responsibility, accountability, and assessments for and of “the good, the true, and the beautiful” in theological education – and its curricula.

Conventional wisdom understands accreditation in general and the standards which are at its core, as having both aspirational as well as regulatory dimensions. While the ideal relationship between these dimensions is one of complementarity, it has not always been fully achieved in practice. In fact, when the standards are oriented exclusively around compliance – either to an aspiration or to a regulation – their character as discursive practices by particular communities tends to be eclipsed. They lose their dynamism and are reduced to particular aspirational and regulatory “technologies.” In fact, standards are more than aspirations or regulations. They are, to borrow from the language of literary theory, not only “empty signifiers” that invite interpretation but more important, are also “cartographical markers” not for what quality is, but what quality should include. Comprehensively understood, Standards are also a collection of codified, summative (and therefore retrospective) “best practices” – a tradition, if you will – of accredited graduate theological education by and for what Etienne Wenger, in a different though not unrelated context calls, “communities of practice.”

7 Advanced degrees oriented to ministerial leadership include the Doctor of Ministry, Doctor of Educational Ministry, Doctor of Education, Doctor of Missiology, Doctor of Musical Arts. Advanced degrees oriented to teaching and research includes the Master of Theology and Master of Sacred Theology; as well as, the Doctor of Philosophy and the Doctor of Theology. The specific features of these degree programs are described in Standard 4, section 4.2.3 and 4, section 4.2.4.

8 Thus, according to the ATS Commission Standards all MDiv programs, for example, must provide breadth and depth in the areas of 1) religious heritage, 2) cultural context, 3) personal and spiritual formation, and, 4) capacity for ministerial and public leadership (ATS Degree Program Standard A.3); but the Standards do not specify the content of these four areas.

9 I deploy the term “practice” much in the same way Michel Foucault used the term dispositif – “a resolutely heterogeneous assemblage, containing discourses, institutions, architectural buildings (managements architecturaux), reglementary decisions, scientific statements, philosophical, moral, philanthropic propositions… said as well as non-said (du dit aussi bien que du non-dit)…” – to signify “the simultaneous identity/difference” of ‘theory’ (speculative reason), and ‘praxis’ (practical reason), and their interplay with the personal, the political, the historical, and the sacred – in the service of transformation. See Michel Foucault, “The Confession of the Flesh” in Power/Knowledge Selected Interviews and Other Writings, ed., Colin Gordon (New York, NY: Pantheon, 1980), 194-228.

10 “Communities of practice are formed by people who engage in a process of collective learning in a shared domain of human endeavor: a tribe learning to survive, a band of artists seeking new forms of expression, a group of engineers working on similar endeavors, a clique of pupils defining their identity in the school, a network of surgeons exploring novel techniques, a gathering of first-time managers helping each other cope.” (Italics inserted for emphasis). Etienne Wenger points out that not all communities are “communities of practice.” The latter are characterized by 1) a shared domain of interest, 2) a community of joint activity, discussions and information, and, 3) a shared repertoire of resources. See the website of Etienne Wenger, www.ewenger.com/theory/index.htm, (accessed 27/1/10). See also, Etienne Wenger, Communities of Practice: Learning, Meaning and Identity (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University
It is not the goal of this essay to offer yet another narrative of “curriculum development in theological education.” For these important narratives, this essay depends on the many theological and non-theological educators who have addressed the theme in more complex and richly-textured ways and from whom much has been learned.11 Neither is it the goal of this essay to insist that the ATS Commission Standards be the aspirational or regulatory norm or framework for all theological education, in general, and the development of curricula, in particular. This essay’s context-specific task is much more general: to make, in a spirit of dialogue, some observations about ongoing conversations on graduate degree programs as a necessary element in curricula in theological education particularly in the US and Canada, to raise some questions about some of the issues that are embedded in these conversations, and to offer an interpretive perspective about the conditions of possibility that may have a bearing on the transformation of theological education and its curricula in our respective locations.

Entering the discussion on “theological curriculum” in this way does at least two things which I believe is important for the future of this ongoing, turbulent and necessary conversation. First, by situating the conversation within an ongoing discussion of the relevance, adequacy, and desirability of degree program standards, I wish not only to recognize the importance of the conversation, but the necessity of re-affirming the public character of theological education as an antidote to the re-emergence of auto-referential subjectivity in theological education and its destructive consequences. At the same time, it reveals my “preferential option” for transformation as the explicit purpose of theological education and, therefore, the orienting, if not operational, principle.

Second, by accepting the multiple locations and positionalities of “our” multi-stranded (curricular) diversities as the methodological and spiritual starting point for curriculum development, I wish to signal my refusal to enter into the extremely well rehearsed disputes about whose claims about theological education take precedence or which curricular models and perspectives are more relevant or important – disputes that I have found largely unhelpful, if sometimes debilitating, and frequently polarizing. At the same time, my particular affirmation of diversity is tied to a recognition not only that the boundaries, territories, and containers of accredited graduate theological education, in general, and theological curricula, in particular, are far more permeable than has often been acknowledged, but also that the virtue of living in leaky containers lies in the strength it provides to refuse the temptation of essentializing or homogenizing accredited graduate theological education and its curricular forms. Such essentializing tends to accompany assertions about the desirability of impermeable, uncontaminated boundaries, territories, and containers – a temptation that continues to this day to hold many captive under its enchanting spell.12

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Curricular dilemmas: Social, Political, Philosophical, Institutional

What is not always readily admitted in discussions of theological education is that not unlike the institutions out of which standards arise, namely, the city, church, and academy, theological curricula are creatures of history – but multistranded histories comprehensively and variously understood as “space,” as “political-economic-cultural artifact,” as “religio-moral event,” as “sites of ministry,” as “structures and processes of capital, goods, information, people,” and, as “ecosystem.” Put in this way, any discussion about “the means by which teaching and learning are formally ordered to educational goals” will have to carefully attend to these histories that not only gave them birth, but which continue to nurture and shape them.

In the first place, our world in the early years of the 21st century no longer resembles the world, which gave birth to the seminary, theological school, or university-affiliated divinity schools. On the one hand, global capital, the transnational reach of multinational corporations, modern science, technology, and higher education, the so-called information and cyberspace revolution – and the post-9/11 long march towards an all encompassing incarcerative design for society, a global panopticon of sorts that seeks to preserve and defend the gains of capitalist-led globalization post-1989, is generating movements not only towards global integration presided over by the unrepentant mandarins of modernity, but to the discovery of a global commons, and of a universally-oriented humanity. By “globalization” I refer to those processes of profound structural transformation that have gained some level of autonomy at the global level; which sustain the movements and flows of capital, people, goods, information, and ideas and images, and which are altering the conditions under which communities and identities are enacted. On the other hand, the proliferation of states, peoples, and movements, often local in orientation, as well as the growing and widespread skepticism towards the project of modernity (the limits and pitfalls of modern science and technology, for example), are generating countervailing movements, sometimes profoundly conflicting even violent, not only towards fragmentation but to an appreciation of plurality, locality, and particularity.13

In the second place, institutions of higher education like the seminary, theological school, and university-affiliated divinity school continue not only to be intensely contested, but also continue to be sites of contestation, despite what appears to be the triumph of global capital, its market-driven institutions,

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13 Needless to say, accredited graduate theological education has not escaped these fundamental transformations. Consider, for example, the following data reported by ATS: 1) between 1995 and 2008, MDiv programs increased by 24%, professional MA programs 71%, academic MA programs 28%, advanced professional degree programs 44%, and advanced academic degree programs 17%; 2) in AY2000, 6,167 students were enrolled in online/distance education programs. In AY2005, there were 12,780, and in AY2008, 19,279 – a three-fold increase in eight years. While numbers do not tell the whole story, they suggest trajectories that invite thought. For example, one might conclude that the almost three-fold increase of the professional MA programs over the MDiv (long recognized as the normative degree to prepare persons for the ordained ministry) is a reflection of the changing understanding of what preparation for ordained ministry requires. Similarly, the proliferation of online education may be evidence of a movement away from the long-held residential, face-to-face model of theological education towards a cyberspace-mediated, non-face-to-face model of theological education. In both cases, these are huge changes that have implications for the construction of theological curricula.


Part I: Theological Education in Global Context: Issues and Themes
and the values that legitimize these institutions. It is difficult to arrive at a substantive consensus at the theoretical level, let alone the pedagogical, as to what, for example, the primary mission of these institutions ought to be, or the role, which they should play in church, society, and the world. Should a university-affiliated divinity school, for example, focus on graduate professional education for pastoral and religious leadership, or should it focus on preparation for graduate teaching and research? What are the consequences for curricula—should the answer be “for both”? More importantly, what constitutes theological education (in contrast say, to “religious education”)? What are its professional and academic boundaries? What constitutes the theological profession, and therefore, what are the appropriate requirements for accredited graduate theological degree programs? Moreover, how do we account for the vast differences, if not unevenness of theological education arising from the real differences among a small denominational seminary in Richmond, Indiana, a large university-affiliated divinity school in Boston, Massachusetts, a diocesan seminary in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, a seminary in Matanzas, Cuba or in Arasaradi, Madurai, South India or in any one of the countries of the global south? Beyond this lies the real challenge of identifying the subjects, stakeholders, and authorities presupposed in the question: who in these institutions should have the authority, not to mention, final authority, to determine the institution’s purpose or mission, programs and policies, and, priorities and resource allocations for learning, teaching and research?

In addition, the notion of community which is central to the language and experience of seminaries, theological schools and university-affiliated divinity schools, and on which many ground their raison d’être has raised more questions than it has provided answers. While there is an emerging sense of a global identity, if not community, and while we may yet in our lifetime see the institutionalizing of a global

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14 In fact, these questions are played out on the surface of the curriculum discussions currently underway. The ATS Degree Program Standards, for example, are currently under review by the entire association; the recommendations that will arise from this three-year process of “redevelopment” will be voted upon in 2012. Among the important issues directly related to curriculum development, are the re-definitions of residency (and location), duration, as well as educational effectiveness, and the definition of professional and academic programs. To be sure, these are complicated, if idiosyncratic conversations within a comparatively limited area of theological education, which, for this reason, may have limited utility in the more comprehensive ecology of global theological education. Still, these issues are illustrative of what is at stake for the construction of theological curricula for accredited graduate theological education. As one member of the Taskforce on the Redeveloped Standards observes, the matter of location or residency, “relates to the accessibility of learning resources, be these faculty, peer groups, accountability structures, research materials or any other necessary resource… the statement on location for each degree [in the Standards]… is followed by a corollary placing a burden on a school to demonstrate that students engaged in extension or distance learning have access to a ‘community of learning,’ education in ‘skills particular to (a) degree’ and attend to ‘formational elements’… Is it possible to provide for all these things apart from a minimum one-year residency requirement?”

“The educational environment,” continues this Taskforce member “has changed so much in the last 20 years that students at a distance now may have access to all the resources they need to achieve the typical degree objectives stated by schools in compliance with ATS degree standards. This is in part the result of 1) the growing digitization of resources, 2) a new level of connectivity enhanced by high-bandwidth internet access, 3) the acceptance of real-time, interactive online community as ‘real’ community, 4) the relocation of some learning from the seminary classroom to the parish workplace, 5) creative educators finding ways to achieve learning objectives with a blend of high-tech and high-touch methods, and 6) the recognition that for distance and/or online education the goal is the achieving of stated educational objectives, not simply replicating the traditional classroom… The result (for me at least) calls for a shift from assuming that a particular context for learning is effective (and thus requiring that context be a part of degree standards), and focusing on indicators of educational effectiveness whatever the learning context may be. In other words, we should stop requiring schools to certify that education occurs at a particular place, and start requiring schools to certify that education is occurring however or wherever it is delivered… in ALL learning contexts.” (“Response to the topics raised in the Aleshire/McCarthy ‘Charge’ to Review Subcommittees;” April 29, 2009, unpublished notes).
civilization or a planetary cyberspace, hyperrealist identity, structures and patterns of actually existing communities, tied to territorial claims, particularly of the state and/or of ethnic groups, still remain and continue to hold sway. Thus, the reigning definition of “community” is still articulated along dichotomous, if not divisive lines – the civilized versus the barbarian, the inside versus outside, the friend versus enemy, the domestic versus the international, the resource-rich versus the resource-deprived. In many institutions of higher education in the US and Canada, not excluding seminaries, theological schools and university-affiliated divinity schools, this reigning definition of “community” articulates itself along the lines of their perceived, if not recognized, stakeholders: ethnic and/or racial, gender, class, age, and sexual preference, as well as academic or professional disciplines, ecclesial families, along with the imagined or real asymmetries of power, position, and privilege that often accompany these asymmetries.

In effect, any pretensions of having a community of learning, normatively rooted in the primary face-to-face relationship within a shared and common horizon, are rendered problematic, if not illusory by, on the one hand, the actually existing “anarchic” structures at the global level masquerading as centralizing, not to mention, civilizing norms, and, on the other hand, the specificities of local identities desperately asserting themselves in the name of survival. The question is not only whether there can be a community without the ethical face-to-face, but also whether it is possible to reach for a community that can account simultaneously for both local (face-to-face) and global identities. What are the curricular/pedagogical implications of this “face-to-face” – or of its absence?15

In the third place, it is difficult to speak about universally applicable theological education for city, church, and academy given what for a long time now has been called the “unevenness of development.” Historically, this unevenness has been articulated as the difference between “core and periphery,” “North-South,” “First World-Third World,” and “Global South-Global North.” Often the unevenness is legitimated by practices rooted in assertions of gender, class, and racial superiority. This problem of unevenness lies not only in the vastly different theoretical and practical contexts in which seminaries, theological schools, and university-affiliated divinity schools have come to be situated in the present – contexts which themselves are undergoing profound changes, not least of all in the epistemological and pedagogical domains. Nor does the problem of unevenness emerge only as a question of re-distribution of resources – political, economic, and cultural. In fact, there are very real differences, both inter-and intra institutionally, in the ways institutions of higher education are organized, supported, and developed, which profoundly shape the nature and character of each institution and which cannot simply be resolved by appealing to some universal pedagogical role which accredited graduate theological institutions are said to play in church, society, and world.16

More important, perhaps, what is often overlooked is that the problem of unevenness also raises critical questions about commensurability, applicability, and translatability the answers to which cannot be found by retreating into some pre-given definitions of what accredited graduate theological education is, not to mention what the religio-moral responsibilities of their institutions are in church, society, and world. Such

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15 This broad question of community in the context of the discussions on curriculum gets raised in terms of the importance of an adequate community of learners. Degree Program Standard A.3.2. states, “MDiv education has a complex goal: the personal, vocational, spiritual, and academic formation of the student. Because of the importance of a comprehensive community of learning, the MDiv cannot be viewed simply as an accumulation of courses or of individual independent work. In order to ensure an appropriate educational community, at least one year of full-time academic study or its equivalent shall be completed at the main campus of the school awarding the degree or at an extension site of the institution that has been approved for MDiv degree-granting status.” Cf. fn. 14.

16 The range of and variations in purpose, theological scholarship, library and information resources, faculty, authority and governance, and institutional resources, of institutions of accredited graduate theological education are illustrative. See ATS, “2008-09 Annual Data Tables,” www.ats.edu/Resources/Publications/Documents/AnnualDataTables/2008-09AnnualDataTables.pdf.
unevenness can only be addressed, if not overcome, by intentionally providing contexts and opportunities for encountering, engaging with, the historical Others who continually displace or replace our best intentions and desires for accredited graduate theological education.\footnote{Nowhere is this question of “commensurability, applicability, and translatability” more clearly evidenced than in the almost endless contestations among member schools, often subtle and subterranean, around, for example, race and ethnicity, gender, and sexual preference in theological education. The importance of these issues are reflected in the cumulative efforts of ATS and the Commission on Accrediting to ensure a comprehensive and thoroughgoing institutional commitment to diversity in its multistranded expressions and articulated in the association’s procedures, policy statements, and Bylaws, as well as in the commission’s institutional and degree program standards. See, for example, ATS, Bulletin 48, Part 1 (2008). See also association’s journal, Theological Education which archives the work of ATS on these issues www.ats.edu/Resources/Publications/Documents/TE/TEIndex.pdf, (accessed 31/1/10). For a forward-looking discussion, see Daniel Aleshire, Earthen Vessels: Hopeful Reflections on the Work and Future of Theological Schools (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm B. Eerdmans, 2008).}

**Orientations: Towards (Best) Practices in the Theological Curricula**

While I am somewhat skeptical about the capacity of institutions of accredited graduate theological education to exercise a consistent transformative role in church, society, and the world, I do not believe that they will wither away – more so than they should. For these institutions in their medieval and modern form have always re-presented society: its “scenography, its views, conflicts, contradictions, its play and its differences, and also its desire for organic union in a total body.”\footnote{Jacques Derrida, “The Principle of Reason: The University in the Eyes of its Pupils” Diacritics 13: 3 (1983): 19.} In fact, these institutions – such as we know them today – are more necessary than ever, because they are already implicated in society as sites for practices that shape human experience – *topoi* for thinking, feeling, and indeed, acting – and, as sites of contestation, of contending perspectives, commitments, values, about the good, the true, and the beautiful which are necessary in the articulation of theological curricula adequate to the needs of the 21st century.

In my view, the articulation of theological curricula requires at least four normative, orienting practices.

First, there is the practice of deliberation. Deliberation cannot be reduced to mere speech. It encompasses the whole range of participative practices, which Jürgen Habermas, when reminded of his flirtations with “ideal speech situations,” is pointing to in his theory of communicative action; it is Paulo Freire’s dialogics of liberation; and John D. Caputo’s radical hermeneutics.\footnote{Jürgen Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action*, translated by Thomas McCarthy (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1984-1987); Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, revised edition, translated by Myra Bergman Ramos (New York, NY: Continuum, 1994); John D. Caputo, *More Radical Hermeneutics: On not knowing who we are* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press. 2000).} These practices pre-suppose a recognition and affirmation not only of the plurality of theological institutions, celebrating difference as constitutive of community, but also of meaningful and direct participation in the construction of theological curricula. Here, “community” has less to do with the aggregation of groups based exclusively on racial, gender, class, or disciplinary identities or solidarities, and more with the sites where human beings, if not theological educators, recognize and affirm their mutual obligations and relationships while simultaneously accepting norms of tolerance and non-exclusion.

Second, there is the practice of creating, nurturing, and defending what Hannah Arendt called, in a different though not unrelated context, “the common,” that is, the *res publica* – the “public thing.”\footnote{Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1959).} Contrary to those modernist practices that reduce the common to a pre-given structure of reality, or even to an ethnocentric project given ontological or universal status through its imposition worldwide, the common is the space for difference carved out by deliberating communities as they seek meaningful consensus. By being committed to the retrieval and preservation of the common, particularly a global common, one casts...
suspicion on the logocentric, self-referential, and totalizing pretensions of modernist narratives that shape theological education today. It also redefines the common beyond the conventional notions of territoriality, recognizing not only our shared context or our profound pluralistic existence, but also of our human species identity.\(^{21}\)

Third, there is the practice of utopia. Most theological schools within the association would agree that “Where there is no vision, the people perish…” (Proverbs 29: 18, NIV) This vision, is not a description of the future, rather, it is an orientation in the present, a point of entry, a beginning, a departure, but not a final destination. While this orientation is mediated through individual limits and the limits of these institutions of accredited graduate theological education and of the communities that constitute these institutions, this unavoidable, if necessary, limitation, can be transformed into a practical critique of universalizing hegemonies, that, in the language of Foucault, makes transgressions possible, making it imaginable to undermine, subvert, put into question, those dominative practices – particularly of pseudo-universals and false dichotomies – which discipline present-day experience of the city, church, and academy. Limitations are transformed into sites of the theological imagination.\(^{22}\)

Moreover, the possibility of transgression rests, largely, on a critical consciousness and a creative imagination that are not imprisoned by the logic of modernity nor bound to conventional wisdom.\(^{23}\) Such an imagination, which is a window into the future, will need to be nurtured, cultivated, indeed, disciplined in order for it to be informative as well as transformative. This however is not an unqualified rejection of tradition, for indeed, the imagination requires that it be at home with memory; and critical consciousness cannot be a disembodied emancipatory interest. Indeed, one of the lessons we have learned for theological education as a whole, particularly from the feminist/womanist movements, is the impossibility of

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21 The false dichotomy of normative aspiration and regulatory necessity that runs through many interpretations of the standards or the alleged incommensurability between particularity and universal applicability, find their philosophical ground in the eclipse of the “common” which Arendt untiringly asserts throughout her work. The articulation and re-articulation of theological curricula need to resist the temptation of yielding either to the false dichotomy or to the evasion of “the common.”

22 “I can’t help but dream,” Foucault muses, “about a kind of criticism that would try not to judge but to bring an ouvre, a book, a sentence, an idea to life; it would light fires, watch the grass grow, listen to the wind, and catch the sea foam in the breeze and scatter it. It would multiply not judgments but signs of existence; it would summon them from their sleep. Perhaps, it would invent them sometimes – all the better…. Criticism that hands down sentences sends me to sleep; I’d like a criticism of scintillating leaps of the imagination. It would not be sovereign or dressed in red. It would bear the lightning of possible storms.” Michel Foucault, “The Masked Philosopher,” interview conducted on April 6-7, 1980 by Christian Delacampagne, reprinted in Michel Foucault, Ethics, Subjectivity and Truth, Essential Works of Foucault, 1954-1984, Vol 1, edited by Paul Rabinow (New York, NY: The New Press, 1997). On the notion of “limits” see James D. Faubion, ed., Michel Foucault: Aesthetics, Method and Epistemology, Essential Works of Foucault, vol. 2 (New York, NY: The New Press, 1998), 476ff.

The need for imaginative criticism in curriculum development is required by the very structure of curriculum itself. As Elliot Eisner pointed out long ago, there are three curricula that all schools teach: the explicit (what it claims it teaches), the implicit (what it actually teaches, often below the threshold of intentionality), and the null curricula (what it does not teach). These three are shaped by political, economic, and cultural assumptions, often tied to the dominant apparatuses of society and therefore, require of educators the capacity to evaluate and assess. See fn. 11.

23 If one will allow a small, but not insignificant philosophical digression, Foucault’s notion of the “critical” imagination resonates, somewhat with Paul Ricoeur’s notion of the productive imagination which he contrasts with the reproductive imagination in his unpublished “Lectures on Imagination.” The latter seeks to “image” a replica of some “pre-existing outer reality” where the copy (what is imagined) is always less than the original; the former, Ricoeur contrasts with the productive imagination which is not bound to the original image but offers the possibility of producing a new reality in the context of the interpretive event. Read in this way, it becomes possible to understand why “imagination” is critical to theological education as an orienting practice in the development of curricula for theological education. That is because the possibility of transformation rests on the capacity for developing “imaginative” practices in theological education. Cf. Foster, et al, Educating Clergy, fn. 11, 20-38.
dissociating mind and body, reason and passion, thought and action. What is at stake, moreover, is the freedom to think beyond the present, to be able to reflect in ways that go beyond present structures of thought and action. This is deconstructive thinking at its best, necessary if one is to avoid the pitfalls of the “first naiveté,” mistaking reversals of the modernist logic and rejections of modernist practices for the transformative act. Derrida warns, for example, that partial critiques of the principle of reason only mean that the practices generated by it are replicated in other forms elsewhere.²⁴

Finally, there is the practice of truthfulness, of institutions of accredited graduate theological education striving to be places of truth in church, society, and the world. ²⁵ Despite their implication in modernity’s “meticulous rituals of power,” seminaries, theological schools and university-affiliated divinity schools, by intention and design especially in terms of learning, teaching, and research and the specific form they take in their respective theological curricula, can provide alternatives to the practices of thought and action generated by the grand narrative of modernity, or other historical narratives for that matter – (hetero-) sexism, racism, class. They can seek to articulate different understandings of the world in which they are situated, provide alternative readings of political, economic, cultural, and religious life – without pretending or aspiring to be legislators for church, society, and world. Such truthfulness is a necessary condition for the ethical, though it is not yet its completion or its apotheosis.

My own normative desire is to see accredited graduate theological education find new and better languages for transformation and hope which can give birth to new and better understandings of what the Greek philosophers called paideia which Werner Jaeger describes as “the process of educating [human beings] into [their] true form, the real and genuine human nature.” And while I may be less confident than Jaeger in uncovering the true and genuine human nature, I appreciate his sense of the importance of an unequivocal commitment to the purposive character of education. I believe that one of the challenges theological educators face is how to move contextually towards the intentional and systematic cultivation of what Foucault called the “[insurrection of] subjugated knowledges” – discursive strategies and formations that have been conceptually, historically, philosophically, and institutionally excluded or eclipsed from conventional education practice – in the hope that they will contribute to both new knowledge and practice.²⁶ This education in the service of transformation has at least three other pedagogical practices or strategies, compellingly developed by Foster et al, with their accompanying forms of reason: interpretation [speculative reason or theoria], formation [virtue or arete], and performance [practical reason or phronesis].

**Locations/Positions: Tasks for Development of (Theological) Curricula**

Let me conclude this essay by suggesting several tasks for the development of (theological) curricula.

First, the development of theological curricula needs to embrace and experience a continually changing world. Seminaries, theological schools, and university-affiliated divinity schools today are not only confronted by profound transformations, dilemmas, and questions that call for both interpretation and action; but more important, perhaps, that these transformations, dilemmas and questions confront these

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²⁵ Truth, however, is always inextricably related to thought, and to the past, present, and future (temporality). Martin Heidegger observed that the unfolding of truth involves both concealment and unconcealment and was inseparable from thought itself. Not simply consciousness, even critical consciousness, thought required situating one’s self as a *topos* through which the truth of Being was brought forth and appropriated. Truth, in other words, arises within a process of discernment, the conditions of which, in theological education, is directly related to pedagogies of interpretation, formation, contextualization, and performance, which Foster, et al have identified.
institutions with the task of articulating appropriate pedagogies, structures, and processes that are adequate not only for the particular historical moment, but equally important, for the particular spaces and places in which they find themselves. To put the matter in its most polemical form, the differences between a seminary, theological school, and a university-affiliated divinity school are too great to be erased. For one to aspire to be another, I believe, is to underestimate the profound implications for education of the spatial and temporal asymmetries, unevenness, and profound imbalances of our world. More important, such aspirations are a failure of the imagination and a mis-reading of the unique niches that different institutions contribute to the wider ecology of accredited graduate theological education.

Part of the problem is that the notion of educational excellence, for example, has been identified only with the standards set by the dominant institutions of higher education – much in the same way that global capitalism has arbitrarily defined for us the true, the good, and the beautiful. Judged even by its own standards, this form of educational excellence has begun to show cracks in its claims to (ecological) sustainability, particularly if the history of the past several years is any indication of what lies ahead. The challenge, then, is to discover the meaning of a sustainable excellence for each institution’s own space, time, and place without surrendering the spirit of academic excellence which animates even these so-called model institutions, namely, rigorous and practical research, honest and open intellectual inquiry, relevant and useful education.

Seminaries, theological schools, and university-related divinity schools may need to situate themselves appropriately and strategically in this global, globalizing, and urbanizing 21st century – which means, they need to focus not only on a changing, globalizing world, but especially on their effects on the local ecology, without surrendering their unique claim to defining for themselves, not only what this globalization means and requires, but what educational excellence means within their particular ecology. The challenge for these institutions is to look beyond mere academic excellence – beyond matters of achieving academic status, for example, or of sustaining a theological institution that offers the widest range of academic and professional disciplines for its own sake – to excellence as such: in body, mind, spirit. By excellence, I mean, to paraphrase Maxine Greene, the Columbia University philosopher of education, assisting individuals in the creation and nurture of an authentic public space in which individuals can appear before each other in the best way they know how to be.

Second, the development of theological curricula needs to develop engaged pedagogies. All education is about the discovery, creation, and nurture of creative and critical consciousness. As Paulo Freire’s Pedagogy of the Oppressed, already pointed out over twenty years ago, “critical consciousness” is a process of thinking, feeling, acting which is set in a thoroughly historical, political, cultural context, and, carried on in the midst of a struggle to create a just, participatory, and sustainable society. It is a rediscovery and a re-affirmation of the humanizing vocation of all human beings, which demonstrates the power of education to negate arbitrary limits while opening the way to alternative futures. Engaged pedagogies are about creating free subjects who participate in the transformation of their chosen spaces, times, and places. The challenge for theological curricula in the 21st century, then, is to be a place for the practice of embodied freedom. This practice of embodied freedom, which is always and already a sustainable freedom, includes the development of the whole person, one who has clearly grasped the simple fact that his or her self is fully implicated in those beings around her or him – human and non-human, and who has learned to care deeply

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about them. Engaged pedagogies, then, are not just about inculcating a learned appreciation for all those things that come under the name of a theological education, nor simply to transmit or receive all those “professional skills” that are dictated by the city, the church, and the academy, not to mention by the market-driven institutions of global capital, but about developing balanced, whole persons where the analytic mind is integrated with feelings, the intellect with manual competence. The 21st century does not need thinkers who cannot do, and doers who cannot think, but connected and connecting persons: to self, to others, to environment.

Engaged pedagogies have profound institutional implications, from pedagogical philosophy to pedagogical style, from pedagogical context to pedagogical technologies. There is a growing acknowledgement among theological educators that a theological school is part of a local, regional, and global ecological system. By this, I mean, a school is more than its campus, unique in itself. It is also, not unlike the community in which it is located, a confluence of sources of food, water, livelihood, energy, materials, friends, ideas, recreation and sports, sacred inspiration – not to mention economic, political, cultural interests and/or concerns. In short, it is a biosphere. A sustainable, creative, and critical consciousness, which is a fully embodied, corporeal consciousness, ought to take this ecological understanding and its implications for theological education and its curricula seriously.29 In this context, it is important to ask whether the way a seminary, theological school, or university-affiliated divinity school organizes its curriculum, to cite only one example, actually reflects the ecological system in which it is embedded. Can one say that what is taught and/or learned in a theological school assist in understanding and experiencing the interconnections of these different times, spaces, places? Is the campus design ecologically friendly and sustainable? Is the academic calendar consistent with the larger rhythms of the ecological system? Are teaching loads, course assignments, and school activities – in other words, the curriculum – congruent with the needs and limits of a school’s physical, political, economic, social bodies?30 Are the members of the institution’s core community, be they faculty, trustees, administration, or support staff, thoroughly and appropriately trained and fairly compensated according to the requirements of their particular biospheres?31 This is part of the question of (ecological) sustainability that can no longer be avoided.32

30 These questions and others like them go to the specific task of evaluation and assessment to ascertain educational effectiveness. The increasing prominence of assessment of student learning outcomes, the evaluation of program outcomes, and, institutional planning and evaluation in ensuring “good theological education” reflects a growing recognition not only among ATS member schools but across the “industry” that it is not enough for institutions of accredited graduate theological education to possess the capacity to provide education; it is critical that schools are intentionally self-reflexive in using that capacity to enable their students to learn. Jeremiah McCarthy, until recently a member of the ATS accreditation staff, notes that assessing effectiveness has focused on: “1) a school’s mission, 2) the expressing of that mission in terms of degree programs with their stated objectives, and 3) the assessing of the degree to which students have achieved the degree objectives outlined for their chosen course of study.” This shift from “teaching” to “learning” as the orienting metaphor for accredited graduate theological education requires that educational evaluation be an intrinsic part of a school’s curricula, and that the creation and nurture of a “culture of assessment” be part of sustainable curriculum development. The resources on evaluation and assessment are vast. See for example, Marilee Bresciani, *Outcomes-Based Academic and Co-Curricular Program Review: A Compilation of Institutional Good Practices* (Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing, 2006); Michael Middaugh, *Planning and Assessment in Higher Education: Demonstrating Institutional Effectiveness* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2009); William Myers, *Closing the Assessment Loop: Nurturing Healthy, On-going Self-evaluation in Theological Schools* (Chicago, IL: Chicago Theological School dba Exploration Press, 2006); Sarah B. Drummond, *Holy Clarity: The Practice of Planning and Evaluation* (Washington, D.C.: Alban Institute, 2009).
31 The challenge for theological curriculum development in the 21st century, in fact, is to rediscover what John Dewey, the dean of American pragmatism, already proposed in 1897, namely, that the specificities of place, the corporeality of
Third, the development of theological curricula needs to attend to building human and humane communities of theological scholarship with its three-fold character of learning, teaching, and research. At the heart of this task is the commitment to, and practice of, dialogue. A seminary, theological school, or university-related divinity school that understands the three-fold character of theological scholarship and its inextricable link to theological curricula recognizes that its constituent parts are in constant dialogue towards particular goals. We already know that the way education occurs is as important as its content. What is sometimes overlooked is that relevant and meaningful education occurs as a dialogue, which means, like any good conversation (or degree program), it has purpose, goals, content, location, duration, and resource requirements. Beyond the form of dialogue as a conversation among and between human beings, I mean dialogue in its original sense of dia-logos: moving through multiple universes of meaning – which often involves conflict and collaboration, continuity and change, and the creation of justice. In its most comprehensive sense, it means together connecting different spaces, times, places, in order to overcome what the American philosopher Alfred North Whitehead called “the fatal disconnection of subjects which kills the vitality of our modern universities.” The theological curriculum, then, ought to be about equipping persons to live well in specific places, preparing them to dwell, not just to reside.

We already know that theological curricula require positive, affirming relationships among its participants. What is often overlooked is that in order for learning, teaching and research to be relevant and meaningful, they must involve passion, i.e., connected to eros, love, and ecstasy. After all, human beings are more than logos; we are also eros, pathos, and the daimon.33 Unfortunately, despite our being a truly passionate people, we still tend to view with skepticism, if not open hostility, the pedagogical virtues of eros, love, and ecstasy in theological education, perhaps, because we fear eros may lead us down the dangerous pathway to an undisciplined, irresponsible, if fascinating human sexuality; or, we believe love will impair our pedagogical judgments and evaluations by making us “subjective” or “biased;” or, we think that ecstasy is nothing more than esoteric, otherworldly-directed experience. Happily, eros is more than the sexual. It is the moving force that propels every life form from a state of mere potentiality to actuality – and therefore, is an entirely appropriate (re) source for theological education and its curricula; love and care in the Christian tradition are the bases not only for a fuller humanity, but for a deeper and expansive understanding of self, other, and world; and, ecstasy, “standing outside ourselves,” is the historically-grounded precondition for personal, political, historical, and, indeed, religious, insight and transformation, without which we will only remain myopically pre-occupied with and in ourselves and our own self-interests compromising, thereby, the futures of accredited graduate theological education.

experience, and the conjunctural nature of the ecological system all need to inform the way theological education and its curricula are designed and intended. This is especially important in the coming century, which will be characterized even more by the fundamental transformations of space, time, and place.

32 The question of (ecological) sustainability in accredited graduate theological education, which is more than a question of environment, travels beyond matters of “institutional resources” although it cannot avoid them. Institutional “mergers and acquisitions” among theological schools, the not so uncommon persistence of re-defining institutional purpose and mission, the discussions around location/residency, duration, hybrid courses (courses that “blend face-to-face instruction and technologically-mediated instruction to deliver the contact hours necessary in the normal definition of clock hours required to deliver credit hours”), and the difference between professional and academic degree programs, may certainly be interpreted as survival responses to market-driven considerations under conditions of scarcity and unevenness across “the industry.” I want to suggest, however, that these may also be interpreted as serious efforts to find one’s niche in the ecology of accredited graduate theological education. A university-related divinity school may have a different ecological footprint than a denominationally-owned theological seminary. How this should be reflected in learning, teaching, and research is the question of “theological curriculum.”

33 Boff, Cry of the Earth, fn. 29.
Bibliography


It belongs to the objectives of this contribution – written from a Latin American context of involvement in pedagogy and theology in Bolivia:

- to develop an understanding which goes beyond the current vision in theological education (TE) that considers pedagogy and methodology as simple tools which enable a more dynamic and more participatory transmission of a pre-established knowledge;
- to promote the methodology at once in pedagogy and in theology as a hermeneutic exercise (different from putting into practise a technique) which allows teachers and learners to discern, define and adjust their own route;
- to consider that, from the perspective of an intercultural paradigm, the variety of actors, requests, disciplines and tools characteristic of TE is suitable for a real cultural negotiation.

**Cinderella in the Land of Theology**

Pedagogy, methodology and didactics are seen, beyond the boundaries, denominations and ages, as the poor relation of TE. To get convinced one just has to consider the required abilities of the persons in charge of theological teaching at the different levels of graduate education and ecclesial recognition. Which place is given to pedagogy? In general more educative experience and more teaching aids are expected from a catechist than from a university professor. As if science or knowledge became easier to be taught the further they become specialized, fragmented and confined in a single discipline. As if they attained a truth which will reveal itself. In Latin America where TE – mainly understood as training of pastors – still is precarious, a professor of theology will be a good pastor above all, as if theology was simply communicated by preaching.

Should it then be unfounded to compare pedagogy in general, and more particularly didactics, with the neglected and undervalued role of a Cinderella in the land of theology? Is it like a maidservant sitting in the ashes, socially excluded and only miraculously admitted to the feast of a theological prince? Her place in this feast remains problematic, she is running out of time and her marriage is finally conditioned by a shoe first lost and found again. It is only because her foot fits to the shoe that she is regarded as worthy to get married to the important figure. How the marriage between this nobleman and this maidservant will function and how long will it last? Will the ousted sisters, i.e. the established theological disciplines, recover the place to which they have the right to aspire?

The debate on the relationship between theology and education within TE is often trapped in a dualist vision or an inappropriate symbiosis: it would be a matter of constructing a new relationship between two points of view which are either too separated or so close to each other that it becomes difficult to distinguish them. When TE agreed to take an interest in pedagogy, it was commonly in the form of an instrumentalization: the search for good didactic recipes which make the communication of theological thinking and knowledge more effective. On the one hand TE tends to take theology at its face value and on
the other hand to reduce pedagogy to a functional exercise. The title of this article reflects somewhat this dichotomy: it is as if TE was a phenomenon in itself which can be improved with a good pedagogy or an effective methodology. It seems to be more relevant for me to view TE as both a pedagogical and a theological practice, the methodology of which is necessary built in dialogue with those two disciplines i.e. in an interdisciplinary manner. This means to reconsider the relationship between theology and pedagogy, namely to take up the challenges that the two disciplines put out one another within the wider context which they have to face together in TE.

The suggested route intends to revaluate the methodology within TE as an approach which takes rather an interest in the interactions than in the TE itself, as a science rather than a technique of the method, i.e. as a science of the path or as a cartography which is able to draw the way on a map.

My starting point is a common situation in TE which I would like to problematize in a pedagogical perspective taking the variety of actors as well as the goals of TE seriously. In reference to the particular Latin American situation I would like to note the relevance of an intercultural paradigm that is capable of inspiring and redefining the relationship between the two disciplines which are at stake within TE.

The search for a methodology (Greek: meta hodos) will lead us somewhere – like the path – and allow the communication between those who go this way.

**A “Problem Situation” as Concrete Framework**

I will take as my starting point a “problem situation” (which is part of the problem-based learning) within TE, which does not only imply the resolution of a pedagogical problem, but also allows theological training during the suggested task. In other words we have to tackle the pedagogical and methodological issues from the perspective of the experience instead of just referring to theoretical solutions related to different pedagogical trends and models.

Those who are involved in TE will more than once be confronted with the requirement for reconstructing or reformulating the curriculum of a specific institution of TE. The traditional solutions to this “problem situation” are known and probably widely shared among churches and between continents. In a caricatured way, they do often respond to the following characteristics:

- they attempt to meet one or the other of the following external requirements: those of prevailing theological knowledge, those of needs or expectations of the supporting church or denomination, those of new academic standards;

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1 The preposition “of” in the title shows a distance and separation between pedagogy and methodology on one hand and TE on the other. I would prefer to replace it by a different way of formulating: “Theological education: a methodological practice at the crossroad of pedagogy and theology” in order to precise that the article will be centred on pedagogical rather than theological perspectives. TE is neither a practice nor a predetermined knowledge, but a project which indicates a certain type of dynamic interaction between theology and pedagogy.

2 I refer to the definition given by the French educationalist Philippe Meirieu in his book which theological teachers should also consult: *Apprendre... oui, mais comment* (“Learning... yes, but how”), edited for the first time by ESF in Paris, in 1987: the “problem situation” is a “didactic situation in which is proposed to the subject a task that can only be handled successfully with a specific educational training (‘apprentissage’). This educational training, that constitutes the real objective of the ‘problem situation’ (‘situation-problème’), is carried out by eliminating the obstacles to the achievement of the task. Thus the production means the learning, and both of them must be the subject of a distinct evaluation. Like all didactic situations, the ‘problem situation’ must be built on a triple diagnostic evaluation which considers the motivations, the competences and the abilities”, 190.

3 In general a faculty of theology will be concerned with pedagogical issues insofar as it is requested to introduce its programme by take into consideration the terminology and the new didactic terms which are required for corresponding with the standards of higher education.
• many a subject is absent in that process of reform and the foreseen solution runs the risk of leaving aside the general context and the persons who are concerned or even the gospel itself. The requests of training expressed by the principal protagonists of TE are generally not taken into consideration as such;
• they reflect a functionalist methodology which is not concerned about the division and fragmentation of theological knowledge and even less about the transformative impact of TE.

Going against this temporary and somewhat pessimistic assessment, I would briefly like to mention the following endeavour of reformulating the curriculum of an ecumenical institution of TE that attempts to change into a university – a common situation in Latin America – which also force it to set up non-theological degree courses. The institution in question hosts students from quite a large spectrum of ecclesial, cultural or socio-economic backgrounds and different generations. To do so the institution has decided to thoroughly rethink its curriculum by starting from expectations of the beneficiaries and by wondering about what the theology can receive and deal with other academic disciplines. The approach is an interactive one. It is no longer a simply deductive one: see how the different realms of theological knowledge are divided, distributed and located in a preconceived overall schedule. And it is neither a strictly inductive one: reinventing a chore from a particular context by waging on the fact that it will lead to a product compatible with the tradition, the discipline in question and the established standards, etc. With regard to this ongoing exercise of reorganizing and conceptualizing the curriculum I would like to mention that its starting point consists in listing the requests of training of the different actors involved in this process of TE. This will allow me to illustrate the search for another kind of methodology. Extending the metaphor of the way or path, it consists in listing the variety of the walkers and comprehending their different relations to training.

I have already suggested that, insofar as the programme of TE focuses only on the established theological knowledge, the needs of churches and the requirements of the traditional university, it operates in fact a social selection by leaving aside many subjects and, therefore, a lot of knowledge. Thereby it makes both a social and a cultural selection. The same happens when any educational curriculum is based on arbitrary choices which are neither explained nor discussed by the concerned audience.

In the Latin American context, the actors who are concerned about TE are not limited to churches and universities. So it is advisable to identify the different actors, to listen to their requests and to provide conditions for dialogue, debates and negotiations. In this particular case, the institution proposes to take into consideration the following actors in the process of constructing a new curriculum.

The students

The students are all sorts of people, ranging from the young holder of the baccalaureate searching for a future occupation to the pastor who assumes office, but did not yet have access to academic studies, and including the experienced professional who wishes to re-orientate his life in connection to the Christian faith; from the native-born coming from a rural or urban background and who stays more or less strongly close to his ancestral origins to the middle classes’ representative who is more attracted by North American lifestyle; from the Catholic who conforms to syncretism to the Evangelical whose Christian identity is

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4 In this particular case, religious studies, pedagogy and development sciences in intercultural field. The project intends to offer to future students of those three faculties, in addition to autonomous branches, a core curriculum in which the different disciplines are invited to produce a common knowledge.

5 This exercise should ideally be undertaken in a way by which the actors make their requests to TE by themselves, giving the word to the authorized representatives (this is relatively easy with students or the concerned institution or even the churches, but it becomes more complicated in the case of the State, the civil society or social movements). In any case, if this exercise is only done by those who drew up a programme of TE, it will be formative insofar as it obliges its members to account for their choices and their own cultural selection.

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precisely related to the denial of ancestral traditions, etc. Their requests and motives are very diverse: from the pastoral calling to the critical and decolonized approach of religious phenomena, and including religious education or diaconal work.

**The churches**

Like everywhere else, in Latin America too, none of the different denominations are uniform and, facing the TE, a lot of expectations or trends coexist within them, regarding the theological orientation, the relationship between theology, cultures and politics, the profile of pastors, the place of the lay people etc.

**The state and the civil society**

The TE is confronted with the controversial issue of “laïcité” (secularity, secularism) or with the pressure applied by a state who maintains a privileged relationship with a particular religion. Be they acceptable or not, the requests which are expressed by a state should be heard by TE, especially in a context where the religious field plays a significant role in the social, cultural and political sphere. It is the same regarding the civil society or social movements, overtaking individual and group positions with sometimes very contradictory goals.

**The users or addressees of TE**

Facing those who are trained in TE and will become pastors or leaders in the church, the expectations of the local community or a specific programme (in the areas for instance of health, education, development, etc.) are not always the same than those of the church authorities themselves.

**The institutions of TE**

At last, it is evident that the institution itself wishes to leave its imprint of TE. According to its degree of autonomy and room for manoeuvre, it will have the possibility or not of inserting its own vision into the curriculum.

I will now go on to the minimal conditions which are required so that a real negotiation and organization of the different requests to TE can be developed. It is a fundamental methodological exercise which will consist, among other things, in recognizing the compatibility, the complementarity, the contradictions or disagreements between these various stakeholders and requests. Only this will allow people to note the different positions, to find a way for integrating or disentangling them, to recognize and accept possible conflicts rather than avoid them. Whatever are the decision-making bodies, the actors, the power struggles capable of orienting the final choice, the very fact that those differences are made explicit in the dialogue will represent a learning process as well as a pedagogical and methodological awareness. In fact the different expectations are all related to preliminary knowledge – an element that pedagogy (and theology!) must always take into consideration.

By preliminary knowledge I refer to the motley compound of understandings, common sense, ideologies, intuitions, inherited representations, indefinite perceptions, even fantasy and emotions, which enter into contact with established knowledge in order to become, through different cognitive (but also emotional and political) breaks, new contents, new knowledge which absorb and surpass the former ones. The variety of requests and preliminary knowledge will inform the theological educator of the necessity to take on the diversity of contexts, spiritualities, epistemologies, rationalities, ideologies, etc.

As I already mentioned, the different requests and preliminary knowledge are fundamental factors, but form one of the poles for the building or revision of the curriculum, the other pole being constituted by the established theological knowledge, the minimal contents, the skills and values indispensable to a real TE. It
is between those poles of TE where I place a methodology⁶ which will allow the reproduction, the creation and the negotiation of pedagogical as well as theological knowledge.

**The Diversity – Obstacle or Chance for TE?**

The previous “problem situation” has highlighted, in a particular context, the essential variety of TE by virtue of its contexts, actors, goals, tools, services, etc. To speak once about pedagogy or methodology in singular form is simplistic or even dangerous. At the same time, to suggest that TE has as many pedagogies and methodologies as believers, cultures, church models, missionary perspectives, political options, etc. would imply a dispersion in contrast with all TE efforts from a community and transformation oriented perspective.

Here we have to revisit the notion of selection in a positive way. I spoke above in a critical way about social and cultural selection, which usually is hidden. We should add a political selection that is always present. It will be easier to notice the theological selection which is always present although only rarely explained in the context of TE. The balance or in the contrary the emphasis on biblical studies, doctrine or practical theology; the place or the absence of missiology or ecumenics; the inclusion or the exclusion of social sciences; etc.: so many choices which are generally implicit and fulfil different theological – and sometimes pedagogical – projects. So many different paths which sometimes are parallel, sometimes intersect, but in most cases without a map clearly drawn in advance.

Cultural, pedagogical, theological and political selections, barely mentioned here, do directly affect the method of TE. At the same time, to choose a method will have immediate implications in terms of selection. There is an interaction between the selection of goals and contents of TE and the methodology, and vice versa. Paradoxically, the more the selection is hidden – or considered as “natural” – the more the choices and positions become obvious.

There is no continuity between the requests of the different actors in TE and the “programme” or contents of theological training, and also no precedence of the latter over the first. It is within this intermediary space that the methodology of TE mainly, and especially pedagogy, are acting. It is in the process of deconstruction and construction of the preliminary or established knowledge that takes place a new methodology of TE which will affect and be affected both by pedagogy and theology. It is a methodology which reproduces and produces at the same time. For this reason it is profoundly hermeneutic insofar as it articulates always the continuity and the rupture of preliminary knowledge of subjects, doctrinal traditions and contents established by the different disciplines.

On this route, pedagogy is seen as a relationship, as a teaching and learning method, which allows for the subjects of the educational process an interplay that modifies the teacher, the learner as well as the discipline itself. Pedagogy then is more than a simple tool or communication technique. It is a process of producing and reproducing knowledge, theological as well as pedagogical. On the way, the contents and goals are modified. Contrary to the colonialist views, in pedagogy, theology and especially TE, all roads do not lead to Rome. As the Spanish poet says: “Traveller, there is no road, you make your path as you walk.”⁷ Selection and the highlighting of diversity are not incompatible. They can interact within a

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⁶ I mention scarcely the steps following the first indicated phase. The requests, once explained and identified, will be organised, reformulated, selected, converted into competences. This new form of expressing educative objectives comes from the market and “knowledge society,” but is not inevitably organic to the prevailing ideology. The competences will finally be translated into contents which, accounting for the study fields and the established disciplines, will try to find the necessary bridging points for the formulation of a more global knowledge. On a didactical level, all that will be translated into “modules” which, starting from a specific problem or a fundamental branch, will lead to an interactive and interdisciplinary teaching and learning process.

⁷ Antonio Machado, “Caminante, no hay camino, el camino se hace al andar.”
dynamic process of negotiation and dialogue, and this is what I will briefly introduce as an intercultural paradigm.

**Reshaping the Relationship Between Theology and Pedagogy: The Intercultural Paradigm**

To say that TE is placed in the heart of diversity, between different knowledge, subjects, generations, gender, cultures, disciplines, contexts, economical conditions, etc., leads us back to the question of method. Beyond the observation of diversity, it is necessary to establish bridging points by which the actors and disciplines can learn together and from each other, and to offer a space of negotiation between knowledge, skills and values. This is what we have attempted to present in an initial and general way in the “Manifesto for a Quality Theological Education,” a document coming from Latin America but already circulating in various wider contexts. After defining the major criteria of quality both for pedagogy and theology as the struggle for and the construction of a quality of life for all, this document sets an epistemological framework where various sources and dimensions of human action and thinking come together: it is an intercultural paradigm which enables to reshape the relationship between theology and pedagogy.

The major characteristics of this paradigm are related to the inter-disciplinary and trans-disciplinary, to various forms of knowledge and the possibility of putting them in relation and articulating them with the historical context, to its transforming and innovative character and above all “to an ongoing process like an upward spiral on the basis of successive, contextual and permanent revisiting interpretations”.

The Manifesto emphasizes that diversity is a treasure, and it is necessary to situate it always in the context of the existing unequal and asymmetric relationship. There is no true interculturality without the establishment of a new relationship and the redistribution of the economic, cultural and religious assets. Lastly, theology, pedagogy and of course TE have to account, each in its own area, for their responsibility in the process of building a world respecting the life in all its aspects and expressions. In this perspective the intercultural paradigm is becoming more than just a methodological device, instead it consists substantially in inserting pedagogical and theological methodology into TE. The intercultural challenge questions and deeply transforms both of those disciplines.

**Scope and Impact of TE**

A TE that takes into consideration the diversity of expectations from the different involved stakeholders, that assumes and clarifies the selections that it uses, that aims at cultural negotiation, oversteps the limits in which common sense confines it, especially the narrow ecclesiastical and academic barriers. It is part of an ongoing critical accompaniment to the different dimensions of the practice of Christian faith and the critical reflection on this practice. More precisely, an educational practice which, without denying the different types of specialization, is carried on and developed further with all members of the Christian community and has no reason to be reduced to its only clerical or academic dimension. TE means to stand back and requires a critical reflection which exceeds the approach or rationalization inherent in academics. It involves pedagogy as a rational effort of learning and teaching the way individuals and communities experience the Christian faith in its different dimensions: cognitive, festive, ethical, mystical, cultural, political, economic, etc.

TE does not aim to pass on faith (what Christian education or catechesis wants to do in general), but to appropriate tools of analysis, celebration, interpretation and transformation with a view to the kingdom of God and from the social practice of the historical Jesus.

Considering the priesthood of all believers, TE is a service available to all believers which, regardless to

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8 “Manifesto for a Quality Theological Education,” a text produced by “Servicios pedagógicos y teológicos” (SPT), available in five languages on the website of this consultative service institution: www.serviciospt.org.
their level of education and ecclesial commitment, wish to deepen the contents and requests of Christian faith. For that reason I assert a TE which oversteps the narrow borders of formal higher education and strive for the training of the whole people of God, and not for the perpetuation of a pastoral and clerical elite. A open and hermeneutic TE requires new visions of the pedagogical and theological task and another methodology.

The fact that men and women, pastors and lay people, illiterates and scholars, rich and poor, dominant and dominated cultures can all express their requests of education, learn to build their knowledge, assume mutual training, manage a new project for the church, become active partners in resisting the destruction of life, etc., requires another pedagogy, another theology, another politics: a methodology of the way.

It will be a way which leads somewhere, a walk in a landscape which is both divers and particular, a path allowing different walkers to meet, a way full of twists and shortcuts for here the right line is not just the shortest distance between two points, a road which allows the walkers to choice their own route.

**Some Theses to Continue the Debate**

- TE is a practice which, by virtue of the priesthood of all believers and according to different levels of specialization, is available for everybody who wants “to give an account for the hope” which is within him.
- The methodology of TE is a process of creative imagination and interpretation within which both theology and pedagogy (not only pastoral theology and didactics!) are enriched each other.
- Building and reformulating the TE programme involves to clarify the training requests of different actors directly or indirectly involved in the learning process.
- The methodology of TE involves an interdisciplinary effort between different theological disciplines which necessarily requires the collaboration and exchange between teachers who are no longer the only masters of their fragments of knowledge.
- A real cultural negotiation in TE requires a radical reappraisal of the educational relation.
- The exercise of a critical, contextual, intercultural and liberating TE would include the construction of didactical devices which combine the communication of knowledge, research, interaction with social and ecclesial practices and, because of this combination, blows up the traditional patterns of ex cathedra teaching.

**Theology And Pedagogy:**

* A European Echo to the Thoughts of Matthias Preiswerk – Pierre Bühler

Even if Matthias Preiswerk develops his own thoughts in the light of the Latin American context and I respond from a European perspective, I nevertheless feel very close to his remarks and questions. From a European point of view, it is true that we do not enough ask about the articulation between theology and pedagogy, what inevitably gets the smallest share to the latter. And as M. Preiswerk underlines, when a link is established, it is too often in a sense of a simple instrumentalization.

Certainly, we can respond in a more nuanced manner to the question of how much pedagogical – and didactical – competences are required for people in charge of theological teaching in the academic Faculties. In Europe there is neither specific nor systematic pedagogical training for university teachers. The universities today are more than in the past aware of this problem and provide since the last decades courses and seminars in university didactics and pedagogy (the university of Zurich, among others, has developed a department for that, the “Arbeitsstelle für Hochschuldidaktik”). At the same time, the universities have set up procedures by which the teachers should be evaluated by the students, in order to improve the quality of teaching. In that sense, we can say that even if these developments are relatively
recent and have not yet borne all expected fruits, the global situation is getting somewhat better.

But a major challenge still is remaining for the faculties of theology: placed in a general context of secular universities and representing a negligible part both in terms of the budget and the number of students, they struggle to show the actual theological specificity of their pedagogy. To take a concrete example, several years ago, the Faculty of theology of Zurich drew up a specific questionnaire for the evaluation of its teaching. Recently the university leadership, according to a usual logic in the European context, has decided to centralize and standardize the evaluation of teaching with the purpose of getting general criteria of comparison… and to control the whole evaluation procedures! This was the end of a specific evaluation in theology.

On this point at least, the institution of TE described by M. Preiswerk has the advantage of some operational autonomy, though limited of course. Even if our integration in the universities has guaranteed us with a certain status, it also has the effect of imposing on us global structures and limiting our room for manoeuvre in our effort to design our theological pedagogy in connection with ecclesial, social and cultural challenges which have to be faced by our students in their professional future.

To go deeper into this topic, I would like – as M. Preiswerk did – to start with a “problem situation” which we have just experienced over the course of those last years in attempting to concretely outline the stakes and problems.

*The implementation of the Bologna process and its pedagogical difficulties*

For some time, we are engaged in Europe (and Switzerland also has decided to join) in the transition to a new system of university education, the Bologna process (so called because of a decision taken in Bologna in 1999 by the European Ministers of education). It consists mainly in structuring the studies as part of a continuous curriculum, through a modularization of the teaching units and the implementation of a system of credit points which must be acquired in the course of the semesters. In summary, one can state that the introduction of the Bologna process leads, with some nuances, to adopt the North American higher education system although the instigators are striving – most often in vain – to emphasize the specificities!

Coming from the Ministries of Education, by means of the rector’s offices, this system has been imposed from on high, without leaving much room for responding or debating. However, some faculties of theology in Germany firstly resisted to the implementation of this system and were supported by their regional churches. At present, they gradually must conform to the system, and also to the global logic of standardization.

What are the pedagogical difficulties of the new model? Even if a strongly structured curriculum can include some advantages (clarity in the advance of the studies, more regular checking of the acquired competences), it mainly leads to a strong schooling of the higher education, calling into question the ancient academic freedom which was commended in classic European universities. This is particularly caused by the system of credit points, which instilled both for students and for teachers a spirit of accounting, sometimes mean-minded. At the same time, the regular checking of competence leads to a multiplication of exams which often demonstrate a gaping lack of creativity.

*Measures to thwart harmful effects*

As the choice of this system has been imposed from on high, we have not really been afforded the freedom to oppose it. We have managed to make best use of the remaining room for manoeuvre so that we can struggle against its harmful effects. Taking advantage of the small size of faculties of theology, we have tried to organize our modules with more flexibility than the big faculties, to change systematically the forms of exams, to plan options for compulsory learning in the form of accompanied reading, to define an important area of learning still left to the free choice of students.

But it is obvious that in this great “upheaval” the freedom left to a specifically theological aspect of
pedagogy has remained very limited, but it was also not just zero. In this way, the implementation of the Bologna process has enabled a reflection on the whole theological curriculum, hand in hand with church authorities. It has been possible, to some extent, to improve the transition from university education to church ministries, by instituting, for instance, a semester of church internship between the bachelor and the master in theology and also by articulating the practical training of students with a continuing education programme (the degree course Master of Advanced Studies). It seems to me that we have thus attempted to take up, in our own context, challenges comparable to those considered by M. Preiswerk in Latin America.

Another challenge which is taken up with caution is about the necessary person formation. This problem is a delicate one in the context of a traditional university. Can person formation be integrated into academic education, or does it divert the latter from its real purpose which is purely intellectual? Should person formation be a matter for another authority, more strictly related to the professional future of the students? This question is important especially in theology, but not solely: it can also be posed for other curricula, like those of medicine, among others. In Zurich, several doctoral projects and a Master of Advanced Studies are interested in issues of spirituality in academic and continuing education in theology. Let us hope that this process will enable the decision-making bodies in training to bridge the false divide between academic education and person formation.

The challenge of global TE and the relay problem

For M. Preiswerk, what is at stake is the necessity of integrating university theological training in the context of the society as such by means of a global project of TE. In this regard, European universities are still often struggling to clearly accept their role and impact in respect of their integration into society. The result is that faculties of theology also hesitate: considered severely by other faculties, doubting of their scientificity, they are often torn between academic high level requirements and concrete tasks of critical accompaniment to extra-academic processes which they are sometimes tempted to forget. One can briefly give two examples from Zurich. The faculty of theology was put in charge of training future secondary school teachers who have to introduce children to the great world religions and civilizations. This training work for teaching tasks struggles to find its place, for it is partly contested by requirements for scientific research commended as fundamental by some colleagues. A second example: the department of practical theology has faced some difficulties within the faculty when trying to create a “centre for church development” (Zentrum für kirchliche Entwicklung). This project may turn out questionable according to the scientific standards. Thus, the issue of a global TE remains open: in particular we must face the relay problem between academic education and responsibilities in regard to the culture, society and public space. The ambiguous status of religion in the secularized societies of Europe highlights the urgency of a critical discussion on this point.

In his article, M. Preiswerk criticizes the social and cultural selection being practiced in TE as far as it is only assuming “established theological knowledge, the needs of churches and the requirements of the traditional academic system”. This is only too true about the tradition of European academic theology. In this context, it is more difficult to redefine freely the actors of TE, as M. Preiswerk does, in order “to listen to their requests and to provide conditions for dialogue, debates and negotiations”. Even if the implementation of the Bologna process has enabled us to redefine the aims of our teaching, a redefining of the teaching conditions will quickly bump into the institutional requirements fixed without consulting the faculties of theology. This will raise the issue of their belonging to the academic community, in debate with other institutions of theological education which are coming from free churches are demanding now – a bit paradoxically – an accreditation by the state! Contrary to the Bolivian context recalled by M. Preiswerk, the Swiss context is not inter-denominational, so this can easily provoke a rivalry between different theological institutions from the point of view of academic recognition. Even if the integration into the university imposes certain constraints and limits on the faculties of theology of traditional churches
(Catholics and Reformed), it guarantees some official acknowledgement. But it is unquestionable that it has its price from the point of view of the articulation between theology and pedagogy.

On the other point at least, the Latin America situation presents an advantage in comparison to the European situation, namely the multi- and intercultural context of the training work. Most often universities of our countries are still imprisoned in a Eurocentric mentality (“We are the best!”), which rubs off on the faculties of theology. It is only cautiously that we really open ourselves to questions coming from theologies which are rooted in other cultural contexts, provided that we can avoid the – somewhat condescending – reflex of considering that we have to help to do things better…

To conclude: the difficulties of going one’s way
As M. Preiswerk has indicated, pedagogy, by being interested more particularly in the methodologies, underlines the necessity of going one’s way (that concept is contained in the etymology of the word “method”, with the Greek root hodos). The European universities, because of their long history, institutional stability and social acknowledgement, do not consider themselves as “going their way”. They are rather sedentary than nomadic in their functioning.

They should probably learn how to become nomads again, and may be it is for the small faculties of theology to react, within the universities, like a critical ferment, by pushing them to learn again the virtues of an open way. That is what it costs to respond in an appropriate manner to the pedagogical challenges which stand out on the horizon. For TE, it would require a critical articulation of the relationship between theology and pedagogy, even if this articulation does sometimes involve a certain resistance to constraints imposed by the global university framework.
What are the main pedagogical issues and shifts that have marked theological education over the last twenty-five years? This is not an easy question to answer in 2,500 words or less. The past twenty-five years have witnessed the rise, fall, and change of nation states, development of international trade agreements, increased international and inter-ecclesial cooperation and competition, rising global concern about environmental degradation, cultural shifts resulting from Western globalization, and a host of other issues that theological education has had to tackle in one way or another. Coupled with this has been a rapid development of and change in technological and medical fields, shifting ecclesial affiliations, increased attention to gender and diversity issues, crumbling canons for theological education, and development of new theological educational models. Perhaps one issue that has remained constant throughout the past quarter century has been a need for institutions and educational models to be able to exist in states of readiness to adapt to change.

Since beginning seminary in 1984, I have witnessed an array of changes in theological education. In my experience as a student, pastor, administrator, and faculty member I have watched and participated in shifting paradigms for what connotes a substantial theological education. To say that the shifts have been anything but earth shaking might be an understatement. Nearly every arena of theological education around the globe has experienced and is experiencing seismic waves of change that emanate from a host of quake zones in cultural, political, economic, theological, and ecclesial realms. Higher education over the same period has witnessed global changes that continue to rock the boats of faculty involved with teaching theology, religion and related fields of study.

Teachers have sought consistently to maintain fidelity to the tenets of their disciplines while at the same time attend to the contemporary needs of their students. Is it any wonder that pedagogical issues have risen and fallen with the seasons that marked changes in the cultural and ecclesial landscapes of the past quarter century? A few forward thinking theological educators spotted markers on the horizon that signalled substantial changes were coming. Their collective work helped identify some of the core needs of theological education and for theological educators during the period under consideration. One might aver that these needs will remain in play for the immediate foreseeable future. Clearly their work around the need for developing a *habitus* and/or praxis approach to theological education was and is timely. The work of Edward Farley, Barbara Wheeler, Dan Aleshire, Charles Wood, Craig Dykstra, Robert Lynn, Leon Pacala, David Kelsey, Chuck Foster, and others were instrumental as catalysts for shaping pedagogical reflection about the contours of theological education that marked the period in North American contexts. Much of their efforts and that of innovations and improvements in theological education have been sparked by grants and programs funded by Lilly Endowment Inc. for North American theological schools. Edward Farley’s work captures well the shifts that marked theological education during this period and he identifies well the particular problems facing theological education for the future. In a 1995 paper, Charles Wood summarized Farley’s list of contributing factors to the changes in theological education to three areas: 1. The changing topography of American religion, 2. The rise of religious studies in American colleges and universities, and 3. The emergence of new ‘intellectual trends and modes of thought,’ associated in part with new sorts of participants in the field.¹ One might say that similar issues have marked global

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¹ Edward Farley, “Re-thinking Graduate Theological Education” (unpublished manuscript), 4-6 cited in Charles Wood,
theological education over the same period as the professors for global institutions were formed in contexts that reflected these shifts.

The issues that have garnered much attention have been those that directly impact the formation of those entrusted with providing ministry in a host of contexts and conditions. A desire shared by faculty during the period was rooted in gaining skills and reflective capacities to improve the caliber of their own teaching so as to improve the quality of student learning. The American Academy of Religion’s emphasis on teaching in the late 1980s and early 1990s and the subsequent rise of the Wabash Center for Teaching and Learning in Theology and Religion in the mid-1990s have propelled many theological school faculty in North America to gain not only skills for reflection on pedagogy and facility with the relevant nomenclature, but to begin to think more critically and reflectively about what contributes to significant student learning outcomes, how to effectively design intellectual experiences that can move into practical ministerial contexts, and how to assess what has been learned and practiced as a consequence of learning. An emerging scholarship about teaching and learning may provide new insights about how to further advance student learning through effective teaching practices.

The Wabash Center for Teaching and Learning in Theology and Religion has been involved with Theological Education since it’s founding in 1995. Raymond Williams, Wabash College faculty and founding director of the Center, and Craig Dykstra, vice president for religion at Lilly Endowment Inc, were the educational architects who crafted the initial Wabash Center mission design and program. Shortly after its founding Lucinda Huffaker joined the Wabash Center as its first associate director and second director. Her leadership was instrumental in shaping ten years of the Wabash Center’s programs for faculty, burgeoning grant program, website development, and advancement of an internationally peer reviewed journal *Teaching Theology & Religion*. Nadine Pence succeeded Lucinda Huffaker as director of the Wabash Center in 2007. Paul Myhre and Thomas Pearson have been associate directors of the center since 2001 and 2002 respectively.

The foundational aim of the Wabash Center throughout its existence has been and continues to be that of strengthening and enhancing education in North American theological schools, colleges, and universities. The Center’s website provides a good summary of the types of programs that have marked it’s involvement with theological education over the course of its history. Perhaps the Wabash Center’s mission statement provides the most succinct summary of its work over the past decade and a half. According to this statement, “The Center will help build enabling environments for good teaching and learning by:

- Initiating studies, workshops and conferences on teaching and learning in theology and religion. These will provide opportunities for faculty members to discuss teaching and learning in a variety of contexts and to share teaching resources.
- Supporting the initiatives of faculty members and institutions that enhance the teaching of theology and religion.
- Encouraging reflection by faculty members within various disciplines of theology and religion on the special contribution of each discipline to the study of theology and religion.
- Enabling those preparing to become teachers of religion and theology to reflect upon, clarify and strengthen their sense of vocation.
- Helping faculty members and institutions to keep abreast of appropriate technology that will enhance teaching and learning.

In pursuing these goals, the Wabash Center will host programs at Wabash College, plan and support projects elsewhere, and grant funds to faculty members and institutions to support initiatives that promise to improve teaching and learning.²

An expressed emphasis on the scholarship of teaching and learning in theology and religion was realized in the birth of the internationally peer reviewed Teaching Theology & Religion journal in 1998 and continues to be expressed in American Theological Association’s journal Theological Education and the more recent Religion & Education journal. Over the past decade a substantial increase in sessions at the annual meetings of the American Academy of Religion, College Theology Society, and Society of Biblical Literature have been dedicated to matters pertaining to teaching religion and theology in higher educational contexts. The concerted efforts of various organizations and journals to raise levels of conversation about teaching and the value of such conversations about teaching and learning for theological education have blossomed. What had been once relegated to individual silos of pedagogical reflection by faculty teaching in isolation has given way to a globalized ecology of conversations about pedagogy at a host of levels.

These conversations have prompted new reflection on course and class design, student learning needs and modalities, syllabi and assignment development, and an arsenal of ways for assessing student learning. The notion of “backward planning” or “reverse design” to help aid achievement of student learning outcomes and realization of teaching goals is now ubiquitous across much of theological education. Communal construction of learning goals and employment of active learning methods have become commonplace. What had once been an isolated and somewhat hermetic existence for teachers has broken way in the later part of the period to an emerging landscape where faculty may experience more collegial and participatory models of theological education. What had been a topic of secondary importance behind scholarship has become a centerpiece in many theological school faculty conversations. Retreats focused on teaching goals, methods, design, assessment, formation, and student learning outcomes have become locations for pedagogical reflection and conversation. The ongoing work of the Luther Seminary faculty with Stephen Brookfield (education professor at St. Thomas University) about how to improve teaching in their context is but one example of a larger set of conversations that currently mark theological education in North American contexts.³

The issues that have marked the period under consideration are manifold. These catalysts for pedagogical conversations have included online and hybrid education, growing diversity of students and need for faculty representative of that diversity, re-conceptualizations of theological education degrees and certificate tracks, and a growing awareness of a need for interwoven curriculums that address more than disciplinary specific concerns. Each of these topics is representative of curriculum and pedagogical concerns that are enmeshed with the massive changes that have marked theological education over the past quarter century and merit further consideration. It seems that some of the hopes expressed by Farley and others 20 or so years ago have begun to be realized. According to Kelsey and Wheeler, “In the late medieval and early Reformation periods, theology was conceived in a unified way, as a habitus, a wisdom that disposes the knower to God.”⁴ Perhaps some of the current moves toward relocating loci for student learning, adjusting pedagogical models to embrace more active learning models, and shifts toward intentionally interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary teaching oriented toward praxis may prompt a renewal of theological education as a habitus for lifelong learning. Advances in technology have made access and

availability to graduate level theological education possible for global citizens in ways that had previously only existed in the realm of dreams and visions.

Online and Hybrid Education

Perhaps one of the 20th century inventions that had the most impact on theological education was the computer and concomitant rise of the Internet. With these tools theological education was no longer the restricted domain of land based residential theological institutions, nor was information confined to a privileged few who had pursued doctoral degrees. The capacity to bring seminary level theological education into individual households has opened doors to theological education that had been previously locked. Students around the globe can now take the majority of their courses from their own home and cultural context without the cost of relocating to a theological school or experiencing fissures that such communal fracturing can cause for seminarians. Theological school classrooms can and in some cases reflect this growing diversity of a global student body. The benefits have been and promise to be immense. The actual impact on ecclesial bodies and ministry in general is yet to be measured in the first quarter of the 21st century.

Hybrid education has become popular in many theological school contexts and appears to be a means by which an array of individuals might have access to theological education that were previously barred from doing so. A hybrid education is one that incorporates both online and face-to-face instruction in a dynamic dance of teaching and learning. Steve Delamarter’s “A Typology of the Use of Technology in Theological Education” provides a good sketch of the contemporary uses of and approaches to digital technology in theological school classrooms. In this essay he claims, “Well beyond the point of impacting only the library, or administrative and student services, technology is making its way into the classroom and touching all aspects of the teaching and learning process.”5 As he approached the study he chose to ask several questions: “What parts of the theological curriculum are you willing to trust to electronically mediated tools and processes? Where do you draw the line? Why there?; How does this relate to your vision of proper theological formation?; How does this relate to your vision of good pedagogy?; How does this relate to your understanding of the needs of the church?”6 As he pursued these questions he discerned that theological educators are beginning to recognize the capacity of hybrid and distance education to prompt engaged/active learning in ways that face-to-face classroom instructional models could not. In addition, the use of digitally mediated instruction has pushed faculty to rethink their own pedagogical assumptions, learning goals, and in general the end goals for their particular courses in relation to the ministerial formation of their students.

Although administrators are not in agreement about the financial benefits from online or hybrid education, there is relative agreement about the merits of digitally mediated education for enhanced and sustained student learning outcomes and expanding the diversity of students who might enroll in a course. Theological School faculty may initially resist teaching in ways that are foreign to their experience. However, examples of faculty abound for those who have found learning outcomes from online/hybrid educational models to out perform face-to-face instruction. This assessment alone merits further investigation and may suggest new models for theological education in the future.

6 Ibid.
Diversity of Students and Faculty

The rise of the Hispanic Theological Initiative and the Fund for Theological Education during the period under consideration is significant for North American theological education. The two institutions paved the way for hundreds of people for whom the dream of a theological degree would have been prohibited by a lack of funding or lack of imagination about what might be possible. Each has seen its mission as primarily to be that of developing the next generation of theological educators, pastors, and leaders who come from diverse backgrounds. This has had and will continue to have profound impact on theological schools in North America.7

As theological schools continue to become more diverse there is a concurrent need for diverse faculty. Culturally diverse faculty and theological institutions continues to be a need for theological education for the foreseeable future. Theological school curriculums have and will continue to become more culturally diverse and reflective of the global diversity of scholarship and theological imagination that currently exists and is emerging from a host of contexts.

In addition, transnational, transgendered, trans-religious students are common on theological school campuses. Multi-ethnic, multi-religious, multi-gendered, and multi-located students might typify what has been some of the driving forces toward curricular and pedagogical change over the past 25 years. Each type of diversity requires a set of pedagogical choices by faculty and students in order to provide the most amendable environment for student learning and formation of a habitus for theological inquiry and pastoral imagination. Increased clarity about how space and place impact learning. Growing recognition for how locations of power and how power is employed in the classroom will continue to play a role. Assessment of student learning will continue to become more sensitive to the particular learning modalities and needs of students.

The past 25 years have also been a time of awakening for many ecclesial bodies in North America to the diversity that exists around the globe and in their own congregations. Prior to 1985 there were only a handful of women educators and faculty of color in North American theological institutions. Although the current numbers for various constituencies are somewhat stationary at around one-third of theological school educators, the efforts of many institutions remain resolute toward developing and maintaining a fully diverse faculty, staff, and student body.8 Coupled with a growing recognition of an ongoing legacy of racism, white privilege, and gender bias that have marked North American institutions, theological educators are intent on providing educational environments that attend to a diversity of people and needs and provide opportunity for a diverse faculty to flourish.

Interwoven Curriculums and Shifting Terrains in Pedagogical Philosophies Driving Theological Education

Perhaps one of the most fundamental changes marking theological education during the past twenty-five years has been a shift from lecture-based pedagogy to more facilitated conversational and active learning models. Student learning goals are often integrated into the course design and faculty is routinely engaged in coaching or facilitating learning instead of dispensing knowledge. Awareness of and appeal to multiple learning styles and intelligences and/or preferences has shifted how and what students learn. Embracing active learning over passive methods has been common. Use of problem based learning models, case

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7 For additional information about the Hispanic Theological Institute see: www2.ptsem.edu/hti/ (accessed 3/12/09). For additional information about the Fund for Theological Education see: www.thefund.org.
8 For specific details about the current demographics of North American theological institutions see research by the Auburn Center for the Study of Theological Education: www.auburnsem.org/study/about.asp?nsectionid=2&pageid=1 (accessed 3/12/09).
studies, and praxis oriented models is becoming more common. Faculty have and continue to recognize the value of shifting the center of pedagogical goals from faculty generated ones to collaboratively developed ones between students and faculty at they collectively place subject learning goals at the center. Shifting power for classroom design and aims from one to many has multiple implications for student learning outcomes and for subsequent work in ecclesial contexts.

An educational philosophy that is oriented toward interdisciplinary praxis has a way of complexifying what connotes a body of knowledge in a given discipline. It uproots the icons of a discipline and provides room for a more inclusive canon of authors and ideas. There is a concerted effort by faculty in a host of disciplines to pay close attention to constructions of knowledge – who does the constructing and what is valued as knowledge? Articulation of particular cultural and individual ways of knowing and writing has ruptured the mono-vocality of prior disciplinary specific courses and loci for knowledge production.

The interwoven and multilayered nature of global environmental contexts suggests a place for theological educators to focus their attention. Ecclesial structures require ever expanding arrays of ministerial capacities and skills. An ability to work within dynamics of exponential change in social, technological, and religious frameworks is paramount. Ministry on the ground in places where people and creation coexist offer new paradigms for practical theology to emerge in correlation with and not in opposition to existing disciplinary areas.

Born out of an interest for theological education to be hyper-contextual, theologically/biblically grounded, and suspicious of non-praxis oriented educational models, Mega-church congregations have developed their own ministerial schools for education and leadership formation. Their movement that developed over the past twenty-five years may yet shift the balance of theological education in new ways not yet articulated.

These pedagogical changes in theological education marking this period are not insignificant. They have a capacity to break open categories that have been previously reserved for a few. Theological educators around the globe have become aware of the legacy of Colonial structures and the hegemony of Western frames of thought and knowledge construction. As these historic models governing theological education curriculums dissipate and are replaced by more learner-centered and contextually relevant models that welcome a diversity of voices and diverse constructions of knowledge, new forms of theological education may emerge.

**Conclusion**

The changes that have marked the last quarter of the 20th century and first decade of the 21st century have prompted re-conceptualizations of theological education in a host of ways. Theological school curriculum, modes of delivery, diversity of faculty and forms of knowledge, ministerial formation, degrees and certificate tracks, attention to student learning needs, diversification of pedagogical methods for teaching and assessment of learning are but a few of the prompted and continue to evoke conversation among theological educators.

Theological education is continually diversified as ministry needs and ecclesial awareness of those needs proliferate. A rise in lay ministry vocations has opened up an array of theological education opportunities and challenges for theological educators. It seems that theological school faculty can no longer afford to remain isolated in studies and engaged with research projects that are aloof from the practical concerns of ministry and formational issues or from ecclesial contexts. Anyone who engages in a swift perusal of theological school websites will quickly note the catalysts for change sweeping cotemporary theological education.

Perhaps a recent advertising flyer from Claremont School of Theology summarized the past twenty – five years of theological education best, “Change. The Study of Religion is Changing. The Students are

*Handbook of Theological Education in World Christianity*
Changing. The World is Changing. And So is Claremont. Claremont School of Theology is transitioning into a multi-religious graduate university, to bring people of all perspectives together to teach and learn about religions, theologies, and cultures.” Many institutions could sound a similar refrain and provide similar advertising strategies. The past twenty-five years have witnessed a sea change in the way theological education is practiced and experienced. Pedagogical methods have been employed to engage multiple learning styles, respond to diverse student needs, and provide multiple opportunities for engaged and active learning in order to enhance outcomes of student learning. Maybe a *habitus* for theological education is emerging that will embrace an individual’s education, their communal context, and their wider ecclesial location in a matrix of lifelong learning.

**Bibliography**


*Part I: Theological Education in Global Context: Issues and Themes*
In the midst of a growing mythology that the academic library is dead, theological libraries are alive, well, and seeking new avenues for collaboration and cooperation. Across both ecumenical landscapes and international borders, theological librarians regularly engage in dialogue, collaborative arrangements, and exchanges of ideas.

There is a global network of theological library associations, which has grown out of commonly identified needs to facilitate the development, use, and exchange of resources for the study of theology; to promote cooperation among theological libraries and librarians; to provide professional training and development opportunities for theological librarians; to identify and index or otherwise make accessible locally produced theological resources; and, to equip users with ways to navigate the literature of theology effectively. In short, no matter the location or size, the role of the theological library is to collect information, to maintain viable access to that information, and to support and equip users with skills of discernment about the viability (quality) of available information, whether in print or online.

The explosion of electronic resources has created both tremendous opportunity and tremendous challenge for theological libraries. The role of the theological librarian to serve as mediator between the user and the information they seek to use has never been more important, and the need for training theological librarians where they serve is greater than ever before. A theological librarianship course in the Asian context started in 1998 at Lutheran Theological Seminary, Hong Kong. LTS is currently offering diploma, MA (Theology) and MDiv programs in theological librarianship. Explorations are underway in the Philippines for theological librarianship degree programs, but there is still a tremendous need in other parts of the majority world for training programs for theological librarians. The American Theological Library Association sponsors a course in Theological Librarianship in cooperation with the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. The course, offered online, provides an overview of theological librarianship, covering briefly its various components, in order to develop in the student a basic understanding of the contexts, materials, services, and issues that characterize theological librarianship. The Association of Christian Librarians has recently released a second edition of their invaluable Librarian’s Manual, which is presently available only in print form. And, in an attempt to foster further collaboration for training for theological librarians, the ATLA Special Committee for International Collaboration has launched a theological libraries “wiki,” which is intended to be an online resource handbook for theological librarians.1

The struggle for theological libraries to remain relevant in the future has a different shape and texture in various parts of the globe, and there is a growing sense of urgency for the need for more and better international collaboration. In a keynote address2 to the March 2009 Conference of the Forum of Asian Theological Librarians, Paul Stuehrenberg, Librarian of the Yale Divinity School, reflected on an Asian visit that was made 50 years ago by Raymond Morris, then Librarian at Yale Divinity School, to over 50 theological schools and their libraries. Stuehrenberg observed, “Much has changed in the intervening fifty

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2 www.atla.com/international_collab/Stuehrenberg_ForATL_address_090310.pdf
years. Theological libraries in Southeast Asia and the programs they support are very different than they were when Raymond Morris visited this region…. And I understand that the nature of theological education has likewise changed, so much that students no longer need to go abroad for advanced degrees. Asian institutions are teaching Asian theology at the graduate level.” Stuehrenberg went on to ask the question why international collaboration matters and focused his address on exploring how theological libraries can collaborate together in ways that are mutually beneficial, that support one another’s missions and in which theological libraries in very different contexts can learn from one another.  

John B. Weaver’s article, “Theological Libraries and the ‘Next Christendom:’ Connecting North American Theological Education to Uses of the Book in the Global South,” identifies ten specific connections between North American theological education and the documentation of world Christianity – connections that are rooted in the uses of the book in the global South. It is a strong call for theological librarians to attend carefully to collecting and preserving the documentation of world Christianity.

The Theological Book Network has had a tremendous, positive impact on building print resource collection strength for theological libraries both in the majority world and beyond. Since 2005, TBN has shipped containers filled with more than 750,000 books to schools in Eastern Europe, China, Brazil, Asia, Mexico, and all parts of Africa. The network has been instrumental in facilitating cooperation between theological seminary libraries in the US and other parts of the world, as well as collaborating with a significant number of publishers, to provide high quality materials for schools with great need and limited or no purchasing power. In addition to the collaboration created with schools in the US, the distribution model of TBN has engendered new partnerships and dialogue between and among theological libraries in proximate geographical regions as well as with schools in the US that have shared from the wealth of their resources.

In real estate, the mantra is location, location, location. In theological libraries, it can be argued that the mantra is collaboration, collaboration, collaboration. One of the key undertakings of each of the global theological library networks/associations has been to index the literature of theology, particularly that which has been locally produced, in order to make it accessible to a larger community. The founding members of the American Theological Library Association (ATLA) undertook to create an index to religious periodical literature. That ambitious undertaking grew to include multi-author works, book reviews in religion, and Doctor of Ministry projects, and eventuated into what are now the ATLA Religion Databases, an invaluable resource for students and scholars of religion and theology worldwide. The fact that the indexes are no longer available in either print or CD-ROM formats has created both challenges and opportunities for the worldwide theological library community. In many parts of the world, access to the databases is prohibitive both because of subscription cost and because of the lack of stable, affordable internet access. ATLA continues to work to find ways to make access to the products affordable. At the same time, other theological library associations are exploring ways to make the indexes they have created more accessible to the larger world community.

William Badke, Associate Librarian, Trinity Western University and ACTS, has been a leading activist and educator for comprehensive information literacy. He has written broadly on the topic of training students in the delights of research. In response to a debate over whether bricks-and-mortar libraries would survive much further into the 21st century, he wrote, “We are living in an information revolution in which

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3 Ibid, 2-3.
5 www.theologicalbooknetwork.org.
7 www.acts.twu.ca/badke.htm.
our students have only minimal grasp of how to identify information problems, find the right resources, identify what they are looking at, evaluate their information, and apply it to the problem at hand.... If libraries are dead, so is education. Instead of going with the flow, we need to harness these wonderful electronic tools and use them to advantage to educate our students. It’s not really about what they prefer but about what we know they need.”

In a personal, unrecorded online conversation about this article, Louis Charles Willard observed, “A transition has occurred in which the context in which libraries function began to change. It is a change that seems to be pervasive and accelerating. This change affects not only libraries but also research, teaching, and learning. Those who do these things (teachers and learners) and those who support teachers and learners, i.e., the [theological] librarians, have to change or be marginalized or abandoned; the teachers and the supporters have to change more than the learners. The supporters are mostly unaware of the ways in which they themselves need to change not just what they do and think, i.e., habits of the body and mind, but most importantly and least visibly, habits of the heart, i.e., how we are.”

How we are as theological libraries and librarians today has changed dramatically even in the past few years. We can identify clearly what was but it is difficult, actually impossible, to describe what will be. The things that we know will endure are these: a quest for gathering and organizing information; a passion for making information available to all who would seek it; and a desire to equip learners with skills for discerning quality and reliability about the information they discover, i.e. to become lifelong learners.

**Theological Library Associations**

*American Theological Library Association (ATLA) www.atla.org*

Established in 1946, the American Theological Library Association (ATLA) is a professional association of more than 1,000 individual, institutional, and affiliate members providing programs, products, and services in support of theological and religious studies libraries and librarians. ATLA’s ecumenical membership represents many religious traditions and denominations.

**Publications**
- ATLA Newsletter (quarterly)
- Summary of Proceedings of the Annual Conference
- Theology Cataloging Bulletin (quarterly)
- ATLA Religion Database, which includes ATLA’s three primary indexes, Religion Index One; Religion Index Two: Multi-author works; and Index to Book Reviews in Religion (available through a variety of online vendors)

*Association of Christian Librarians (ACL) www.acl.org*

Established in 1957, the ACL is one of the oldest and largest evangelical academic librarian organizations, and seeks to integrate faith, ministry, and academic librarianship. Membership is open to individuals and institutions. The Commission for International Library Assistance (CILA) was founded in 1989 by the ACL to serve libraries in Christian institutions of higher learning, especially outside the US and Canada, with the training of their staff, the organizing and managing of their collections, and the strengthening of infrastructure to maintain and improve themselves.

**Publications**

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9 Former librarian, Princeton Theological Seminary and Harvard Divinity School and accreditation officer, Association of Theological Schools (retired).
• The Librarian’s Manual, a text for beginning librarians in developing countries. [2nd edition forthcoming]

_The Librarian’s Manual_ is a valuable resource for librarians in developing countries, providing guidance and best practices for the profession.

_Australian and New Zealand Theological Library Association (Anztla) www.anztla.org_

The first library consultation of the Australian & Theological Association of Theological Schools (ANZATS) was held in 1978 with subsequent consultations in 1979, 1983, 1984, and 1985. The decision to form an association was made at the 1985 consultation in North Adelaide, and the inaugural conference of ANZTLA was held in Canberra in August 1986. Chapters of the Association exist in New Zealand and all mainland states of Australia. There are institutional and individual memberships.

**Publications:**

- Australasian religion index online www.anztla.org/AriLogin.aspx (username and password required for access)
- ARI is an author, subject and scriptural passage index to over eighty religious and theological serials published in Australia and New Zealand and representing all religious traditions.
- Australasian union list of serials in the theological collections online www.anztla.org/AulotsSearch.aspx
- AULOTS contains existing holdings for 5256 serial titles held in 96 theological and religious libraries in Australia and New Zealand.
- ANZTLA Newsletter (ISSN 1030-701x)
- ANZTLA Standards www.anztla.org/pages/standards.html. The standards and commentary were prepared for administrators of theological institutions, librarians, teaching faculty, members of accrediting agencies and other interested persons. They are intended to encourage and assist theological institutions and their libraries in the provision and evaluation of library services, resources, and facilities.

_Association of British Theological And Philosophical Libraries (Abtapl) www.abtapl.org.uk_

ABTAPL is an organization of libraries and librarians working with theological and philosophical collections and materials. ABTAPL was originally formed to be the United Kingdom member of the International Association of Theological Libraries, which was set up in 1954, under the auspices of UNESCO. The original international association was relatively short-lived, but it provided the impetus for the establishment of several national associations of theological libraries. ABTAPL’s first meeting was in 1956.

**Publications:**

- ABTAPL Union list of periodicals www.ke.ac.uk/abtapl
- This list includes the philosophy, theology and religious study journal holdings of more than 45 different institutions in Britain.
- Bulletin. Published three times a year as a forum for professional exchange and development in the fields of theological and philosophical librarianship.
- Guide to theological and religious studies collections of Great Britain and Ireland
- A comprehensive compilation of location and brief holdings descriptions of the theological libraries in the United Kingdom and Ireland.
- ABTAPL guidelines for theological libraries (ISBN 9789847845021) www.abtapl.org.uk/pub.html (downloadable pdf) The primary aim of the booklet is to set out guidelines for the provision of library services in colleges involved in theological education and training and covers areas such as collection management, information technology, information literacy, staffing, library co-operation and management.

_Bibliothèques Européennes De Théologie (BETH) http://theo.kuleuven.be/beth/_
BETH is an ecumenical association of the national theological library associations in Europe, with additional members gathered from among the various individual theological libraries that are recognized as extraordinary in their scope, either from their collections or from their influence in the international sphere. Established in 1970 as the Conseil International des Associations de Bibliothèques de Théologie, the name was changed in 1999 to BETH (Bibliothèques Européennes de Théologie) in order to recognize the distinctive European nature of the organization.

Christian Association of Librarians in Africa (Kenya) www.freewebs.com/cala-africa/index.htm
CALA--Kenya is an influential, vibrant, growing community of Christian librarians that integrates faith, ministry and librarianship through development of members, services and scholarship. The Association’s mission is to empower Christian librarians through professional development, scholarship and spiritual encouragement for service in higher education and society in Africa. The Annual Kenya Conference provides important professional development and leadership training around a central them.

Forum of Asian Theological Librarians (ForATL) www.foratl.org
Established in 1997 during the second Consultation on Asian Theological Librarians with the objectives of facilitating the development and exchange of resources for theology in the Asian context; encouraging the support and formation of theological library associations, national depositories of Christian literature, and union listings, directories, guidelines, indexes, and bibliographies for publication; promoting cooperation among and training of theological librarians; and developing an Asia-wide network of theological libraries. Membership is open to individuals and institutions.
Publications:
- ForATL News, twice yearly newsletter

Red Latinoamericana de Información Teológica (RLIT) www.ibiblio.org/rlit/
Founded in 1994, RLIT unites the theological librarians of the Central Latin American region, and is open to all denominations. It meets biennially.
Publications:
- LEMT – Lista de encabezamientos de materia para teologia
- Boletin del Bibliotecario Teologico Latinoamericano.
Access to information and communication technologies ICT is a chance and challenge, for religions and theological education and for education in general.¹ Online access to full text e-books and e-articles is a global trend and is becoming more and more important also for theological libraries, especially in the global South. Lack of funds for physical books, decreasing support from donor agencies for theological libraries in the South, improved high speed internet access in many countries, low cost laptops for many teachers and students and a growing number of open repositories are important factors in this trend. The fact that the access to libraries is reserved for people registered in an academic institution and sitting in the physical university campus such as students and teachers makes it often difficult to students and teachers outside the campus as well as for church leaders, specialized ministries, parish pastors etc. The following article describes and valuates the global digital library on ethics which is online since the end of 2008 and which can serve as a model also for a future global digital theological library.

The Characteristics of the Globethics.net library

The Globethics.net library (www.globethics.net) is a global digital library specialized in the field of applied ethics². Global, because the target public is located everywhere on the globe, and because the content itself comes from all the countries in the world; digital, in the sense that all the content that the library gives access to is available in a digital format (there is no physical library); specialized in the field of applied ethics, in the sense that the content available in the library addresses ethical issues with the aim of enabling a researcher to study an ethical issue, a teacher to teach ethics or an ethical challenge or a professional to address and overcome a work-related ethical issue.

The Globethics.net library addresses the challenge of the information gap that is still separating the global North from parts of the global South. Also in the field of applied ethics, this situation is an injustice that needs to be overcome. In today’s world ethical challenges are per definition global: Climate change, society, politics, economics, information and religion are issues that cannot be dealt with seriously and justly or taught on a global scale by only one part of the world population (one part of the world, one religion, one pool of experts, etc.). Global ethical challenges need global ethical discussions and responses. Globethics.net has the ambition to participate in the emergence of this dialogue by offering access to connecting people (network) and to content (digital library) that users normally cannot get access to. In the South, many people do not have access to information/knowledge from the global North, because it is too expensive whereas in the global North, many people do not have access to information/knowledge from the global South, because it is not distributed in the channels that they normally use.

The Globethics.net library means sharing of resources. It gets its content from three major sources: commercial publishers; open access actors; Globethics.net participants. Globethics.net buys journal subscriptions from commercial publishers and therefore receives the right to display the copyright

² Some figures as of the 30th of October 2009: 4,043 registered participants; websites visits from 179 countries; 423,806 full-text documents available at no cost after free registration; 4,027 documents submitted to the library.
protected content in its library. Registered users can access this content for free after having logged in (registration to Globethics.net is free). As specified before, this service addresses the issue of poor access to information/knowledge because of financial reasons. Globethics.net also harvests content from so called open access repositories, which are University-based or Institution-based document servers providing free access to scientific or institutional documents. This content is harvested in a bulk import to the Globethics.net server and is then screened, as far as possible, for free full text ethics-related content before being displayed in the library. The last but very important sources of the Globethics.net library are submissions of Globethics.net participants. Every registered user (=participant) is encouraged to submit his/her own ethics-related books and articles to the library. This can be done directly in four simple steps through an online submission process. Each submitter becomes a librarian supported by the quality control of reviewers.

The advantage of the Globethics.net library in comparison with a traditional physical library is the fact that full text content can be accessed from anywhere on the planet provided one has access to a computer and an internet connection. This means that people do not have to move to a physical place (often far away and expensive in transport) and do not have to be affiliated to an institution. Of course this situation also implies some limits to the service: a physical library has real librarians, who can help and provide training in information systems that can be complicated to use. At Globethics.net the assistance to participants is done by email, but hopefully, communication technologies can soon allow for some distance training. Obviously, nothing can ever totally replace human contact.

The advantage of the Globethics.net library in comparison to other digital libraries is its specialization: the fact that the content is preselected in order to reply to the needs of the target users and that the service is trying to address especially the needs of a global community of people working or simply interested in the field of applied ethics makes the library very appropriate as a first source of information for this very community. At the same time, the fact that this community is global also implies some difficulties that need to be overcome. The collection that is selected for the library needs to be representative of the diversity of religious, cultural, philosophical, linguistic, educational and professional background of our users on the one hand, and on the other hand it also needs to be coherent in order to ensure a proper documentary treatment and organization of the information in the database.

The aims of this effort are to improve the services offered to Globethics.net library users. Nonetheless it is also a way for Globethics.net to contribute to the effort of the Open Access community by developing better and fairer information services in order to improve education (life-long self-education as well institutionalized education), mutual understanding and quality of lives and societies through value-oriented behavior for all.

The Global Movement for Open Access to Knowledge and Information

The Open Access Initiative is a movement that started in Universities in 2001. The Declaration of Budapest³, 2002, can be considered as the founding document of this movement as it articulates the aims and principles of the open access movement:

An old tradition and a new technology have converged to make possible an unprecedented public good. The old tradition is the willingness of scientists and scholars to publish the fruits of their research in scholarly journals without payment, for the sake of inquiry and knowledge. The new technology is the internet. The public good they make possible is the world-wide electronic distribution of the peer-reviewed journal literature and completely free and unrestricted access to it by all scientists, scholars, teachers, students, and other curious minds. Removing access barriers to this literature will accelerate research, enrich education, share the learning of

³ www.soros.org/openaccess (last visit 30.10.09).
the rich with the poor and the poor with the rich, make this literature as useful as it can be, and lay the foundation for uniting humanity in a common intellectual conversation and quest for knowledge” (Budapest Open Access Initiative, 2002).

The objective was to harness the efforts of many institutions that were trying to find a solution to the so-called “journal crisis”. This crisis originates in the fact that universities and other institutions are paying their researcher for their work, and then once the work have been published they find themselves having to pay commercial publishers for the research results they have produced. This means that universities have to pay twice for the same research results. Over the years, journals have become more expensive and more numerous. Today, most universities, especially in the global South, cannot afford to buy the journals they would need for their students and researchers and sometimes cannot even afford to buy the published results of their own research.

The green and the gold road: One of the objectives of the open access initiative is to solve this crisis. In pursuit of this objective it follows two routes: (1) institutional servers and open repositories (“green road”); and (2) Open Access Journals (“gold road”). The first strategy consists of encouraging universities and other institutions to build an institutional document server, where they can store their institutional documents and where researchers can (or must – depending on the policy of the university) store their research results (in the form of a pre-print or post-print copy of an article that was published in a journal). The documents stored in the repository are freely accessible to anyone who visits these repositories. The second strategy, or “gold road”, consists of creating a new model of scientific publishing. The principle of this model is to find a way to have a journal with the same level of quality as a traditional journal, but totally free of cost for the end-user. (One way of achieving this is to have the author or an academic association paying the cost of publication.)

Conflict or cooperation with commercial publishers? The open access movement has brought innovative developments to the commercial models of information and knowledge services. However, there are institutional conflicts between national, public and university libraries which are mainly in favour of the open access movement, and commercial publishers which defend their commercial interests. As mentioned before, the Globethics.net library on ethics aligns itself with the open access movement, but also cooperates with and subscribes to commercial content. Globethics.net supports the movement by making the open access content in ethics more visible to the specific community of interest that the registered users represent. The biggest obstacle that open access content has to face now is the issue of reputation. Because of the deserved reputation for quality and the high profile of big commercial journals, universities encourage their researchers and professors to publish in the commercial reviews instead of the Open Access Journals. In its library, Globethics.net treats the Open Access Journals and the commercial journals in the same way in order to make them searchable and visible.

Globethics.net itself is a producer of open access content in its quality of open access publisher (The Globethics.net Series) of e-publisher (Globethics.net assists journals, that so far were only available in printed version, in becoming electronic and open access journals) and finally through the submission process of the library. The final step which the library has to take to become a fully open access actor is to develop into an open repository itself. This will mean that the original open access content of the library will be shared with the whole open access community and not only with the registered users of Globethics.net.

At the same time, the Globethics.net library is more than an open access actor, because it also provides access to commercial content to its registered users. The major reason for this is that the global South also needs to have access to content in the field of applied ethics that is only available from commercial publishers and for which financial resources are often very limited. Globethics.net is a small actor and cannot revolutionize the system. However, the library follows the underlying philosophy of the open access
movement by trying as far as possible to convince the commercial partners to collaborate and to make their content accessible in the library so that people who are usually denied such access can now read those very valuable articles and participate in the global debate on ethics.

**Chances for Future Theological Education in World Christianity**

Online libraries such as the Globethics.net library open manifold chances as a few quotes show:

**For affordable access for teachers and students:** “I can’t afford to buy books I urgently need for my teaching in ethics at university level. How can I buy a book for 30 USD with a monthly salary of 150 USD? It's excluded. The Globethics.net online library helps me a lot by offering free access to an incredible amount of articles and books. It took me only four minutes to download a book of 300 pages which I can use directly. It will substantially improve my teaching in theological ethics.” (Irene Ludji, Duta Wacana Christian University, Yogyakarta/Indonesia)

**For Training in Christian networks:** “The core activities of WSCF Africa Region are training. We approach topics such as HIV and AIDS, conflict resolution, the challenge of higher education, women’s empowerment and gender, advocacy, trade, migration and the food crisis. Our target group is of university students. Thanks to the Globethics.net online library we now have access to much more resources and information to uplift the content of our trainings, wherever they take place.” (Georgine Kengne Djeutane, World Student Christian Federation, Regional Secretary for Africa)

**For Church Leadership statements:** “This online library on ethics is very helpful for me as church leader. The free online library, but also the online news and newspapers help me in preparing public statements of our church on current issues of church and society such as corruption, the economic crisis or family or interreligious issues. I want to deal with these challenges from a theological ethical perspective. I have also invited all theological seminaries and churches in my responsibility to use this online library in their research and teaching.” (Methodist Archbishop Michael Kehinde Stephen, Ibadan, Nigeria)

The Globethics.net model could be used for a global digital library on Theology with a huge potential of synergies. This could (a) substantially decrease costs (if compared with costs for the thousands of physical libraries and multiplication of the work of librarians), (b) increase interaction between world regions and languages (Globethics.net library for instance can be used in a multilingual way), (c) give more global visibility to theological knowledge production from the global South where lack of funds often hinder the publication of theological research results.

**Challenges of ICT-based Online Theological Education**

Online libraries rely on the internet, therefore on information and communication technologies (ICT). Each technology is ambivalent, it can be used to serve people, improve their lives and human dignity but it can also be abused for personal interests, for the exploitation or oppression of other human beings or nature. A technology is ethically speaking negative when it a) destroys life and b) increases injustice, dependence, war, exclusion, egoism, environmental destruction, irresponsible behavior and conflicts. A technology is ethically speaking positive when it a) supports a life in dignity for everybody, b) increases

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4 For the following see also Stückelberger, Christoph: Chances and Challenges of ICT for Religious Ethics, its networks and Power Structures, International Review of Information Ethics, Vol 9, 2008, 48–52.


Handbook of Theological Education in World Christianity
the implementation of fundamental values such as justice, freedom, peace, participation, community, sustainability, responsibility and reconciliation.\(^6\)

The internet in general and online libraries as part of it, aims – in extreme – at \textit{Access to everything for everybody everywhere at any time in any form with any method}. The positive side of it is an enormous increase of equal access, of participation, of freedom of decision, of transparency, of online communities etc.\(^7\) This results in an ethical challenge for the user which is \textit{Access to the right thing for the right person in the right place at the right time in the right form with the right method}. This means that an online library, as well as a physical library, can never replace education, training and teaching through parents, teachers, leaders, peers. Such training is crucial for a responsible use of online resources in order to avoid eclecticism, superficiality, plagiarism and theological syncretism. Responsibly used, online libraries can strengthen the unity in diversity of world Christianity! This unity in diversity, for Christian theology, is based in God’s incarnation in Jesus Christ. Not in abstract, but in one concrete human being at a specific time in history in a specific place with specific parents and a specific message to his time. This contextual faith is combined with the vision of the global unity of humanity as God’s creatures. The theological term for this contextualization of truth is “kairos”: To do the right thing for the right person in the right place at the right time in the right form with the right method.

Another challenge is the fact that classical theological-ethical orientation is mainly built on texts and verbal argumentation. In the modern media world, \textit{images, films, video clips} play a central role, increasingly also in online libraries. This development from scripts to pictures\(^8\) needs methodological reflections and leads to hermeneutical shifts. The number of publications on the role of emotion and intuition in leadership as well as in ethical orientation is an expression of the tendency that logical and rational arguments are becoming only one way of expressing positions and to convincing others.

ICT and its online libraries modify \textit{power structures}\(^9\) which consequently influence the power structures of ethical discourse and decision making. The models of power and knowledge sharing can be distinguished: a) the “catholic” model: top down, b) the “protestant” model: bottom up, c) the “pentecostal” model: the “google” approach. This third model seems to be horizontal: the Pentecostal spirit leads people in their decision without central structures but extended “congregational”, decentralized autonomy. The manifold expressions of the spirit – for outsiders in a random way – leads to self-organization, but also local “kingdoms” and lack of coherence and control. It is a kind of “google” ethics: a fast growing movement with random content, decentralized initiatives and expressions.

Online libraries increase the opportunity for broad, horizontal knowledge sharing and fair access to theological resources. However, they need to be used in a transparent, accountable and responsible way.

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\(^6\) Stückelberger, Christoph/ Mathwig, Frank (2007): Grundwerte, Theologischer Verlag, Zurich.

\(^7\) “Ethical Challenges of Ubiquitous computing” was the theme of Vol 8, Dec 2007, of the International Review of Information Ethics. Ubiquity in the large sense includes the six “every”: issue, person, space, time, form, method.


INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIP AND FUNDING POLICIES IN THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

THE UNITED SOCIETY FOR THE PROPAGATION OF THE GOSPEL (USPG) AND ANGLICAN THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

Michael Doe

In this short paper I seek to do three things: to illustrate the role that USPG has played in theological education since its foundation in 1701; to describe what we are supporting around the Anglican Communion today; to look at some future directions and suggest where USPG might play a part. The paper is necessarily about broad trends rather than attempting a comprehensive survey. It concentrates on training for the ordained ministry, while recognizing that theological education is a much broader concept for the whole church. In looking to the future it sets out the tension between differing emphases.

History

Since its foundation in 1701 S.P.G has been concerned with theological education. Our founder, Thomas Bray, saw to it that the clergy who were the first missionaries were supplied with books to enable what would now be described as ‘continuing professional development’. Education in its widest sense was the driver for much that Bray did through SPCK and SPG. Two examples may illustrate what happened as SPG’s presence around the world grew.

Firstly, in Barbados in 1712 the Governor General bequeathed his estates to the SPG for the purpose of establishing a college. This began one of the most inglorious episodes in the Society’s history as the legacy included not only the sugar plantations but also the slaves who worked upon them. Construction began in 1714 on a College “for the use of the mission in those parts of the British dominions”, and as a “nursery for the propagation of the gospel, for providing a never-failing supply of labourers to be sent forth into the harvest of God”. During its history is has served as both a Grammar School and a Seminary, the latter staffed for about twelve years from 1955 by the College of the Resurrection. In 1983 the property was transferred to the Codrington Trust, for training ordinands for work throughout the Province of the West Indies.

Secondly, in India, Bishops College Calcutta was established in 1820 by the first Bishop of Calcutta, Thomas Fanshawe Middleton, with funding from SPG and other agencies, to train Europeans and Anglo-Indians to work first as catechists and then as ordained clergy. Indians and other Asian students were soon admitted, but the College’s contribution to the number of clergy working in the Indian church grew slowly – in part because it also educated students studying other subjects. In 1918 Bishop’s College became a purely theological college and began its association with Serampore, which continues to this day. The SPG

1 This paper was originally given at the Selly Oak Centre for Mission Studies Consultation “Ivory Towers and Muddy Grounds” Birmingham, March 2009, as part of the process towards “Edinburgh 2010”. Its author, Bishop Michael Doe, is General Secretary of USPG: Anglicans in World Mission. The author is grateful for the help of Catherine Wakeling, Habib Nader, and Clare Amos in compiling this paper.
continued to support the college until the 1950s, when it exchanged giving an annual grant for a lump sum for the college to invest.

The Church of England continued to send out missionaries. Clergy rarely received any training, it being assumed that their University degree, together with the grace of Holy Orders, would equip them for ministry whether at home or overseas! But in the second half of the 19th century the numbers of SPG lay missionaries increased rapidly especially with the development of medical work, the recruitment of British teachers (particularly women to teach girls in Asia) and the appointment of women in their own right. Lay missionaries were present in UMCA from the beginning.

The Missionary College of St. Augustine was established in Canterbury in 1848 to “relieve the deficiency of an adequate supply of Ministers, duly prepared by special training, to labour with effect in the dependencies of the British Empire.” Its purpose was to train men so they were ready to be ordained on their arrival in the diocese where they were ready to work, and to train men from overseas who were sent by their bishops and then ordained on their return home. In 1952 the College re-opened as the Central College of the Anglican Communion to train clergy from all over the world. It closed in 1966.

In 1923 S.P.G. set up a Training College in Selly Oak, Birmingham to train women missionaries. From the 1950s some men took courses but they were not allowed to ‘live in’ until the College went co-educational in 1965. In 1996 the Methodist Church closed their own Kingsmead College to create with USPG the United College of the Ascension. The U.C.A. both prepared UK clergy and laity for missionary work overseas, and provided further training and research opportunities for leaders and potential leaders from churches around the world.

However, questions were increasingly raised about bringing students to the UK, because of the cost, the concern for cultural context, and a greater commitment to building up the local capacity around the world. U.S.P.G. began to prefer funding more local institutions rather than providing much more expensive scholarships in Birmingham and other places in the UK. There is a continuing tension between those who favour this policy and those who regret the loss of the cross-cultural context which U.C.A. sought to create, together with what they see as the added value coming from the UK academic scene and an exposure to UK culture more generally.

One result of these developments, together with the declining number of Missionaries / Mission Companions, was the closure of UCA in 2006, but USPG stayed in partnership with the Methodist Church to create the Selly Oak Centre for Mission Studies (SOCMS) within the Queens Foundation, Birmingham, and is committed to funding this until at least 2012. The new Centre has as its core activities:

1. The development and delivery of courses, programmes and pastoral care, both academic and formational in nature, that respond to and meet the needs of partner churches, international students and scholars, from other parts of the world church.

2. The development of a worldwide network of theological and mission study institutions with which the sponsoring bodies are in partnership in order to promote the development of mission studies as an academic and practical discipline, and to encourage mutual collaboration, in particular on site and split-site research that builds capacity in theological education and research in partner institutions.

3. The provision of exploration, training and reflection programmes for mission partners/companions/programme volunteers from the UK who have been selected by the sponsoring bodies to serve in or visit other parts of the world church, short term and long term.

Today

Like most mission agencies, USPG has sought to leave behind the colonial “North to South” role in favour of “Mission from Everywhere to Everywhere”, exploring how all our worldwide partners – the Anglican

Part I: Theological Education in Global Context: Issues and Themes
Provinces and Dioceses – can be “Heirs Together” of SPG and UMCA, and in particular helping the Anglican Churches of Britain and Ireland to play their part in the Anglican Communion. This is not easy given the continuing economic disparities of our world and the tendency of NGO’s and the Western donor culture to invent new forms of colonialism. We have however tried to make decision-making more international, and to honour the mission priorities of the local church as they nominate projects for support through grants, personnel exchange, and scholarships.

Leadership Formation including Theological Education is one of the four Priority Areas which USPG has agreed with partners worldwide for financial support. It takes three main forms.

First, grants from the Common Provisional Fund. In 2008 this represented £351,642 of the total Fund. Some examples of College funding are St Marks’ Theological College, Dar-es-Salaam (£4,500), The College of Transfiguration, Grahamstown, South Africa (£3,200), and St Paul’s Theological College Ambatoharanana, Madagascar (£16,000). Other Provinces have nominated ‘Theological Education by Extension’ Courses for funding, for example TEE in Zimbabwe and in Ethiopia.

Secondly, our Personnel programmes. In 2008, ten of the 39 Mission Companions around the world were directly involved in Theological Education, for example Andrew & Rosemary Symonds in Swaziland and Richard Fermer in Recife, Brazil. Others, like Bishop Christopher Boyle in Malawi, have seen improving theological education as one of the priorities of their Diocesan ministry. A number of volunteers on the shorter-term Experience Exchange Programme also take part in such work. In addition we continue to offer small grants to British ordinands and clergy on sabbatical who spend 4-6 months in a variety of placements – there were 22 such awards in 2008.

Thirdly, and central to our commitment to Theological Education, there is the Training & Experience Programme. In 2008 this cost £180,000 and supported 326 people in a wider variety of courses, from catechism through to certificate and diploma in theology, to postgraduate qualifications. The TEP also provided means for professional studies and qualifications in youth work, administration, finance and management.

Future

Many of the established institutions are doing well. For example, Lanka Theological College in Sri Lanka is developing new work in Asian and women’s theology, and the U.T.C. in Bangalore continues to maintain a high academic standard. Like many of the institutions we support both of these are ecumenical. Others face more difficulties, sometimes because like Bishop’s College in Calcutta they have inherited old buildings, or because in some provinces diocesan bishops prefer to set up their own courses to avoid the costs of the more centralised provision or simply because they want to have more control over the training of their own ordinands.

What then are the issues which will determine the future of theological education, especially around the Anglican Communion? Five tensions may be seen.

Firstly, Leadership vs. Ministry. In some places there is a concern that priestly formation and ministry have been overtaken by more secular ideas of leadership. Nevertheless, competent leadership remains central to the future health of Christ’s church. This is equally true of the episcopate, where initiatives like the Canterbury New Bishops course seek to equip them for leadership in their diocese, and for clergy who (as in Northern Malawi) can be a resource for agricultural development schemes alongside their role as parish priests.

Secondly, Residential vs. Non-residential. It is often the question of cost which decides whether theological training takes place in a Provincial, usually national, seminary or more locally, so that only younger people with more discerned potential are awarded a residential place. Others are more likely to be trained on more local, for example diocesan, courses, through evening and weekend groups, and/or through
extension courses by post or the web and e-mail. In some Provinces people from these courses cannot become stipendiary ministers. Again the issues arise: how is priestly formation to take place alongside academic learning? Which form of training is more likely to draw from and engage with the student’s own context?

Thirdly, Ecumenical vs. Anglican. There is a tension between working ecumenically, whether that is for principled or pragmatic reasons, and the need for a proper Anglican formation of new priests. USPG is fortunate here in having as its Theological Consultant the person who looks after the ‘Theological Education in the Anglican Communion’ work in the A.C.O. One of TEAC’s concerns is to better articulate ‘The Anglican Way’² and to secure more resources, in appropriate languages, to prepare those entering Anglican ministry. Such developments, however, should be a contribution to, rather than a negation of, a theological awareness which embraces the wider “Ecumenical Vision” as expressed in last year’s World Conference of Theological Institutions (see www.wocati.org/conference.html).

Fourthly, Global vs. Domestic. This is more difficult to define, but it’s a tension between training which is more earthed/contextual and that which is more globalised world / cross-cultural. Theological education must be rooted in local situations if the student is to understand where they themselves have come from and the new situations in which they are likely to serve. But such understanding is most likely to happen when they see each local place as part of a much larger whole, and are helped to come to terms, both personally and ‘theologically’, with all the issues of commonality and difference.

Fifthly, Ecclesial vs. Prophetic. This is sometimes seen as Maintenance vs. Mission, which may be unfair because the presence of a committed and worshipping congregation can be a living sign of God at work in that local community. However there is a tension between, on the one hand, ministry which is primarily concerned with individual discipleship and church growth and, on the other hand, ministry which is engaged in a more prophetic way with issues and challenges in the wider world. The latter will be marked by engagement with such matters as HIV/AIDS, and often inter-faith issues as well. The content and context of training is crucial in directing what kind of ministry a person may take up.

Other tensions could be listed – for example, Intellectual enquiry versus ‘simple faith’ – but all of them touch on two further issues. The first is about both candidates and content: who is theological education for? Up to now it has generally excluded those with less access to academic training, and in particular women. In response USPG has provided staffing for a course in the Caribbean for ordinands from the tourist industry, and support for ‘liberation theology’ workshops in shanty towns in Lima in the Diocese of Peru. A recent Anglican Communion consultation for Women Theological Educators has also been a response to this deficit.

The second is: who controls theological education? Ordination is the particular responsibility of the bishop so it is natural that he (and now in a few places, she) should exercise a particular responsibility over training for it. But some theological educators feel that bishops do not always value their contribution, especially in the more academic rigour which they seek to bring to clergy training, and particularly when their institution is claiming a certain amount of autonomy and distance from the church leadership so that it can play a more prophetic role in the life of the wider church.

In conclusion, what more might be done? There are a number of Networks which seek to increase co-operation and share resources. One of these is the Trans Continental Training Network, administered from the Selly Oak Centre for Mission Studies, where they are also exploring such developments as split-site

² “The Anglican Way is a particular expression of the Christian Way of being the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church of Jesus Christ. It is formed by and rooted in Scripture, shaped by its worship of the living God, ordered for communion, and directed in faithfulness to God’s mission in the world. In diverse global situations Anglican life and ministry witnesses to the incarnate, crucified and risen Lord, and is empowered by the Holy Spirit. Together with all Christians, Anglicans hope, pray and work for the coming of the reign of God.” See www.anglicancommunion.org/ministry/theological/signposts/english.cfm.

Part I: Theological Education in Global Context: Issues and Themes
courses including doctorates. There are links between such places as Madagascar and Canterbury, Sri Lanka and York, where training courses and even university validation may be taken forward. The web offers all kinds of possibilities, although we often forget that for significant parts of the Anglican Communion English is at best a second language. USPG is also keen to work with the St Augustine’s Foundation, and other organisations like Trinity Wall Street, to find new ways forward.
INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIP AND THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION IN THE ASSOCIATION OF PROTESTANT CHURCHES AND MISSIONS IN GERMANY (EMW)

Verena Grueter and Maureen Trott

Why is the EMW Involved in Theological Education?

The Association of Protestant Churches and Missions in Germany (Evangelisches Missionswerk, EMW) was set up in 1975 by a community of German churches, mission centres and church organisations with international relations as a focus of networking with the worldwide Christian church. It aims to enrich church life in Germany through the experience and insights of Christians in other parts of the world and to promote ecumenical partnership and solidarity. One of the original reasons for establishing the EMW was to provide joint support for ecumenical ventures in the field of mission in the widest sense of the word, and right from the beginning there was a special emphasis on promoting ecumenical theological education.

German churches and mission centres entrust the EMW with funds to be distributed to partners in many parts of the world as one way of participating in the ecumenical sharing of resources. For the EMW, this does not only mean the one-way flow of funding. It is also a process of mutual learning and encouragement. This ecumenical partnership is characterised by the hope that the renewal of the churches and their mission will be enhanced by strengthening theological thinking. Learning from others can also contribute to the renewal of the churches in the Western context.

How Does The EMW Support Theological Education and What Kind of Programme Does its Mandate Cover?

The first point of contact for partners in the field of theological education is often a personal meeting with EMW staff, including those on the Africa/Middle East, Asia/Pacific and Latin America Desks, or by direct (usually e-mail) contact with the Theological Education Desk. Concrete applications for support are processed by this Desk and submitted to the EMW Commission on Theological Education which meets twice a year to take the decisions on how to distribute the funds available. The members of the Commission are all directly involved in theological education, academic partnerships and/or international relations within their own German churches, and their rich experience enables them to conduct the debates on principles and criteria of support and on many aspects of theological education both in Germany and worldwide which are on the agenda of these meetings. The Commission is also an advisory body for the EMW Board.

In this context it is good to draw attention to some of the challenges currently faced by the churches in Germany as in all Western societies. Growing secularism, individualism and the trend to look for spiritual orientation outside the churches are some of them. We have decreasing membership within the historical churches with the result that dwindling funds are available for local budgets and grants for partners overseas. In addition, restructuring, merging and centralisation of church institutions for ministry in the home context, for mission, ecumenical relations and development are now in full swing in Germany.

Having said this, the EMW is very much aware of the continuing and in some cases increasing need in many parts of the world for support for programmes and activities which cannot always be fully financed.

1 The address of EMW is: Theological Education Desk, Association of Protestant Churches and Missions in Germany, Evangelisches Missionswerk in Deutschland, Normannenweg 17 – 21, D-20537 Hamburg, Germany, Website: www.emw-d.de.
with local resources. There is also a serious commitment to ecumenical theological education and for the viability and survival of institutions in the field of theological education. Both the ‘donors’ and those in charge of theological education in a given region, country or church are thus confronted with practical problems and needs – some of them similar – which we hope to tackle jointly within true ecumenical partnerships.

The EMW’s partners in Africa, Latin America, Asia, the Middle East and the Pacific are for the most part theological colleges and seminaries, university departments of theology and religious studies, associations for theological education, TEE programmes or councils of churches. The types of programme which can be supported by the EMW are as follows:

• Library development
• Budget support
• Support for programmes, consultation and conferences of special theological significance for a region or country
• Lay training programmes such as those often attached to theological colleges, TEE programmes and other distance-learning projects
• Scholarship funds run by colleges, church councils or universities, which select the students most qualified and in need of financial assistance to study theology. Priority is given to faculty development in the South. Individual scholarships cannot be given.
• Although the emphasis of support is on investment in people, the EMW is one of the very few donor organisations which can still help to finance buildings for colleges and seminaries in the South where this is seen as essential for their development, especially in the case of library buildings.
• Networks of theological education and ecumenical institutions. The aim is to enhance cooperation among churches and the educational institutions as well as to be open to learning from other denominational traditions.
• Programmes of special support for women in theological education.

Basic Criteria for EMW Partnership in Theological Education

The following points are some of the basic principles and guidelines for partnership which have arisen from the long experience of the Theological Education Desk and the Commission on Theological Education:

1. Theological education in its various forms deserves support because of its central role in the life and mission of the church. Academic theological education makes an important contribution to the mission of the church in a given society. Mission is understood as the comprehensive, holistic character of the church as an advocate of the people in their society and a witness of Christ to all humankind.

2. Ecumenical theological education should aim at strengthening the links between different denominations and churches and promoting awareness of ecumenical issues in a given context.

3. Instead of channelling support bilaterally, sharing of resources should be implemented where possible in a multilateral ecumenical context. Since the beginning of the EMW, high priority has been given to cooperation with the World Council of Churches, especially with the programme on Ecumenical Theological Education. The experience, insights and competence of persons involved in theological education in global or regional ecumenical bodies help churches and ‘donors’ in Western countries to use the funds available for grants in an effective way.

4. The quality of theological education, its aims and content are a legitimate concern of the EMW and dialogue with partners on these issues are to be continued.
5. The gender issue is always given due attention in all EMW partnerships. Despite the progress made in recent years, some churches are still reluctant to give space for the voices of women, their theological education and their role in teaching, research and publication. This often has to be done by separate women’s organisations which require special support.

6. The question of contextual theologies has a high priority in the debate on the quality of theological education. It is the EMW’s view that the current challenges of neoliberal globalisation, global pandemics such as HIV and AIDS, increasing conflicts of ethnic and religious character and the ongoing violence against women require the development of theologies and theological teaching which qualify future church workers to analyse theologically and act pastorally in the face of these challenges.

7. The presence of theologians from the North in theological institutions of the South can make an important contribution to ecumenical awareness and dialogue on both sides. A few German lecturers continue to be given support for short or long terms of continuous teaching service overseas, while the EMW’s major emphasis remains on supporting local or national staff. They are to be encouraged to undertake on-going training and in their endeavour to contribute towards more relevant theology for their own cultural context.

8. The growing influence of charismatic and Pentecostal groups worldwide – including the West – also calls for a response in ecumenical theological education.

9. Freedom and flexibility in theological education, relevance and contextual orientation can and should be supported by ecumenical donors. There should be a balance between the churches’ ‘ownership’ of their institutions of theological education and sufficient freedom for educators and students to develop their own, innovative or critical understanding of theology and enjoy a certain independence from church hierarchies.

10. The EMW Commission on Theological Education is increasingly reluctant to continue supporting the long-term dependence of theological institutions on funds provided by donors overseas. The fact that reductions in our grants are inevitable in the long run can encourage partners to pool their resources and to find innovative ways of running ecumenical programmes of theological education.

11. Ecumenical partners overseas should enjoy a certain security and stability in their planning for the future of their institutions. This stability cannot be achieved by reliance on contributions from abroad. Efforts to develop income-earning projects, closer cooperation (e.g. pooling personnel, resources, libraries etc.) and to invest in the use of modern communication technology in order to reduce spending on operational budgets are to be encouraged.

12. Another matter of concern to the EMW is good stewardship. Professional standards of administration and management and compliance with established principles of stewardship and accountability by theological institutions form a part of the churches’ witness to the world. Capacity building in this field should be encouraged and the subject of stewardship and the fight against corruption should be included in the curricula of ministerial formation.

13. In all joint discussions on the future of ecumenical theological education in a given region it is a vital strategy to strengthen so-called centres of academic excellence, i.e. the relatively small number of higher institutions for theological education. But on the other hand it is important not to neglect smaller institutions in remote areas which do not enjoy access to foreign funds, traditional donor partnerships or modern technology, but nevertheless contribute tremendously to the life and mission of the churches in their region.
EMW Involvement in Regional Consultation Processes on Theological Education

The experience of the EMW has led to the insight that ideally each country or region of the world should have a central body to reflect on theological education in its own context and to clearly identify priorities and strategies for future development. This should help overcome the problem of donor-led funding. With this aim in mind the Theological Education Desk is becoming increasingly involved in processes of consultation on theological education with such central bodies and other overseas donors.

The first process of this kind has been conducted with the Senate of Serampore College in India with the goal of analysing the real needs of theological education in India and channelling the resources of donor partners to where they are needed most. The Policy Paper which emerged from this consultation process can be read below (see appendix). This policy is now being implemented by the Senate of Serampore College and the EMW.

The second example is the consultation process now being conducted under the leadership of the Latin American consultancy SPT (Pedagogical and Theological Services). Donor agencies and important players in Latin America have drawn up a ‘Manifesto for a Quality Theological Education’ and are continuing their exchange of experiences with the aim of coordinating their policies.

Appendix: EMW-Policy for a Partnership in Theological Education in India

Introduction

As an ecumenical body, the enhancement of Ecumenical Theological Education is one of the main tasks of EMW. Therefore, we are grateful that we can count on international partners, especially the associations for Ecumenical Theological Education in the regions. Our partnership with the Senate of Serampore College (SSC) and the Board of Theological Education of the Senate of Serampore College (BTESSC) is of central importance for our work for Ecumenical Theological Education in India because of its history as a national ecumenical body for theological education. It started in 1827, when the King of Denmark granted the Royal Charter conferring the powers of a University on the Baptist Mission Society’s College in Serampore, including the right to confer degrees. The development of a Higher Theological Department and cooperation with the Syrian Church were provoked by the World Mission Conference in Edinburgh 1910. With the affiliation of other institutions of theological education in Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Nepal, Serampore College developed into an ecumenical body. The Bengal Act of 1918 made provision for the constitution of a Senate which had to include at least one and not more than three representatives of the churches who sent students to Serampore. In 1975, the Board of Theological Education, originally a wing of the National Council of Churches in India, was constituted as an advisory body for the Senate and the Council of Serampore College, thus creating One National Structure for Theological Education in India.

Over the past years, the affiliation of the SSC has increased from 18 to 50 colleges, many of them run by smaller churches. As a consequence, donors face a flood of funding requests, many of which are not always convincing. In some places, a kind of “donor fatigue” over funding requests from India can be noticed. Moreover, some instruments of support have become questionable. This is especially true of endowment funds, which have not provided the capital that was needed to maintain a good level of salaries and to help colleges become self-sufficient. Low salary levels have in some places led to a “brain-drain”: faculty members, well trained with the help of overseas funding partners, have left Indian colleges or stayed in the US or in Europe after their studies because they were offered better salaries there. This phenomenon requires close consideration with regard to the practice of funding overseas postgraduate studies. As both the SSC leadership and those responsible for Ecumenical Theological Education at EMW have an interest in improving their cooperation and overcoming their less satisfactory experiences, they came together in Kolkata in 2006 to exchange their concerns and to initiate a consultation process.
History of the consultation process

The consultation process, therefore, had the following goals:

- To improve coordination and prioritisation of funding requests for TE in India.
- To analyse the real needs of TE in India in order to channel the resources to where they are needed most.
- To address the changes in funding and staffing that EMW is going through in way that is transparent to Indian partners.
- To strengthen the BTE-SSC as the One National Structure for TE in India.

In July 2006, representatives of EMW and NMZ met the Executive Committee of the SSC in Kolkata. Both sides came to an understanding that in order to achieve the above-mentioned goals, the following issues should urgently be addressed:

- Strengthening the SSC as an advisory body.
- Improving distributive justice, the effective use of funds, transparency and accountability.
- Providing information on the development and real needs of ecumenical colleges to EMW.
- Assisting institutions in fundraising of local resources.
- Setting up regional centres.

Among the priorities mentioned by the members of the Executive Committee were:

- Curriculum Revision.
- Faculty development, especially for weaker and smaller institutions.
- Setting up a resource and research centre in North-East India, related to SATHRI.
- Strengthening Ecumenical Theological Education in North India.
- Strengthening the programmes committed to developing contextually relevant theologies related to Dalit, tribal, feminist, poverty and ecological concerns.
- Strengthening of lay training by TEE.
- Enlarging the offices of the SSC.

It was agreed, therefore, that the SSC would invite its constituency and overseas partners to a consultation to be held in Kolkata in February 2007.

On 27th and 28th February 2007, fifteen members of the SSC, led by their President, Dr. John Sadananda, and their Registrar, Dr. Ravi Tiwari, and three representatives of EMW, representatives of the North-Elbian Centre for World Mission (NMZ), the Christian Education Fund (Ausbildungshilfe Kassel), the German Church Development Service (Evangelischer Entwicklungsdienst) and the Council for World Mission (CWM) met in the rooms of SCEPTRE, Kolkata for a two-day consultation and came to the following results:

- It is necessary to develop a Master Plan for the development of Ecumenical Theological Education in India during the next 10 to 20 years, considering among others the following questions: How many colleges are required? Which regions have to be developed? How many candidates are needed for churches and colleges?
- Pedagogical training has a high priority.
- North and North-East India are the regions which need development in Ecumenical Theological Education.
- The different levels of cooperation should be made transparent to one another: the cooperation between EMW and SSC and its members as well as the different bilateral cooperation between churches and ecumenical partners on the one hand and SSC and its members on the other.
- The consultation shall be continued between German and European partners, including the SSC leadership.
The consultation process was followed up by a consultation in Hamburg on 3rd and 4th April 2008 between EMW, other European partners of Ecumenical Theological Education in India and Dr. John Sadananda, the President and Dr. Tiwari, the Registrar of the SSC. The following observations were made:

- Ecumenical Theological Education is the most important instrument in order to protect churches from growing fundamentalism and to ensure a theological education adequate to the challenges of Indian churches and society today.
- A fertile tension between churches and theological institutions is necessary for freedom of thought, but is not always welcomed by the churches in India. European partners of Ecumenical Theological Education in India consider this freedom very important.
- Indian churches do not always bear financial responsibility for Ecumenical Theological Education.
- There is a lack of interdisciplinary studies in ecumenical colleges in India although these are very much needed to develop contextual theologies.
- Some of the stronger theological institutions receive the largest share of funds coming from nearly all of the European partners.
- Historical and bilateral relations lead to funding on denominational lines instead of common ecumenical strategies.
- European churches and ecumenical bodies lack communication amongst themselves about funding requests from India.

As a consequence of the consultation, the representatives of the SSC committed themselves to develop a Master Plan for Ecumenical Theological Education in India for the next 10 to 20 years by October 2008. EMW committed itself to draw up a policy for Ecumenical Theological Education in India.

At the next consultation held in February 2009 in Chennai agreement was reached on the points of implementation detailed in this document.

Criteria, guiding principles and priorities for funding of projects of Ecumenical Theological Education in India by EMW

Given the analysis and the results of the consultation process held during the past two years, EMW adopts the following policy for its future cooperation with the Senate of Serampore College and its affiliated institutions.

We commit ourselves to promoting the quality of Ecumenical Theological Education in India according to the following criteria, guiding principles and priorities:

Formal criteria for funding applications

- Ecumenicity of the institution’s constituency, teaching staff and students.
- Financial participation of the churches which own the institution.
- Gender justice concerning access of women both to studies and teaching staff.
- Presentation of institutional audited financial reports for every project funded by EMW.
- As a rule, membership of the Senate of Serampore or the Board of Theological Education.
- The project has to be in line with the Master Plan for Theological Education in India developed by the SSC.

Guiding principles to ensure the quality of Ecumenical Theological Education in India

According to SSC representatives, Ecumenical Theological Education in India should always take into consideration the specific context today, which is marked by a variety of cultures and religious forms and practices, a growing socio-economic marginalisation due to economic globalization and, as a consequence, by growing fundamentalism, the ecological crisis and the growing pandemic of HIV and AIDS. Ecumenical Theological Education in India should therefore develop concepts of contextual theologies and
of pastoral care based on the gospel of Christ’s death and resurrection which equip future church workers to cope with these problems. Special interest should be dedicated to:

- Biblical hermeneutics which are sensitive to gender questions, differently-abled people, interfaith dialogue, ethnic and cultural diversities, marginalized people.
- An interdisciplinary approach of theological research and teaching, especially with regard to socio-economical and ecological ethics, bio-ethics and nuclear ethics.
- History of the ecumenical movement.
- Improving the training of ministers for rural ministry and pastoral care in crisis situations.
- Addressing the problem of increasing urban centres as a challenge for pastoral work in ministerial training.

Priorities for the development of an Ecumenical Theological Education of quality in India as expressed by SSC representatives

- Presentation of a Master Plan for the Theological Education in India by the SSC containing concerns and concrete plans for the development of the colleges for the next ten to twenty years in the following categories: limiting the number of institutions; regular programmes; staff development and exchange; limited constructions and extensions; management and financial administration; special issue-orientated programmes and projects.
- Pedagogical training of teaching staff as a priority in the work of the SSC.
- Mainstreaming of the courses in Gender Justice, Dalit and Tribal studies etc. which have up to now been offered as additions to the curriculum.
- The central role of SATHRI in faculty development according to the needs in theological subject areas and regions, especially for the weaker and less developed institutions, as to be detailed in the SSC Master Plan for Ecumenical Theological Education.
- Development of Theological Education in the less developed regions of North and North-East India.
- Strengthening the SSC as a coordinating body for Theological Education in India.
- Library programmes.

Implementation

The EMW will

- Cooperate with the SSC as an advisory body.
- Promote transparency about funding requests.
- Inform the SSC about all grants for TE in India approved by EMW.

Projects no longer considered as priority

- Contributions to endowment funds.
- Construction projects for the well developed colleges.

Recommendations

- We recommend that the SSC considers the challenge posed by the growing Pentecostal movement.
- We recommend that the SSC strengthens lay training and adult education.
- We recommend considering more programmes addressing society.
- We recommend considering mergers between small neighbouring colleges in order to avoid costs for infrastructure.
- Further, we recommend that European partners of Ecumenical Theological Education in India work by mutual reference to their policies.
• Finally, it is recommended that inputs from Ecumenical Theological Education in India be taken up in theological education in Germany and Europe.
• The results of this policy will be evaluated after two to three years.
INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIP AND FUNDING PRINCIPLES IN THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION IN EVANGELICAL PERSPECTIVE

Manfred W. Kohl

Overseas Council

“As the seminary goes, so goes the church” is a foundational statement of Overseas Council (OC). Thirty-five years ago, on a mission trip to Asia, five business men became convinced that Christian pastors and lay leaders can be most effectively trained within their own country, in their own language and culture. OC was founded in 1974 in Indianapolis, USA. Today there are independent affiliates in USA, Australia, Canada, Great Britain, Europe, and New Zealand. OC currently partners with more than 100 seminaries, bible institutes, and other strategic ministries around the world, leveraging people, expertise, and resources to advance quality Christian leadership training. OC’s goal is to train effective, biblically sound pastors, teachers, evangelists, missionaries, and lay leaders in their own countries. This ministry focuses on training institutions in Asia, Africa, Latin America, Eurasia, and the Middle East because in these non-western countries Christianity is growing fastest and the need for biblically trained leaders to disciple millions of new believers is most urgent.1

Funding for the ministry comes primarily from individuals and churches, but also from foundations and organizations. Donors and funding agencies at home are challenged to invest in four major areas; namely (1) student, faculty, and staff scholarship assistance, (2) educational/library resources, (3) campus development, and (4) leadership consultation.

Standards for International Partnership

Standards for international partnership have been established together with the leadership of partner schools around the world. These standards constitute values that are shared by OC and partner theological institutions and serve as tools to stimulate institutional growth and development. These standards of international partnership are gathered under seven headings:

I. We are committed to strengthening the church, and seek to enable partner institutions that
   1. affirm a theological framework compatible with the World Evangelical Alliance Statement of Faith and the Lausanne Covenant.
   2. train leaders for Christian ministries.
   3. foster mutually beneficial relationships with evangelical churches and church bodies.
   4. have national or regional ownership.
   5. are committed to mutual accountability and dynamic partnership.

II. We are committed to strategic impact and seek to enable partner institutions that
   1. have significant influence for positive change within their context.
   2. demonstrate potential for broad Kingdom impact.
   3. equip students with bachelor’s level or higher.

1 See website of Overseas Council: www.overseas.org.
4. demonstrate multiplication through assistance to other institutions.

III. We are committed to cooperation and seek to enable partner institutions that
   1. are multidenominational in their ministries, student body, faculty and board composition.
   2. are willing to cooperate with others and avoid competition and duplication in a city or country.
   3. are committed to learning, dialogue and change.
   4. demonstrate diversity of age, gender, language and ethnicity.

IV. We are committed to a global orientation and seek to enable institutions that
   1. demonstrate global awareness, concern and orientation.
   2. are willing to assist Overseas Council in understanding the realities within their continent or region.
   3. engage global trends in balance with local concerns.

V. We are committed to excellence in education, and seek to enable partner institutions that
   1. are accredited or are actively pursuing accreditation.
   2. are missional, transformative and holistic in their community.
   3. are expanding their programs through new information technology and delivery systems.
   4. have faculty who are striving to grow in Christ and who serve as role models and mentors.
   5. are equally concerned about academic excellence, spiritual formation and ministry competencies.
   6. have quality academic faculty with educational skills and ministry experience.
   7. are responsive to ongoing training needs of alumni and pastors.
   8. are responsive to the training needs of the laity at various levels, including the grass roots.
   9. are developing curricula that focus on contextual realities from an interdisciplinary perspective.
  10. have faculty and staff who are engaged in research, publication and engagement with the wider academic community.

VI. We are committed to excellence in institutional development and seek to enable partner institutions that
   1. have leaders who foster team cooperation.
   2. have strong vision and orientation toward the future expressed in a realistic strategic plan.
   3. implement an effective performance measurement system for all functions.
   4. have leaders engaged in continuing professional development through opportunities like the Institute for Excellence.
   5. provide for continuing training for staff and faculty.
   6. practice financial management which demonstrates integrity and accountability.
   7. are progressing toward financial sustainability through increasing reliance on local resources.

VII. We are committed to excellence in governance and seek to enable partner institutions that have a board (council, trustees)
   1. consisting of representatives of church and society who demonstrate ownership and carry ultimate responsibility for the entire institution.
   2. that ensures legal and statutory compliance within the institution’s country
   3. that governs by policy and sets strategic vision.
   4. that avoids conflict of interest.

Handbook of Theological Education in World Christianity
Continuing Professional Development

Continued growth and development of any institution is possible only with continuing professional training of its leadership, and this is nowhere more true than in the case of theological institutions where, in many cases, theologians have been elevated to leadership with little or no training in the skills necessary to manage such institutions.

OC has assisted in the professional development of leaders in theological education in two significant ways. One of these has been, since 2005, the employing of experienced, proven leaders as Regional Directors in every region where OC works. The principle of establishing personal contact with top leaders is vital in leadership development, and these Regional Directors provide training and capacity building of the board, management team, and faculty as well as exercising a pastoral role with respect to the leaders, visiting every partner school regularly. They also look for potential new partner schools.

Secondly, OC has established an international forum called the Institute for Excellence to specifically strengthen leadership skills and organizational expertise for presidents, deans, and other senior administrators. These Institutes are usually one week in length and are held once a year in each region in which OC works. Over the last decade more than 1,100 leaders from 236 theological institutions, representing 96 countries, have participated in these Institutes.

Funding Principles

One of the major topics of the Institutes is resource development, with the result that several partner schools have established a Master of Business Administration degree program in Biblical Stewardship and Christian Management. Also, many partner schools have now established their own local fundraising department, with staff qualified in this field. Fundraising and stewardship, whether at home or abroad, must be seen as a ministry, and every person involved ought to pledge to the following basic commitments:

- We see ourselves as stewards. The resources at our disposal are not our own. Everything belongs to God, who created everything.
- We are faithful to the purpose for which those resources are given and manage them in a manner that brings maximum benefit.
- We speak and act honestly.
- We are open and factual in dealings with donor constituencies, recipients, project communities, the public at large, and with each other.
- We endeavor to convey a public image conforming to reality.
- We strive for consistency between what we say and what we do.
- We demand for ourselves high standards of professional competency and accept the need to be accountable through appropriate structures for achieving these standards.
- We share our experience and knowledge with others where we can assist them.
- We see ourselves as stewards of God’s creation.

Biblical Principles of Fundraising

According to the understanding developed in the work of OC and its networks all Christian fund-raising (personnel, management, work, philosophy, and marketing programs) should be accountable according to the following biblical principles:

1. Christian fund-raising is part of Christian ministry – pointing to and actually practicing kingdom values. It should have as its first priority the focus on godliness and contentment rather than on riches (1Ti 6:6-10; 1 Pe 1:7, 5:2).
2. Christian fund-raising should be totally trustworthy and above reproach (1Ti 3:2-3; Tit 1:7-8).
3. Christian fund-raising should guard strictly against false teaching and manipulation of people in order to attain its goals (Tit 1:10-11; Ac 8:20ff.).

4. Christian fund-raising, in all its activities (including marketing and advertising), should adhere strictly to the truth. Word and action, promises and delivery, must be the same (2Pe 2:3a; Mt 5:37).

5. Christian fund-raising must guard against establishing false distinctions between the material and the spiritual (1Jn 2:15-16).

6. Christian fund-raising organizations should expect their personnel to demonstrate a lifestyle which will be an example to others in that they show themselves willing to make sacrifices themselves (3Jn 5-8; 2Co 9:2-3, 7; Ac 4:34).

7. Christian fund-raising should always focus on working within the will and plan of God, giving him the ultimate honor and glory (Jas 4:15; Mt 6:33; Ps 115:1).

Since Jesus spoke more on sharing, giving, money, and power than on any other issue except the kingdom of God, we cannot declare fundraising to be simply private and personal or secular and worldly. Fundraising is an integral part of spirituality from the evangelical perspective, and funding principles must therefore be included as a vital aspect of theological education.
As it is very likely that the global economy is shrinking in 2009 for the first time since the Second World War, there will be a jump in world poverty if private-sector creditors overlook developing countries’ financial needs. Given this milieu, tackling financial viability and finding global support for theological education is an uphill task. Even in good times, unearthing financial support for theological education was no walk in the park. The current financial meltdown globally makes our task truly daunting. We are not alone in this ‘trap’. All institutions of learning share the same fate.

Current tasks in fund-raising are not meant to supplant previous efforts. Rather, they intend to supplement them. Obviously, there is sufficient viability in our previous efforts which can be further nurtured to become even more viable. Not recognizing this is not just wrong as a matter of fact but is foolish as a matter of policy. We are encouraged to look at what we have and not merely at what we had. This is so because we believe that God does not know what to take. God only knows what to give. The current meltdown will change one way or another. Red lights do not stay red. Not incidentally in fund-raising, fund-raisers can secure complete intellectual satisfaction or logical coherence in the difficult task of fund-raising only if they gloss over, brush aside, or even explain away those factors which embarrass the system of their choice and cannot be fitted into it. With that caveat, we venture to explore financial viability and global financial support for theological education.

In a sense, financial viability in theological education could be quite simple. A leader in the Back To Jerusalem movement in China has pointedly used an example:

God will surely provide for all the needs of the Back to Jerusalem movement if we remain faithful to him and obedient to his leading. The details of how he will do it we leave to him. He might call every rural Christian family in China to dedicate a chicken and its eggs to help fund the Back to Jerusalem workers. If he does, then that would be millions of eggs each month!\(^1\)

The above-mentioned affirmation of faith asserts that, on the one hand, we depend totally on God to provide what is needed. On the other, it needles us to re-visit our priorities and, if need be, look for changes, new ways of doing innovative yet inexpensive theological education programmes, ferret out new ways of raising more local funds, and re-invent doing theology globally.

For a start, steps can be taken to get local churches to own theological education. When they do this, they are stating that theological education (teaching and learning) contribute crucially to the very existence of the churches themselves. Churches are the ‘consumers’ of the product of theological seminaries. As such, it is good they know that it is not only in their interest and well-being that theological seminaries are well run, but also they themselves have a crucial role to play in the running of theological seminaries. What would get theological education going viably is a sustainable movement strongly committed to the ‘equipping the saints for the work of ministry’ (Ephesians 4:12). This movement will then create a defining moment and momentum that will persuade church-goers that, on this issue, ‘equipping the saints for the work of ministry’, we are convinced that God will bless it. We then get a series of commitments from our

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\(^1\) Brother Yun, Peter Xu Yongze, Enoch Wang with Paul Hattaway, *Back To Jerusalem* (Waynesboro, GA, 2003), 89.
church members. There is both relentlessness and flexibility in this movement. We are relentlessly asking
church members to give to theological education. We are also flexible in getting them to give.

A recent report on Americans graduating from a four-year liberal arts college, is shocking in that it
shows a very high percentage of graduates joining the work force (that is, if they could land a job!) with a
large student loan to pay. The ‘student loan’ phenomenon is so serious that the report had used bankrupt
B.A.s to emphasize its point. The same point applies equally to graduates from medical schools. It is
estimated that a new graduate from most medical schools in America owes the bank US $150,000. It is,
thus, not a surprise that many new seminary graduates, upon graduation from seminary, owe their banks
$30,000 on average.

Education, whether liberal arts or medical, or theological, is expensive worldwide. Graduates from
medical schools can expect easily to earn $100,000 per annum after their three-year residence following
the acquisition of their M.D. qualifications. This will give them the financial clout to pay their loans.

Theological seminary graduates in the US tend to look for churches that could pay them well enough to
enable them to pay back their loans. Inter alia, this means that churches which are unable to put together an
average of $60,000 per annum cannot hope to appoint a pastor. It also means that many small and rural
churches are left without a pastor, forcing many of them to ‘join forces’ to invite a minister to pastor two or
three churches.

Many third world seminaries have to raise funds to feed and educate their students who do not
necessarily face a steady future employment in the church. They are also challenged to look into continuing
theological education for the clergy.

It has been frequently stated that it is contextually inappropriate when the commonly used
‘professionally-paid’ ministry model was blindly applied to the Long House Churches in East Malaysia.
The flaw with applying the ‘professionally-paid’ ministry model in an essentially non-cash society was
highlighted when the money from the West, that was used to pay the pastors, dried up. If only this were the
only incident in the history of theological education in Protestant churches.

Today, many rural churches, whether in the scenic Hawaiian islands or on the mainland USA, cannot
afford any more to have their own pastor and have fewer and fewer worshippers on Sundays, because they
cannot afford to pay some $60,000 per annum to have a kahu (pastor in Hawaiian). Many churches in rural
settings (like the United Church of Christ, USA) have, therefore, decided seriously to explore multiple
tracks for ordination. The usual, traditional track known as 4/3, i.e., four years of college education, topped
off with 3 years of seminary training (the traditional B.A., M.Div. track) is still there and the one most
favoured. The second track is for the natural church leaders to do part-time theological education classes
for at least two years and then seek ordination, with five years of mentoring after ordination. The third
track is for the natural church leaders to do seven years of mentoring and then seek ordination. Presumably,
ordinands from tracks two and three would settle for less than the normal salary a pastor receives, making
it possible also for smaller churches to appoint pastors.

While this can reduce the costs involved for theological education, still the question remains how to
develop a viable and sound concept for funding theological colleges and programmes run in churches of
the global South. The kind of rule of thumb from the past, that one third of the costs should come from the
supporting churches of a college, one third from income generating resources of an institution of
theological education and one third from partner institutions in the global network, in many places has
proved helpful, but in many other places has not materialized. It is increasingly difficult financially to
maintain a proper institution of theological education due to:

1. dwindling funds from the West

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2 Yeow Choo Lak in his keynote address on Sub-theme II: Financial Viability of Ecumenical Theological Education at
the conference ECUMENICAL THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION; ITS VIABILITY TODAY, held in Oslo, Norway, 4-
11 August 1996, organized by the Ecumenical Theological Education Program, World Council of Churches.
2. supporting churches are struggling financially due to increased costs caused by global economic crisis
3. an increasing number of students come without having any sufficient funds to contribute

Perhaps a new discipline needs to be explored by which each parish should give an annual contribution for theological education in order to have this task of the church firmly rooted in the responsibility and consciousness of local church life.

The ETE programme of the WCC or its predecessor, the Theological Education Fund (TEF), owes its existence to a marvellous act of global solidarity for funding and strengthening theological education in the churches of the South in the late 1950s in which mainly churches and mission boards of the states and from Western Europe were involved. As many mainline churches in America and Western Europe face decline in membership and financial resources due to demographic reasons and also because the changing ecclesial landscape sees some new and financially very gifted churches in places like South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore and also in other parts of the world, we should look for a new system of global solidarity for promoting ecumenical theological education worldwide.  

The time has come to reconsider the (one-sided) international division of labour with regard to making available grants and scholarships for theological education and library development. The number of applications by far outweighs the resources available for TE in the WCC at present. It might be explored whether we would like to mobilize for a new global solidarity fund for theological education or whether it is more appropriate to establish regional solidarity funds for ecumenical theological education which exist already in some regions. This whole interest goes together with another issue of fundamental importance which is bridging the institutional divide between global ecumenical networks in theological education and global and regional evangelical and Pentecostal networks of theological education.  

There are well-developed evangelical networks of theological education, like the International Council for Evangelical Theological Education (ICETE) under WEA, which play an important role in some regions and levels of theological education and which are not yet part of WOCATI and/or ecumenical networks in WCC for a number of reasons. Bearing in mind what was called for during the Global Christian Forum in Nairobi last November, in terms of widening the networks of cooperation, we should explore whether more intentional channels of cooperation and communication are built with some of these networks outside the present constituency of WCC.  

There are 14 key reasons why it is vital to increase financial support for theological education both bilaterally and multilaterally in the future for securing leadership development for World Christianity:

1. Theological education is vital for the transmission of Christian tradition from one generation to the other. Theological education is essential for the renewal and continuity of the church and its leadership. Theological education is a matter of survival for an authentic and contextual mission of the church in contemporary contexts.
2. Theological education is crucial for the interaction between church and society where many issues demand a determined stand on the position of Christianity. This has become a commonly held conviction both in Western and Eastern Christianity, in both the churches of the South and the churches of the North.
3. Theological education is deepening biblical knowledge and the capacity to distinguish and to assess the different powers and spirits and to discern God’s working in this world. More knowledge and

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3 Challenges and Opportunities in Theological Education in the 21st Century. Pointers for a New international debate on theological education, par 27, see: Joint Information Service WOCATI-ETE November 2009 (www.oikoumene.org/?id=4976).
4 Ibid par. 28.
awareness in the basic understanding of Christian faith is a vital contribution for the identity of Christian churches today and the lay involvement in church and society.

4. There are grave differences in the accessibility and quality of theological education programmes in different parts of the world. In some countries there are more institutions of theological education than a decreasing number of theological students can fill. In other countries, despite fast growing local congregations, only one or in some cases non-theological colleges are available to offer B.D., Master of Divinity or even Doctoral programmes in theology. There is a need for a major step forwards in terms of bridging the divide between churches and countries with extremely different standards and availabilities of theological education programmes.

5. Ecumenical theological education and broad-based ecumenical formation is a vital priority for Christianity in the 21st century and the continuation of the ecumenical movement – this was affirmed again by the last assembly of the WCC in Porto Alegre, 2006. Without an increased commitment in theological education for ecumenical dialogue and cooperation, the unity of the church, its holistic mission and service in today’s world and dialogue with people of other faiths, we might see an increased fragmentation of world Christianity. Growing trends of religious fundamentalism and a severe lack of properly trained Christian leadership in many fast growing churches in the Southern hemisphere demand for more investments in infrastructure and programmes of theological education.

6. Theological education is not only serving in building up the church, but also in creating social awareness, political discernment, social involvement and Christian participation in transformation processes of societies. Thus, investing in theological education is a direct investment also into the social and political development and transformation of society and the raising of its educational levels.

7. The only proper remedy against religious fundamentalism is investment in education. Lack of education and theological formation is one of the root causes of ignorance over against other cultures, religious traditions and special social contexts. Churches, which take theological education of both laity and ordained seriously and support all its different levels, are better equipped to counteract trends in religious fundamentalism and communal tensions in their own regions and worldwide.

8. In quite a number of churches, women do not have equal rights and access to theological education and to enter into the ordained ministry of the churches. Ecumenical theological education has particularly promoted the theological education of women in theology, for ministry and various fields of pastoral work within the church. A renewed and transformed community of women and men in the church, and their mutual enrichment in the different ministries of the church, can be greatly enhanced by theological education programmes.

9. Globalization and the acceleration of technological and communication progress as well as deteriorating standards of human rights and the Christian ethos in many issues of the global world today is demanding more theological and ethical expertise in a number of crucial ethical areas. It is only theological education which enables churches, as well as Christians in civil society, to face new challenges and the social demands of the churches in the context of globalization and radical ethical challenges. Many issues like bioethics, ecology, migration or inherited patterns of social discrimination of marginalized groups, demand forms of interdisciplinary knowledge and expertise for which high-level forms of interdisciplinary dialogue and quality theological education is vital.

10. Theological education is one of the key answers of global Christianity to the growing longing for new value systems and ethical standards in a globalized world. Without reflected knowledge of the immense sources of Christian spiritualities and ethical values in Christian tradition, there cannot be any proper communication and spread of ethical and spiritual values, which are vital for supporting communitarian and egalitarian orientations in a world fragmented and torn apart by many anti-humanitarian forces.

Handbook of Theological Education in World Christianity
11. Churches and Christians should be aware of the fact that Christianity – in different degrees, but in all the Protestant, Roman Catholic, and Orthodox traditions – had a strong historical inclination and heritage to support and nurture theological education (theological faculties often have been the centre around which secular universities later grew). But investments in theological education have gone in a number of countries both in the West and also in the South, and some churches consider theological education as only important up to the lower degree levels (B.D.) in order to secure the input of new ministers. The abilities of churches, however, to strengthen their own leadership, to prepare a new generation of well-trained theological educators and to remain attractive for a younger generation of intellectuals, still to a large extent depends on investments and an increased sense of ownership and responsibility of churches for higher (postgraduate) programmes of theological education.

12. Christianity might be losing its initiative and leading role in higher education in some settings, if one realises the growing importance of highly equipped and well-funded Muslim institutions of higher and academic education worldwide. Facing growing and considerable investments of some Muslim governments and private organizations in Muslim universities, colleges and faculties of religion, it is vital for the Christian family not to renounce its own tradition of a strong commitment to higher theological education. The future of a Christian-Muslim dialogue needs well-educated pastors and well-trained lecturers of theology and religions in institutions of theological education. The future of many Christian minority churches in Muslim countries also depends, to a considerable extent, on the educational level of their leadership and their ability to enter into a qualified dialogue with Muslim neighbours.

13. The consequences of global migration for the future of theological education are far from being sufficiently reflected upon and thought through. In several countries there are growing ethnic minorities (minority churches) which do not have access to the established systems of academic theological education and demand for new forms of adapted models of theological education for their churches (African diaspora churches in Europe; Hispanic churches in the US). Investing in new models for ethnic minority churches is an urgent need for the future interaction and positive integration of immigrant churches in several countries.

14. Investing in theological education is a strategic investment in the future of Christianity as a whole and the growth of the ecumenical cooperation between churches. All churches, in some way or other, are challenged to develop a balance between the need for becoming open to the challenges of the globalized world and the need for a vital interaction with and inculturation in the local cultures in their own context. All churches are challenged to become “glocal” in their own identity and capacities for dialogue. The proper means to assist in this process is theological education. Thus, investing in theological education is a vital contribution to world peace.7

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Part I: Theological Education in Global Context: Issues and Themes
PART II

REGIONAL SURVEYS OF DEVELOPMENTS IN THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION SINCE 1910
(19) THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION IN AFRICA

“STRETCH FORTH THY WINGS AND FLY”:
THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION IN THE AFRICAN CONTEXT

John S. Pobee

Memory Lane for Renewal

For one who for fifteen years served as an executive of the World Council of Churches’ Programme on Theological Education in its various incarnations, it is not only a privilege to be part of this project but also an exciting and renewing trip down memory lane. This project may not be treated as just recalling the past but also, and perhaps more importantly, as an exercise in renewal.

The Eagle among Chickens: Narrative Theology, Africa’s First Love

Africans are not given to the propositional style; rather, they are given to narrative culture. The title of this piece is rooted in the oral and narrative culture of *homo africanus*. It is taken from an aphorism of a great Ghanaian, Aggrey of Africa, of the Phelps-Stokes Foundation fame, who told the story/parable of a naturalist who, upon seeing an eagle domesticated among chickens, undertook to encourage it to regain its identity as an eagle. After days of trying, the eagle finally “stretched out its wings and with the strength of an eagle, mounted up higher and higher.”

The parable encapsulated Africa’s story as the second largest continent which by contact with European nations has been subjected to ideologies of exploration/discovery, slavery, racism, colonialism, and Christian missions, which have left well-nigh indelible marks on Africa. These contacts have resulted in the emasculation of *homo africanus*, so to speak, cast in the image and likeness of Europeans, a North Atlantic captivity and Peter Pan Syndrome. Aggrey’s parable of the eagle among chickens is making a case for Africans to recover their identity among the comity of races, peoples, tribes, and tongues.

*Nyimp a oko nsa na obo ehina*

In African cultures wisdom is characteristically couched in proverbs. The proverb at the head of this section is an Akan proverb that “the one whose duty and good service is to fetch water for the household, is the one who is likely to break the pot for fetching the water”. In the nationalist age and in the context of ideologies of racism and colonialism, it has been the practice to condemn the European incursion into Africa. The Akan wisdom is that if negative things have been associated with European incursion into Africa, so too have there been some very positive results.

The Aggrey aphorism is designed to remind us that Africans have an identity of their own, which may not be ignored. Second, the other Akan proverb is the reminder that it is not helpful to belabour the shortcomings of previous generations even if we must learn from their mis-steps. Third, the parable and the

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711 Bediako, Theology and Identity. The Impact of Culture upon Christian Thought in the Second Century and Modern Africa.
proverbs signal to us that truth and wisdom may not be mediated only through propositional style. Narrative Theology measured in terms of stories, songs, proverbs, art, becomes the measure of Theology in Africa, even though it will exist alongside the style imported through foreign encounters. The evident success of Christianity, especially through African initiatives in Christianity, owes much to the narrative characteristic of *homo africanus*’ epistemology and ontology.

**North Atlantic Legacy re-Theology**

Theology in Africa began with a North Atlantic paradigm and artefacts, which also shortchanged African identity, ethos, use and creativity.

**Enlightenment culture**

The Enlightenment culture was the solvent of Christian theology. René Descartes, the French philosopher and mathematician (1596 – 1650), gives the quintessential statement of that culture when he writes *cogito ergo sum* i.e. “I think, therefore I am”. That articulated the twin pillars of the culture’s epistemology and ontology, namely rationality and individualism. That already diverges from *homo africanus*’ epistemology and ontology. The latter puts much store by passion and community. *Homo africanus*’ style is nearer the biblical notion that “to know”, more than intellectual pursuit, is engagement in lived experience. Bridges-Johns states it thus: “This (biblical) knowing is more by the heart than by the mind and conveys engagement in lived experience; and its dynamics are more of love and response than that of subject and object. Knowledge of God, therefore, is not measured by the information one possesses, but how one lives in response to God.”

The style of the genre of theology emerging from African Christian initiatives is rediscovering and modelling this insight. That style of theology belongs to the genre styled by the people. This genre in not so many words, challenges the hegemony of clergy in the practice of theology, insisting on the participation of each and all (cf 1 Peter 3:15). In that tradition theology is not only reflection and transmitting a body of information. Theology is as well, and perhaps more importantly, participating and doing the Word of God.

The foregoing stands alongside the North Atlantic legacy represented by the university departments and seminaries. But even in the latter there is a growing consciousness that the North Atlantic legacy needs a revisit, review and renewal. Representative of that growing consciousness is Jean-Marc Ela, a Roman Catholic theologian from Cameroun. He writes:

“In Africa, the confrontation between the message of the gospel and the African universe must bring forth a meaning with the poor to transform the lives of African Christians. Today, the faith of the church in Africa is in danger of death, because the church tends to forget its cultural dimensions as marked by its Greco heritage. If the faith of the Africans is not to die, it must become a vision of the world that they can feel is theirs; European cultural dimensions must be stripped away. There is an urgent need to reject present foreign models of expressions, if we are to breathe new life into the spoken Word. Our church must express a Passover of Language, or the meaning of the Christian message will not be understood. One of the primary tasks of Christian reflection in black Africa is to tally, reformulate our basic faith through the mediation of African culture. In place of the cultural presuppositions of Western Christianity, namely *logos* and *ratio*, we must substitute African symbolism. Beginning with the ecclesial furrow where the language

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713 Bridges-Johns, “From Babel to Pentecost: The Renewal of Theological Education,” 138.
714 Amirtham and Pobee, *Theology by the People. Reflections on Doing Theology in Community*.
of faith germinates, we must restore the gospel’s power to speak to Africans through the primordial symbol of their existence.”  

Culture of individualism versus traditional communitarian epistemology

The Enlightenment culture promoted a culture of individualism. Contrary to the legacy of the culture of individualism, African societies have communitarian epistemologies and ontologies. The northern legacy of theological education has been an exercise in producing professional and theologically educated clergy, thus creating a gulf between the professional class and the theologically unschooled laity. It is not without interest that a lay person who studies theology in Ghana is openly styled sëfo i.e. priest. There is need for theology in Africa to capture the idea that theology is the common patrimony of all who desire to “know” God. This has far reaching consequences for theology and accreditation. We are yet to explore the shape of theology in community rather than as individuals who happen to be in the same school. How may accreditation be done in theological education in community? In any case, the idea of theology in community demands a re-orientation of theology as the activity of all persons of faith. That is the significance of the catch-phrase, “theology by the people”. Theology in Africa is not a finished product, it is under construction and development.

Sharp distinction between theology and spirituality

The northern legacy tended to rather sharply distinguish between theology and spirituality. The irony is that the subject of theology is God, the Ultimate Reality, and therefore spirituality cannot be an extra – it is integral to theological construction (cf. I Cor. 2: 10-12). As the noted preacher at Constantinople, Evagrius Ponticus (348–99) put it, “a theologian is one who truly prays. And one who truly prays is a theologian”. As such, spirituality and worship are the hermeneutic for probing theological education and ministry. African initiatives in Christianity are living that orientation. The African reality ensures that the distinction is untenable. There are common threats of this 21st century: terrorism; climate change (droughts and floods); poverty (almost the synonym for Africa); genocide and racism and tribalism (cf. Rwanda, Burundi, Darfur and South Africa, among many other examples); disease and want of better health facilities. A Christian theology that is articulating the gospel of hope, has its work cut out for it. God’s word, the gospel of hope, has to engage the social, political, and economic challenges of the African scene. The crises of racism, tribalism, and unemployment are not just technical problems in search of some perfect plan; they are rooted in the imperfections of humanity, manifested as societal indifference and individual callousness. Such issues are indices of risk and insecurity. The solution to these is to tap into the moral underpinnings of the nation.

Of course, theology cannot go it alone because the issues raised require changes in government policy as well as changes in hearts and minds. On the ground, this means that theology in Africa must of necessity be an engagement between the God-word and social, economic, and political issues. That is the significance of the Theology of Liberation in South Africa, and of the Theology of Reconstruction in East Africa and South Africa. From West Africa also the writer has explored Religion and Politics, Church-State relations, and Theology and Economics.

These forays into the engagement between theology and social issues were earlier critiqued as “politics dressed up as religion”. But the concern was to attest to the idea that issues of politics and economics can

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715 Ela, My Faith as an African, 44.
717 Villa-Vicencio, A Theology of Reconstruction, Nation Building and Human Rights; Mugambe, Theology of Reconstruction.
718 Pobee, Kwame Nkrumah and the Church in Ghana 1949-1966; Pobee, Religion and Politics; Pobee, The Worship of the Free Market and the Death of the Poor.
as well be religious-spiritual issues, a departure from the “orthodoxy” of the time that said “keep religion out of politics”. The development in Africa was in consonance with the insights of the early church father, Metropolitan John Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople (AD 398 – 404), who held that Christians worship at two altars: the altar in the sanctuary and the altar in the marketplace. It was also an insight and thrust of the ecumenical movement.

_Ideology of Christendom versus sense of pluralism_

When I was in _statu pupillari_ at the University of Ghana, the word ‘theology’ was reserved for Christian Theology. The department was called Department of Divinity and later Department of Theology. It has its roots in part in the early church fathers’ epigram _extra ecclesiam nulla salus est_, i.e. outside the church there is no salvation. By implication non-Christian religions have no theology to be studied. When Christianity was declared the only religion of the Roman Empire, the ideology of Christendom emerged and became the cultural solvent of Christian theory.

Africa, the second largest continent, is a continent of plurality – races, tribes, religions, cultures, etc., – which cannot be ignored or short-changed. Within individual nations, pluralism is in evidence. The significance of this fact of pluralism is that though we have different stories, we also have common hopes, the foundation of which is life in abundance. Though we may have different origins and may not look the same, we nevertheless aspire to move towards a better future for ourselves and our descendants.

The rising consciousness that pluralism is the context of theologizing ushered in the establishment in the 1960s of Religious Studies departments in Nigeria, Botswana, and South Africa. The case of the University of Ghana is particularly interesting for its self-designation – a “Department for the Study of Religions”. Though the underlying aim of departments of Religious Studies is to foster dialogue between the major religious faculties and institutions of the context, the Department for the Study of Religions especially highlights dialogue between persons of different religious persuasions for mutual respect, understanding, and peace and humanity. The fact of differences of faith persuasions and doctrines does not diminish the humanity of the other person. Thus the bottom line issue of religion is not so much the dogma as being human.

A Christian theology emerging from a Department of Religious Studies is forced to focus on the fundamental and critical issue of Christian mission and theology, namely the uniqueness of Christ. Baldly put, the issue is this: why may one, an African, commit to Jesus, Christ and Lord rather than traditional gods, Muhammad or the Buddha? Theology with a hermeneutic of pluralism is a commitment to encouraging freedom of thought and speech. It signals that asking the right questions in theology is essential for renewing theology.

It may not surprise that the first Festschrift in Black Africa was in honour of Rev. Prof Christian Goncalves Baeta under the title _Religion in a Pluralistic Society_. That volume came from the Department for the Study of Religions.

_‘Hey Presto’ Ecumenical Imperative!_

This volume is celebrating the centenary of the Edinburgh conference of 1910. It has been as a stream rather than a static institution. It has thus developed its own momentum and renewed emphases. Konrad Raiser has helpfully outlined seven marks of renewed ecumenical vision:

1) Calling the whole church to bring the whole gospel to the whole world.

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720 Pobee, _Religion in a Pluralistic Society. Essays in Honour of Prof. C.G. Baeta_.

_Handbook of Theological Education in World Christianity_
2) Ecumenism involves the whole church in the daily lives of people; it is at once concerned with human and societal matters as about ecclesial matters.
3) Ecumenical vision incorporates Communion and is dedicated to expressing communion.
4) Such vision empowers peoples to take their lives into their own hands and shape it.
5) Ecumenism opts for and engages in dialogue and solidarity.
6) Ecumenism is committed to and endeavours to live a culture of sharing and caring for life.
7) The vocation and dedication of ecumenism is also peace-building, conflict resolution, and mediation.721

These seven marks of the renewed ecumenism mean that, (a) theology must be characterized by holism, i.e. the interpenetration of sacred and secular, matter and spirit, individual and community; (b) theology must be about everything and not some things. Ela writes: “a theologian must stay within earshot of what is happening within the community, as that community can become the subject of mediation and prayer. In the end, a theologian is perhaps simply a witness and travelling companion, alert for signs of God and willing to get dirty in the precarious conditions of village life. Reflection crystallizes only if it is confirmed by specific questions.”722 (c) We are required to be in life together; no one may be an onlooker or mere passenger. Therefore, the formation process should be, inter alia, empowering peoples, institutions etc., to claim everything for God. The process must be characterized by dialogue, which demands openness of minds and hearts to others, a rich and deep sense of vocation.

The Stream of Edinburgh 1910

Edinburgh 1910 emphasized the importance of education for mission. The particular perspective is to bring the ecumenical imperative to bear on theological and ministerial formation. Of course, in the nature of this case, the African genius was not brought into play and the constructs were very much North Atlantic fabrications. But 1957 marks a particular landmark in the dance between the ecumenical movement and Africa and, for that matter, the Third World.

The Eagle Has Flown: Ethiopia Arises

In December 1957, the International Missionary Council met at Achimota, Accra, Ghana. In March of that year, the Gold Coast had become sovereign independent state. That story was to open the gates to an accelerated independence movement across Africa. Thus, African nationalism was a factor with which to reckon. Ghanaian independence fuelled the struggles of several African countries to become independent sovereign states, leading to the birth of over fifty African states.

The independence movement was the highwater mark of a whole stream and movement which had flourished as Ethiopianism723 between 1872 and 1928. Mojola Agbebi a.k.a. David Brown Vincent (1860 – 1917) gave a classic statement of its agenda: “to render Christianity indigenous to Africa, it must be watered by native hands, turned by native hatchet, and tended with native earth; i.e. it is a curse if we intend forever to hold at the apron strings of foreign teachers doing the baby for age.”724 This is the profile of African Theology.

This corresponds to the report of the Church Conference on African Affairs, Westerville, where the mission agencies themselves came to a similar conclusion: “Our particular American or European forms of Christianity are shaped according to the racial genius and culture of the Western world in accordance with

722 Ela op cit 11.
our biological and social heritage. To impose those forms upon other peoples would be a kind of spiritual imperialism which is contrary to the due respect for humanity. Each nation, we believe, has its own contribution to make to the universal Christian fellowship.”

And so, the Achimota I.M.C. meeting in 1957 set up the Theological Education Fund (T.E.F) which has mutated into the Programme on Theological Education (P.T.E), and Ecumenical Theological Education (E.T.E.). These designations tell stories. Fund signals funding as a tool for effecting a vision of renewal. Ecumenical Education tells a vision of education and ministry as tools for forging and structuring the ecumenical imperative. And so, T.E.F. and its successor bodies promoted Joint Theological Colleges e.g. Federal Theological Seminary, South Africa; Trinity College, Umuahia, Nigeria; St. Paul’s Theological College, Limuru, Kenya; Trinity Theological College, Legon, Ghana etc.

The rationale for such institutions was that if persons of different denominational commitment trained together, rubbing shoulders in the lecture room, dining hall, socialising together, the veil of suspicion about the different and the unfamiliar would be broken and a better understanding and appreciation of the other person and other view points fostered.

However, the experience so far makes us wonder whether putting together different denominations on one campus necessarily generates ecumenical commitment and consciousness. So, it is still on the agenda of ecumenical theological education to explore and discuss the glue that fosters ecumenical commitment, especially the sense of unity in diversity.

Associations of Theological Schools


The circumstances of African theological institutions (i.e. lonely and few and far between, paucity of qualified African theological educators, inadequate resources) made the associations a necessity for mutual support in the region. The associations were agents for creating the spirit of fraternal charity. In a way, there were attempts to model the spirit of the icon of St. Andrew, patron saint of the Eastern Orthodox Church and St. Peter, patron saint of the Church of Rome that “theological dialogue only bears fruit when carried in a spirit of fraternal charity”. In such institutions attempts were made to engage differences with honesty and integrity as well as in the spirit of fraternal charity. The ecumenical imperative requires engagement with sore-points, prejudices, engaging points of excitability and irritation. Without such engagement, renewal and transformation are impossible. Courage, forethought, imagination, and insight are essential ingredients of the canopy of ecumenism to move away from age-old securities.

Renewal Is the Name of Ecumenical Imperative

U.S. Presidential aspirant Barack Obama had the word CHANGE as key word of his campaign. He expounded it in the words, “you cannot do the same things and expect different results”. That is the essence of change, renewal and transformation. In any case, renewal and transformation are impossible without spirituality. Hence, the T.E.F. stream’s continued stress on spirituality. T.E.F. and its successor

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incarnations used a number of handles on to the goal of renewal: (a) Financial viability and enabling, (b) Contextualization, (c) Theological education by extension, (d) Theology by the people, (e) Spirituality and viability of theological education. In all these, the principal actors were the associations and theological schools. The staff of T.E.F.-P.T.E.-E.T.E. were principally enablers, creating a forum and platform for encounter between schools.

Women in Theology and Ministerial Formation

One of the most exciting developments on the continent of Africa over the past thirty years has been the face of women in theological and ministerial formation. The face is focused on the Circle of Africa Women in Theology (C.A.W.T.). Women constitute more than half of church and society. And so, allow me to dip into another aphorism of Aggrey of Africa: “Educate a man and you educate an individual, educate a woman you educate a family, a clan, the nation.” Especially because women constitute at least half of society, they represent a most critical and strategic agency of the formation of church and society.

Three points may describe what C.A.W.T. represents in the spectrum of theologies in Africa. First, instead of the usual Association of Women in Theology, they chose Circle of Africa Women in Theology. That self-designation already hints at the model of church and theological education and institutions women seek. It captures the idea of the “Church in the Round”. The topography makes it easy for all to be visible and participate. Such a perspective is consistent with and faithful to the ecumenical movement’s basic ecclesiology of koinonia.

Second, one of the founders of C.A.W.T. suggested that, “the future church is one that ensures that women’s liberative theology becomes an integral part of the church’s contribution made visible in the church and the academy.” This is a challenge worth pondering, especially in respect of securing life in abundance and fullness for all created by God and in God’s own image.

Third, the peculiar ethos of African Women in Theology has been articulated by an African woman theologian, Nyambura Jane Njoroge, who writes, “The entry of African women theologians into the discourse has challenged the male-articulated scholarship as being gender specific and therefore, ignoring and rejecting women’s experiences and perspectives on African reality. Women contend that ethics constructed by male scholars do not go deep enough to confront and dismantle both Christian and African values, attitudes, beliefs, and structures which are life-threatening to women. To a large extent, African theology and liberation theology have been uncritical of cultural values that approximate sexism in the church and society. It appears as though the men assumed that to attack Western-imposed values and structures will be enough to transform African communities.” This statement suggests that the African theology represented by C.A.W.T. is not just reactionary; it is creative and constructive, endeavouring to be inclusive, making connections and participatory.

African Publications

One of the drawbacks of theology in Africa has been publications by Africans and with African perspectives. Even today, most of the standard textbooks are from the North. In the contemporary globalized village and ecumenical age, no group’s identity and insights may be left out; for ecumenical

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credibility each story, each identity, each spirituality should be in evidence at the table. Without the African etch, the ecumenical prism will lack something and suffer in its wholeness. For that reason, African theologies have their valid place around the theological table.

Theology Serves Mission

The endeavour of WCC in respect of theology and theological education represents the perspective that theology is not only a scientific quest; it is also a service to the church’s mission. But mission is not only evangelism (making converts); it is as well proclamation and obedience to the Will of God in the social, economic, and political areas of human existence to redeem everything to God through Christ. For all those areas properly understood should foster the well-being of humans in God’s image and likeness. This is a lesson the ecumenical movement has reminded the world vis-à-vis the authentic vocation of theology.

At Once Theology and Education

Theological education and formation in Africa must be theologically sound and renewing as well as educationally sound and viable. It must be committed to articulating God’s self-disclosure in a plural world. But it is also committed to being educationally sound. Herbert Zorm writes, “Theological education is education, commitment is not a substitute to competence. Academic excellence, technical proficiency, and breadth of experience are necessary components of theological education. The specific problem of the third world theological education concerns the standards by which these components are measured as well as the minimum requirements by which they can be achieved. Precisely at this point, the questions of ‘hybridizing the transplant’ and of ‘search of native plants,’ arise. Standards for evaluating new patterns and methods ultimately have to be found within the context, whatever reference is made to Western standards.”

Much has happened regarding theological education in Africa. Much still needs to be done. The viability of what develops must meet the identity and context of homo africanus so as to be vibrant, vital, and viable.

A Last Word

The T.E.F., which continues today in E.T.E., has been a vital instrument in creating ecumenical consciousness in theological education and bearing the consequences. Its particular regional focus assisted in bringing peoples and insights of all races to the ecumenical table. Its mediation and popularization of contextualization has contributed to the growing fullness of the ecumenical conscientiousness. What is often overlooked is that without that particular ministry and mediation the World Council of Churches would not have had access to a vital renewal agency of theological institutions. That mission is not complete. The WCC would need to reinvent an institution like the T.E.F. tradition to serve the purpose and role T.E.F fulfilled. It would be vital for the next century.

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Introduction

It should be stated from the outset that religion, in one form or another, plays a crucial role in the lives of many African people. It is a point of reference and indeed the guiding principle in the social, economic and political life of many Africans. While in the past the lives of many African people revolved around African Traditional Religions, today Christianity seems to have taken precedence over the indigenous religions of Africa. This chapter will focus on theological associations which promote theological education and their role in the expansion of Christianity on the African continent. Since there are numerous such associations, space does not allow us to discuss all of them but a selected few which appear to us to have significant impact in the ministry of the church. All the associations discussed in this chapter have different aims and objectives but their primary purpose is to advance the kingdom of God on earth. Some of the associations promote theological education from an ecumenical perspective while others are designed to cater for specific theological needs of their churches, denominations or socio-ecclesiological constituencies. Again, there are associations which do not necessarily address theological concerns per se but have been formed to promote the teaching of religious education in primary, secondary and tertiary institutions from a pluralistic perspective. The chapter will begin by discussing associations which promote theological education from an ecumenical perspective, followed by those which promote theological education of specific ecclesiological constituencies, then, it will discuss associations which promote the study of religions and will conclude with associations which promote lay ministry. In writing this chapter we have adopted a descriptive approach in order to bring out the details that can help us understand how such associations function.

Associations Which Promote Theological Education from an Ecumenical Perspective

It has been noted above that in Africa there are a variety of associations, which deal with theological education. Such associations vary in scope. While some serve specific denominations or ecclesiastical ideologies, others are concerned with theological education from an ecumenical perspective not only in Africa but also the world as a whole. In this section we shall provide a description of associations that promote theological education from an ecumenical perspective and which appear to have some impact on the mission of the church in the world generally and Africa in particular. We shall start with those which view the whole of Africa as their theatre of operation and shall end with those which are regional in character.

World Conference of Associations of Theological Institutions (WOCATI)

One of the associations which need special mention here is the World Conference of Associations of Theological Institutions commonly known as WOCATI. A number of Associations that shall be discussed below are member associations of this very important world-wide organisation encompassing Europe, America, Africa, and Asia. This association was formed at a consultation which was held in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, from 16-19th June, 1989. This consultation was sponsored by the Programme of Theological Education of the World Council of Churches. Representatives from over 20 associations of theological
schools, institutions and centres from all regions of the world attended this consultation. The formation of WOCATI was a result of the impact of the ecumenical movement world wide and of the increasing awareness that we are living in a world of inter-dependence. As a result of this awareness, there was a felt need for a global network and organization, which would support and enhance the work of theological institutions and their associations. The roots for the establishment of WOCATI go back to the meeting of the director of associations in Singapore in 1987. From that time onwards extensive discussions took place between many of the theological associations and the PTE which culminated in the Yogyakarta consultation during which the establishment of WOCATI was formally endorsed. Aims of WOCATI include the need to identify and advocate excellence in theological education and ministerial practice, encourage full compliance with standards and purposes established by members, and provide leadership and understanding of purposes, role and needs of theological education.

The primary objective of WOCATI is to serve the needs and aspirations of its member associations and their institutions, schools and centres. WOCATI seeks to support theological education throughout the world. The existence of this global organization is seen to be an invaluable resource for all theological institutions and their associations by providing an established network and resource to facilitate the work of the member associations. The central aim of WOCATI consists of its commitment to the twin goals of contextualization and globalization. Contextualization roots theology within the lives of communities of the people in their societies. As it takes serious account of the particular cultural, economic and political realities experienced by the people within their specific histories and societies, contextualization brings forth a wide diversity of theological expressions. WOCATI also acknowledges the impact of globalization as a powerful and liberating force within theological education and the fact that several theological institutions are committed to this perspective. Globalization readily accepts the reality of living in one world of inter-dependence.

Membership of WOCATI is open to associations which are constituted at least in part by theological institutions which award degrees and diplomas at the university first degree level and above. Other purposes of WOCATI include establishing processes which assist member institutions in faculty development, library improvement, women’s concerns, resource sharing and providing guidance on accreditation matters. It is anticipated that a consultation and general meeting, with two representatives from member associations attending, will be held at least every four years. These meetings will provide a focus and form to assist the work of WOCATI.1

_Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians (EATWOT)_

Apart from WOCATI which we have discussed above, there is also another association which deals with issues of theological education in Africa with an international perspective. It is the Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians (EATWOT). It is an association of men and women committed to the struggle for the liberation of Third World peoples by promoting new models of theology for a religious pluralism, social justice and peace. This theological ecumenical organization has great interest in contextual theology in Third World countries. EATWOT take the third world context seriously. They do theology from the vantage point of the poor seeking liberation, gender co-responsibility, racial and ethnic equality and interface dialogue. In this way, Third World Theologies offer alternative voice to the marginalised and exploited people of the planet.2

The origin of this ecumenical association is traced back to the theological activities of Fr Oscar Bimweyi of Zaire who conceived the idea of forming an association, which would encompass a wide range of theologians who would be interested in developing theologies that were relevant in their context

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especially in third world countries. This embryonic idea culminated in the formation of EATWOT which was inaugurated in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania in 1976 during the first meeting of an Educational Dialogue of Christian Theologians. Twenty two representatives from Africa, Asia, Latin America, and Minorities in America and Europe met in Dar es Salaam for an “Ecumenical Dialogue of Third World Theologians” to share with one another theological efforts in their denominations-Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox. This association led to the formation of EATWOT African region in Accra, Ghana in 1977 which focuses primarily on African theological issues.

There are a number of factors that led to the formation of EATWOT. In the first instance, Third World Theologians became aware that the underdeveloped countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America were not developed not because they had limited resources but were forced into such a condition as a result of long years of exploitation and economic, political and cultural domination. At the same time, Third World Theologians also became aware that the “universal” theology they had inherited from the West was not relevant to their context of poverty and marginalization. In this context, there was a felt need to reformulate traditional theology in order to make it relevant to peoples struggling for a more just and egalitarian world.

EATWOT endeavours to achieve a number of things. In the first place, it endeavours to interpret the gospel using the hermeneutical circle so to link God’s word to the life of the marginalised people. Coupled with this, it strives to encourage the interchange of theological views through the publication of books and journals with themes of interest in the Third World. In addition to this, it fosters the mutual interaction between theological formulation, science, art, spirituality and ecology. Moreover, it motivates the interaction of theologies within the diverse cultures and religions of peoples of the Third World. Besides, it gives support to social movements for spiritual, social and inter-religious liberation. Furthermore, it promotes publications of liberation theologies in different languages for the purpose of contributing for an interaction of theological views in the Third World. To crown it all, it organises regional, continental and intercontinental meetings of Third World Theologians.3

EATWOT’s administrative structure consists of a General Assembly, Executive committee consisting of President, Vice-President and Treasurer, Executive Secretary, and four regional coordinators for Asia, Africa, Latin America and Minorities in the USA. There are also three working commissions on (a) Church History, (b) Theological Study and (c) Women. Its activities include organizing international and regional conferences, consultations, international and local reflection groups, meetings and regional projects. Since its formation EATWOT Africa works in association with other ecumenical organizations such as CATI.4

**Conference of African Theological Institutions (CATI)**

Concern to promote and enhance theological education in Africa as a whole has also been manifested in the formation of the Conference of African Theological Institutions (CATI). This is a continental, ecumenical organization which coordinates and liaises with sub-regional associations of theological institutions in Africa. It was founded in March, 1980 in Mbabane, Swaziland following the consultations of the Theological Education Fund of the World Council of Churches and following the setting up of the Programme on Theological Education. Its special focus is on the continent-wide operations through sub-regional theological associations. In its operations CATI, through its member associations, tries to build bridges between Africa and other regions in the world. This association aims at providing leadership needed to foster the mission of the church and to be of service to the theological associations, institutions and churches in Africa. It encourages study and practice of relevant spirituality as an integral part of theological education in Africa. It stimulates change and growth; encourages theological institutions in Africa to become a part of this fellowship through the member associations; coordinates on-going research programmes of theological institutions, associations and churches; encourages and facilitates exchange of

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4 Amanze, *A history*. 
staff and students; fosters ecumenical perspectives and commitments through theological education; establishes meaningful relationships between theological institutions and related agencies within and outside Africa.

CATI serves primarily as a channel of communication, mutual challenges and coordination between regional associations, related bodies, their member institutions and church bodies in Africa and beyond. Seeks to identify and pursue priority needs and issues for theological education in the African context through various projects, including: Bible commentary for Africa, Theological curriculum in Africa; Advanced theological studies; African church history; African Pastoral studies; Theological Education by Extension; Library Development. The administrative structure of CATI comprises a General Meeting every 3 years, composed of 2 voting delegates from each member association and one from each related body, an executive committee consisting of one voting delegate from each member association, and a secretariat headed by a secretary. Membership consists of associations of the theological institutions operating in Africa and Madagascar. Associate members consist of organizations and bodies engaged in promoting theological education in Africa. CATI has members in 28 African countries. The full members of CATI are:

1. West Africa Association of Theological Institutions (WAATI)
2. Association des Institutions d’enseignement theologique en Afrique Centrale/Occidental (ASTHEOL-CENTRAL/WEST)
3. Association of Southern African Theological Institutions (ASATI now defunct)
4. Association of Theological Institutions of Eastern Africa (ATIEA)
6. Association of Theological Teachers in Madagascar (ATTIM) and

*All Africa Theological Education by Extension Association (AATEEA)*

Another continent-wide organization, which caters for theological education in Africa, from an ecumenical perspective, is the All Africa Theological Education by Extension Association (AATEEA). The roots of this association are traced back to the World Council of Churches’ Conference of Theological Education and Ecumenical formation which was held at Kempton Park, Lutheran Centre in Gauteng Province, South Africa from 17-22 September 2002. The theme of the conference was “The Journey of Hope”. The conference was attended by delegates from Africa, Europe and North America. It was held on the realization that theological education was one of the key ways in which the leadership of the church can be developed and enhanced. The primary goal of the conference was to bring together stakeholders for purposes of reflecting together critically, evaluate theological education in Africa and to formulate together strategies for action.

It was at this conference that the delegates at the end of the meeting agreed to establish an All Africa TEE Association, extending the already existing East Africa TEE Association. In addition to this, they agreed to share as many texts and materials as possible through E-mail and Internet; to set up a TEE Africa website and set up a continent-wide training courses for TEE-Coordinators and for TEE-writers.

The Johannesburg Conference was followed by the All Africa TEE Conference which was held at the Ankrah Conference Centre, Mukono, Uganda from August 23-29, 2003. This conference was funded by Trinity Church, Wall Street, New York and the Church Mission Society. The conference, which was essentially an Anglican initiative, was attended by representatives from other denominations which

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included, among others, the Church of the Brethren, Methodist, Lutheran, Presbyterian and the Organisation of African Independent Churches. A total of 74 participants attended the conference from Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Sudan, Rwanda, Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Nigeria, Ghana, Zambia, Zimbabwe, South Africa and Mauritius. The theme of the conference was “Quality and Relevant Theological Education for Church Leaders in Africa”. One of the decisions that were made at the conference was to set up an interim committee. Its tasks were (a) the setting up of an All Africa TEE Association; (b) the drafting of an constitution towards this end; (c) preparation for a conference to launch the AATEEA in two years’ time and (d) the renewing of the TEE Africa database of programs and, ultimately, of courses. The interim committee, which was elected on the last day of the conference, comprised Rev. Canon Kateeba, Rev. Gunnar Berndesen, Rev. Kangwa Mabuluki, Dr. Gerard Florigny, Ms Lucy Kithome, Mr. Gatimu Kiranga, Rev. Adrina Chatfield and a representative from the Mekane Yesu Seminary of Ethiopia.8

According to Kangwa Mabuluki, the All Africa TEE Association (AATEEA) was formally launched in October 2006 at the All Africa TEE Conference in Livingstone, Zambia. As we have seen above, the Conference was a culmination of a long process to consolidate the work of TEE one of the rapid growing and increasingly relevant way of doing Theological Education in Africa.9

The objectives for creating this association are (1) to serve as a forum of collaboration and mutual support among TEE programs in Africa; (2) to arrange and conduct training programs and seminars aimed at improving the competence and effectiveness of the TEE staff / Tutors (3) to engage in joint effort in addressing key issues facing the TEE programs including, writing, production, editing and evaluation of course materials (4) to arrange and encourage introduction of TEE in countries where none-exists; (5) to explore and initiate creative ways of enhancing collaboration between TEE programs and Theological Colleges/ Seminaries and (6) to encourage the use of HIV/AIDS Sensitive Syllabi and Modules produced by EHAIA for TEE programs in Africa.

The AATEEA is involved in a number of activities consonant with its aims and objectives. In the first instance, it is concerned with the standardization of curricula and materials throughout Africa. It has been observed that though TEE Programs can differ from country to country in terms of target group, course format and specific course content, there are certain elements which are critical in making a TEE Program. In order to maintain the integrity of TEE, AATEA seeks to specify common general elements which should characterize a TEE curriculum or course.

Secondly, there is the issue of the accreditation of TEE Courses. Mabuluki has observed that accreditation of TEE programs is very important, though, of course, it requires time to research the most effective way of doing it. AATEEA facilitates forums to explore and research ways how TEE could get accreditation, both at continental or sub-regional level as well as encouraging and supporting individual TEEs work towards getting the accreditation in their respective countries.

Thirdly, the AATEEA is also concerned with the training of writers in TEE method of learning. TEE is a specialised method of learning and the course materials are written to meet TEE learning objectives. AATEEA facilitates and organizes training workshops at Regional and/or sub-regional level to help train writers for TEE Course materials, who can also utilize creative local methods of writing.

Fourthly, the AATEEA is actively involved in promoting contextual Bible reading and strengthening gender awareness. Gender is viewed as an important cross cutting topic in Theological Education and AATEEA promotes the integration of gender issues in TEE programs, to create awareness and affirmation. Currently, AATEEA is promoting the Contextual Bible Reading program aimed at helping to fight Gender

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9 Personal communication with Rev. Dr. Kangwa Mabuluki, General Secretary of AATEEA, 24/9/9.
Violence – “Tamar Campaign”, and HIV & AIDS Related Stigma and Discrimination, in collaboration with Ujamaa Centre in the School of Theology and Religion at University of Kwa Zulu Natal.

Fifthly, the Association is involved in Encouraging the use of the HIV & AIDS curriculum and modules. The Ecumenical HIV&AIDS Initiative in Africa (EHAIA) at the request of TEE Programs in Africa facilitated the production of HIV/ AIDS sensitive curriculum and modules. AATEEA encourages and facilitates the use of the material enabling TEE programs to play an important role in working towards an HIV/AIDS Competent Church. Finally, the AATEE is concerned with the promotion of diversified theology. It encourages and, where possible, facilitates research into contextual Theologies to enable TEE students respond effectively to Theological challenges of our time.

The coordination of AATEEA is entrusted to one of the members of the TEE where the General Secretary is also based. At the moment the General Secretary is Rev. Dr. Kangwa Mabuluki. His coordinating office is based at the Theological Education by Extension in Zambia (TEEZ). Mabuluki has intimated that while the operations of AATEEA depend a lot on the structure and facilities of the host TEE Program, there is a need for additional resources to cover growing administrative and operational costs. These include, in the first place, maintaining a fast and efficient internet connection. It should be noted that most of the communication among Executive Committee Members and member TEE programs are carried out on internet. Coupled with this, the General Secretary is tasked with the duty of developing and hosting an Information Management (Dynamic) Web Page. This is the type of web page that members of TEE have the facility to add information from their country (or location) so that the updating is not totally centralized. In addition to this, the General Secretary carries out other duties such as managing other communication costs, namely telephone and postage; Production of promotional and Resource materials and Staff costs, which include remuneration as well as travel costs for full time and part time staff. 10

The Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians

It is important to note that since its inception Christian theology in Africa has been done along patriarchal lines conditioned both by the patriarchal nature of most African cultures and the patriarchal nature of Christianity itself. For a long time, African women theologians have been feeling that patriarchal theology was a yoke of oppression on their neck and that there was a need to liberate themselves from this burden. In order to redress the situation, African women theologians initiated a theological movement whose main goal has been to liberate women from the throes of male domination, subjugation and oppression and assert their dignity as human beings created in the image and likeness of God. This led to the formation of the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians. Its history is associated with the activities of Mercy Amba Oduyoye. This remarkable theologian was born in 1934 and belongs to the Akan cluster of people in Ghana. It is one of the most significant matrilineal peoples in West Africa. Oduyoye is a trained Methodist theologian. She is currently the Director of the Institute of African Women in Religion and Culture at Trinity Theological Seminary in Ghana. She earned her first bachelor’s degree in 1963 from the University of Ghana, her second bachelor’s degree from Cambridge University in 1965 and her Master’s degree from Cambridge in 1969. She served as youth education secretary from 1967 to 1969 for the World Council of Churches and as Deputy General Secretary of the WCC from 1987 to 1994. She has had a wide range of teaching experience. She has taught at Harvard University, Union Theological Seminary (USA) and the University of Ibadan. In addition to this, she has also served as president of the World Student Christian Federation. Her research and publications have focused on Christian theology from a feminist and African perspective. She has placed a great deal of emphasis analysing how African religion and culture influence the experiences of African women. She has addressed in particular the effects of economic oppression on

10 Personal communication with Dr. Kangwa Mabuluki, General Secretary of AATEEA, 24/9/9.
African women.\textsuperscript{11} It is intimated that before 1980 Mercy Oduyoye was the only African woman publishing theological works on a regular basis.\textsuperscript{12} Oduyoye’s brilliant career has been well celebrated in the \textit{African Women, Religion and Health} which is worthy reading.\textsuperscript{13}

According to Oduyoye, her involvement in the affairs of African women in theology dates back to the mid 1970s and to the first conference of African women theologians, which was organized in Ibadan in 1980 by Daisy Obi, the Director of the Institute of Church and Society of the Christian Council of Nigeria, Isabel Johnson the Secretary for women’s department of the All Africa Conference of Churches and herself then in the faculty of Religious Studies Department of the University of Ibadan. This led to the convocation of African women theologians which was held in Accra, Ghana in 1980. This marked the beginning of the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians.\textsuperscript{14}

The Circle for Concerned African Women Theologians was inaugurated in 1989. The women of the circle are practitioners of African Traditional Religions, Judaism, Christianity, Islam and other world religions. Membership is not dependent on religious affiliation but only that one should consciously live by a belief in God.\textsuperscript{15} Musa Dube, one of the Circle theologians, has intimated that those in the Circle of concerned theologians consist of those who are seated together, who are connected and who seek to keep their interconnectedness of life. They are indigenous African women and also African women of Asiatic and European origins. These concerned women are engaged in theological dialogue of the cultures, religions, sacred writings and oral stories that give identity to the African women. They engage together in a critical reflection on matters of justice across boundaries of gender, faith and belief.\textsuperscript{16} With the passing of time the membership of the circle has encompassed women theologians from more than twenty countries including Egypt, Ethiopia, Madagascar, Angola, Mozambique, Namibia, Botswana and Malawi. In 2005 the Circle registered over 500 members on the continent and abroad.

The criterion for membership is commitment to research, write and publish on issues affecting African women and women of African descent. The mission of the Circle is to undertake research, writing and publishing on African issues from a woman’s perspective. The vision of the Circle is to empower African women and to enable them to apply their critical thinking and analysis in the current search for human knowledge. Theology, religion and culture are the three chosen foci which they use as the framework for Circle research and publications.\textsuperscript{17}

According to Isabel Apawo Phiri, the Circle was launched with the aim of creating theological space for African women theologians to find and mentor each other on how to produce theological literature that is based on their experiences. Another aim is to use communal power to get involved in activism as they work towards the transformation of their communities and institutions for gender justice. The Circle’s understanding of ecumenism is guided by the philosophy that ecumenical relations do not only involve the unity and renewal of the church but also that it embraces the unity and renewal of the world as a whole. Phiri has postulated that membership in the Circle is through individuals who are willing to conduct research based on African expressions of their religion and culture using the methodology of gendered analysis to be followed by writing and publishing. The success of the Circle is measured in terms of yearly

\textsuperscript{13} See Isabel A. Phiri & Sarojini Nadar (eds.), \textit{African women, religion and health: Essays in honour of Mercy Amba Ewudziwa Oduyoye}, New York: Orbis Books, 2006 where her career has been discussed in detail.
\textsuperscript{15} The Circle, “gender and theology in Africa today” www.thecirclecawt.org/focus.
publication of journal articles, chapters in books and individual and co-edited books. Through its publications the Circle makes its voice heard in theological circles not only in Africa but also in the world as a whole.18

The Circle is the space for women to do communal theology. They are more visible today than ever before. They are recognised and have acquired international ecumenical recognition. They have become the voice of the voiceless women of Africa. Among the many responsibilities they have on their shoulders, is the need to help to create and sustain viable communities of women and men in the church and society at large in Africa. Foremost in their minds is the need to promote cooperation across religions and to provide the circle of women an opportunity to explore questions of the well being of women writing in the context of African cultures. The Circle works tirelessly to promote, uphold, and enhance justice and human dignity for all women and all people and more importantly to provide leadership in creating such justice. It is intimated that through participation in face to face research, educating one another on forms of worship and the dogmas of their different faiths; they have managed to be agents of justice to one another. All this is done in the context of ecumenical spirit. Particular attention is give to the girl child and women of Africa living in the context of so much suffering and pain which sometimes leads to death.19

One of the issues that the Circle focuses on is the issue of gender in Africa. According to Oduyoye, gender parameter in African culture and African religions play a crucial role in women’s lives. They affect how womanhood is viewed in Africa. In this regard, the women in the Circle examine critically every aspect of Africa culture and religious beliefs and practices. These include, among others, the names given to baby boys and girls, rites related to the birth of boys and girls, everyday language, proverbs, myths, legends, daily relationships in marriage, inheritance laws, women’s leadership roles in church and wider society, the concept of God, doctrines concerning the nature of human beings, the liturgy of the church, and a host of other things. In their quest to address gender imbalances the women in the Circle have noted that all areas of human life in Africa are rooted in a gender ideology whereby it is presupposed that the masculine encompasses the female or takes priority in relation to the female and is entitled to expect subordination and submissiveness and self-abasement of the female.20

As a result of this awareness, women in the Circle have consciously decided to adopt new methods of doing theology. They have realised that there is a need to re-examine the way people read and interpret the Bible. Consequently, gender in biblical studies has taken the form of re-reading the Bible. They have also applied hermeneutics of suspicion in the interpretation of the Bible. They have also paid attention to cultural hermeneutics. As regards the maleness of God, they have found that there is a need to exhibit the feminine face of God and to distance God from the violence against women that has become a common feature in man-woman relations in Africa. They have insisted that God should be placed beyond gender. They have also argued that the male face of God is purely a human, social construct and that it should not be applied to God.21 According to Musa Dube, since its formation in 1989 the Circle has remained vibrant. Many African countries are represented in the circle. The philosophy of the Circle is to make the voices of women heard and give a women’s interpretation of the religious phenomena. The more experienced women theologians provide mentorship to other women who are interested in the activities of the Circle. As a result, the impact has been huge. The membership stands now at 600 Concerned African Women

Theologians. The Circle is considered the most active in Africa. It has published more than 100 books. Its greatest challenge, however, has been the circulation of these books to theological institutions in Africa and making sure that the books are being used to contribute to the shaping of the religious leadership on the continent.

The activities of the Circle have a significant impact in theological education. The vision is towards a more academic voice of women in academic circles in order to show how religious traditions affect the lives of women. This is done through research and publication. Despite this success, the Circle faces a number of challenges. For example, some women do not see the benefits and so they do not see the need to join the Circle. By and large, there is lack of enthusiasm. People do not know much about the Circle. There are also challenges in terms of keeping the leadership going. Apart from this, it is not easy to find sponsorship to enable women to attend conferences both nationally and regionally because of the credit crunch. There has been a strong drive towards strengthening the provision of services to women in general – women of faith at faith level. This would take the form of a centre which would enable members of the Circle to meet other women in the community and thus have some direct impact on them.

**West Africa Association of Theological Institutions (WAATI)**

As we have noted above, there are a number of associations which deal with theological education in Africa. Some cover the whole of Africa while others are confined to particular regions. In West Africa, the importance of cooperation in theological training resulted in the formation of the West Africa Association of Theological Institutions (WAATI). This association was founded in 1973 in Ibadan, Nigeria. Its activities cover the Anglophone West African countries namely, Gambia, Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and the western part of Cameroon. Its aims are (a) to promote Christian fellowship, understanding and cooperation among the various institutions engaged in theological education in West Africa, (b) foster the study of theology and related subjects and (c) improve the standard and methods of theological education in West Africa. In its operations WAATI holds biannual assemblies but in the intervening years it holds sub-regional zonal meetings. The sub-regions are Nigeria, Ghana, Liberia and Sierra Leone. Cameroon joins Nigeria. The biannual assemblies are devoted to both staff institutes and business meetings. WAATI provides a forum for discussion and exchange of information and ideas of common interest to members; promotes cooperation with other theological associations in Africa and elsewhere and forms a link with donor agencies. Apart from this, WAATI promotes research into theological education and religious studies and disseminates the results, acts in an advisory capacity to member institutions and churches which they serve. WAATI projects include: church history projects from an African perspective, publications on pastoral counselling from an African perspective and Muslim Christian relations. For its operations WAATI depends heavily on grants from the Program of Theological Education from the World Council of Churches. WAATI’s membership includes departments of Religious Studies in government owned universities in the six countries that have been enumerated above. The administrative structure of WAATI comprises (1) a General Meeting which meets every two years, (2) the Officers consisting of a Chairman, Secretary, one National Secretary for each country, Assistant National Secretaries where needed and Treasurer and (3) an Executive committee consisting of Chairman, Secretary, National Secretaries, Treasurer, and such other members as the General Meeting may from time to time appoint, provided that the total membership is not more than 15 persons.

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22 Interview with Musa Dube, Gaborone, University of Botswana, 8/9/2009.
23 Isabel Apawo Phiri, “The Circle of concerned African women theologians: its contribution to ecumenical formation”, http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m2065/is_1_57/ai_n15954348/).
24 Inter. with Musa Dube, 8/9/2009.
In West and Central Africa the need for theological cooperation also led to the formation of the Association des institutions d’Enseignement Theologiques en Afrique Centrale and Occidental (ASTHEOL). This association was formed in 1966 with the support of the Theological Education Fund (now PTE). The association covers Benin, Cameroon, the Central Africa Republic, Congo, Gabon, Ivory Coast, and Togo. Of about 30 eligible theological institutions, 15 are ASTHEOL members, the Kimbaguist Theological Faculty being one of them. In 1974 the association was divided into two regional groups namely, ASTHEOL West with its base in Cameroon and ASTHEOL East with its base in Zaire. Its major project has been the Franco-phone African Doctoral studies programme based in the Protestant Faculty of Theology in Zaire, the other such programme being in the Protestant Faculty of Yaoundé. ASTHEOL normally holds biannual assemblies for staff and students.26

In Eastern Africa the call for cooperation in theological education of the people working in theological colleges and universities in the region necessitated the formation of the Association of Theological Institutions in Eastern Africa (ATIEA). This association was founded in 1960. It covers Ethiopia, Kenya, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia. The aim of the association is to promote Christian fellowship, foster the study of theology, improve the standards and methods of education for the Christian ministry in Eastern Africa and provide a forum for discussion and exchange of information. Early in its existence it started a course leading to a Diploma in Theology which was later surrendered to Makerere University. In 1978 ATIEA held a workshop to finalize a syllabus for a three year B.D. course which is being conducted in a number of member institutions such as the Makane Yesus Seminary in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia and St. Paul’s United College, Limuru, Kenya. ATIEA also sponsors research projects, especially in the area of Christian ministry. A publications committee representing the various denominations that are members of the association is in charge of publishing the reports of research activities.

The association’s policy is to guard against exclusive elitist tendencies overemphasising academic excellence to focus also on effective mutual communication channels between churches and theological institutions and associations. Furthermore, it is open to developing imperative models of ministerial formation. Like all other sub-region theological associations in Africa, ATIEA’s primary objective is to promote theological training within the context of Africa. It organizes annual staff institutes consisting of staff and students. At times the association runs specifically student institutes. It produces a newsletter every four years. One of its projects has been working on Swahili textbooks intended to produce commentaries on books of the Bible and church history.27

In central and Southern Africa cooperation in theological education led to the formation of the Association of Theological Institutions in Southern and Central Africa commonly known as ATISCA. This association was formed in Harare, Zimbabwe in 1986 and it has over 23 member institutions from Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland, Mozambique, Zambia, Malawi and Zimbabwe. In order to foster and enhance its ecumenical activities, ATISCA has a number of projects. One of these is the church history project designed to produce historical texts that are relevant in independent Africa. One aspect of this project entails the compilation of primary source texts for the study of regional church history which can be used in theological colleges and departments of theology and religious studies at the universities in the region. ATISCA has also embarked

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26 Amanze, A history, 276-277.
27 Amanze, A history, 273-274.
on a Biblical studies project with national coordinators in Malawi, Zimbabwe, Botswana, Mozambique, Lesotho and Swaziland. Apart from this ATISCA is engaged in the production of contextual theology by taking into account seriously the African culture. The need to develop a relevant theology for Africa generally and Southern and Central Africa in particular dominated the discussions of the ATISCA Conference that was held in Swaziland in 1996, the proceedings of which have been published in book form entitled *Theology cooked in an African pot*.

ATISCA as an ecumenical organization fulfils a number of objectives as laid down in the constitution. It promotes fellowship, understanding and cooperation between various institutions engaged in training for Christian ministry and university departments engaged in theological and religious studies. ATISCA stimulates research and publications, provides a forum for discussion and study of current theological issues and matters of common interest and organizing annual institutes for teaching staff. Besides, it fosters and enhances the study of theology, religion and related subjects and encourages the development of theologies that are relevant to the African context and situation. In addition to this, ATISCA encourages and supports graduate and post-graduate studies and joint research projects in theology and religious studies. ATISCA is mandated to coordinate theological education and religious studies programmes in the region and identify areas of cooperation, means of coordination as well as to explore ways and means of upgrading theological and religious studies in the region. One of the tasks of ATISCA is to act in advisory capacity to the member institutions and the churches that they serve and where necessary assist in the planning of those concerned with theological and religious education. In order to carry out effectively its programs, ATISCA has a secretariat consisting of a Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary/Treasurer, and Vice-Secretary. It also has an executive consisting of the officers that have been enumerated above and three additional executive members.28

**Association of Theological Teachers in Madagascar (ATTIM)**

The need for cooperation and coordination of theological and religious studies was also felt in Madagascar. This resulted in the formation of the Association of Theological Teachers in Madagascar which was formed in 1963. In recent years the association has undertaken research and conducted a consultation on various aspects of theology and religious studies in Malagasy. For example, in 1977 ATTIM organized a consultation on “Sacraments in Malagasy, religion and the meaning of biblical sacraments through the Malagasy understanding of them”. Speakers both from the Christian and the Malagasy community contributed to this meeting. It gave people the opportunity for mutual understanding and dialogue in the above subject. One of the projects of this ecumenical organization is Theological Education by Extension work in Madagascar. In the 1990s the association ran into difficulties when out of its commitment to the ecumenical movement it invited African Independent Churches to join the association. This action led to the withdrawal of some mission churches. Despite this problem, however, the association has continued to carry out its programmes of theological education in the country.29

**Associations Concerned with theological Education of Particular Ecclesiastical Ideologies**

It has been noted above that the concern to promote theological education in Africa has taken different forms. In the first part of this chapter we have covered associations concerned with education generally and not for one particular denomination theological from the point of view of ecumenical relations. Many such associations were in most cases initiated through the activities of the World Council of Churches particularly the Program of Theological Education wing of the WCC. However, there are a variety of

associations engaged in theological education which have been initiated entirely by a particular church denomination or ideological position. In this section we shall examine four of such associations.

Association of Member Episcopal Conferences in Eastern Africa-Roman Catholic

Since their inception in Africa, Christian churches throughout the continent, have been concerned with theological education in order to advance the spread of the gospel. One of the churches that have been meticulous in theological education is the Roman Catholic Church. The church’s desire to educate people on spiritual and pastoral matters and prepare them for leadership in the church led to the formation of the Association of Member Episcopal Conferences in Eastern Africa whose history goes back to 1960 when the Catholic Bishops of Tanganyika (today Tanzania) proposed through the then Apostolic Delegation in Nairobi, that there be a collaboration among Catholic Bishops in the region. The Apostolic Delegation comprised Kenya, Nyasaland (today Malawi), Uganda, Sudan, Tanganyika and Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia). The Bishops’ conferences of these countries agreed to work together. Having secured this agreement, the then Apostolic Delegate Monsignor Guido Del Mestri consulted Rome which gave its approval. This took place when the winds of change were blowing both regionally and internationally within the church. At this time, more and more African clergy were assuming the mantle of leadership as bishops in Uganda, Kenya, Tanganyika and Malawi. At the same time, the Second Vatican Council was being summoned by Pope John XXIII whose primary purpose was to renew the church. These changes demanded a new vision that could safeguard the church in its missionary work in Africa. The prospects of independence in the region brought about not only hope for the future but also fear that the new independent African countries would lean towards communism and atheistic socialism which would, in turn, jeopardize the work of the church both in its pastoral and educational activities. The church also saw that the emerging modern society would need leaders who were highly qualified and creative with moral integrity and guided by Christian and gospel values.

The first meeting towards the formation of AMECEA was held in Dar-es-Salaam from 17th to 26th July 1961 under the theme “The future of the church in Africa”. One of the things that were discussed at the meeting was the need for a Centre for Pastoral Renewal and On-going formation. It appears that though this was a regional meeting, its agenda was Pan-African. This historic meeting was attended by Bishops from Kenya, Nyasaland (Malawi), Tanganyika (Tanzania), Uganda and Northern Rhodesia (Zambia). These became the founding fathers of AMECEA. Sudan and Eritrea/Ethiopia joined later. The Bishops formed what came to be known as the Inter-Regional Episcopal Board in Eastern Africa (ITEBEA). Its first Chairman was the late Adam Cardinal Kozlowiecki and Rev. Killian Flynn was appointed its first Secretary General. In 1964 ITEBEA was changed to AMECEA. Its original intention was to be a regional forum for collaborative study of and reflection on pastoral issues of common regional interest. One of the outcomes of AMECEA was the launching of the AMECEA Pastoral Institute (API) in Ggaba Kampala, Uganda in 1967. In 1976 it was moved from Uganda to Eldoret, Kenya due to political insecurity.30

The AMECEA Pastoral Institute offers a unique opportunity for pastoral agents in AMECEA to renew themselves for the church of tomorrow. It is the only institution in the region which provides ongoing formation and renewal in a supporting setting enriched by dialogue among lay persons, religious men, women and clergy. Its mission is to provide high quality pastoral training and spiritual renewal opportunities in the AMECEA region. Its vision is to have creative, effective, prophetic, humane, up-to-date and open-minded pastoral leaders and agents who are committed to deeper evangelization through the training of others and the building of the church as the family of God, within the reality of globalization, technological advancement and the rapidly changing African context.

The API offers a nine-month residential on-going formation program focusing on pastoral, spiritual, theological and development studies. The courses offered in the program provide participants with theological and pastoral knowledge, skills and necessary attitudes for effective and holistic evangelization. The curriculum covers courses such as Pastoral Theology, Pastoral Communication, Pastoral Counselling, Religious Education, Spirituality, Liturgy, Scripture, Pastoral Anthropology and Development Studies. These AIP also organizes workshops whose aim is to equip participants with practical skills on various pastoral ministries and fields of specialization. Training received at the institute has a great deal of impact in the life of the church in the AMECEA region and beyond.31

**The African Network of Institutions of Theological Education Preparing Anglicans for Ministry (ANITEPAM)**

In recent years the Anglican Church in Africa realized the need to strengthen the theological basis of the ministry of the church. This led to the formation of the African Network of Theological Education Preparing Anglicans for Ministry (ANITEPAM). Its creation goes back to the first Anglican Episcopal Inter-Seminary Symposium in Africa, which was held in Harare in 1991. During the meeting the delegates felt that there was a need to form a network which would nurture, support and sustain theological education for Anglicans on the continent. A team of representatives was named from throughout Africa to continue the vision that began there. These representatives became the ANITEPAM’s first Governing Council. The formation of the ANITEPAM was endorsed by the Council of Anglican Provinces in Africa (CAPA) at its meeting in Harare in October 1992. ANITEPAM was officially launched in 1993 with Rev. Dr. Leon P. Spencer as its first Corresponding Secretary, based in Nairobi, Kenya. He was succeeded by Rev. Fareth Sendegeya of St. Mark’s College, Dar-es-Salaam in 2003. He was later succeeded by Rev. Mike McCoy, a part-time staff member at the Theological Education by Extension College of Southern Africa who served until 2006 when he was succeeded by Rev. Martin Mgeni in Malawi.

Since its launch in 1993, ANITEPAM has played a crucial role in theological education in Africa. Its core business is to work in partnership with others to strengthen and encourage the ministry of theological education throughout the African continent. It is well placed to support research for the development of contextual theology appropriate for the African people. In order to achieve this, ANITEPAM helps theological educators by informing them of the available resources and opportunities that can help them acquire new ways of doing theology. This is done in a variety of ways. In the first instance, ANITEPAM publishes regularly the ANITEPAM Bulletin and the ANITEPAM Journal. The Bulletin appears in February, May and August each year. It carries news and comments on issues of importance and relevance to African theological educators and students who might not be aware of such issues through geographical isolation and lack of access to electronic and other media. The Journal, which appears in November each year, publishes articles and teaching resource material at a greater depth than is possible in the Bulletin. Since its launch in 1999, the Journal has focused on the future of the African church in the new millennium, Christian-Muslim relations, understanding Theological Education by Extension, women in the African church, contextual theology, as well as theological education and God’s mission in Africa. Such vital information is disseminated to every known Anglican institution of theological education in Africa, to every African Anglican Bishop as well as other Anglican leaders, theological educators and mission agencies all over the world.

Apart from this, ANITEPAM undertakes a publications program designed by African scholars which is suitable for African institutions especially at the grassroots level. In addition to this, it maintains a faculty exchange program, through which African theological educators in one region of the continent gain experience in other regions of Africa. Moreover, ANITEPAM hosts consultations in order to allow


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exchange of information among theological educators in Africa such as the French-speaking Anglican theological educators consultation which was held in Kenya in 1996, the African women theological educators’ consultation which was held in Zimbabwe in 1998, and the second global consultation of Anglican Contextual Theologians which was held in Durban, South Africa in August 2004. Furthermore, ANITEPAM builds relationships with other theological education networks such as the Primate’s working group and Theological Education for the Anglican Communion (TEAC). Generally speaking, ANITEPAM provides a variety of opportunities to theological educators to deepen their understanding of their faith and to broaden their relationships not only in Africa but also within the Anglican Communion and the universal church. In order to accomplish its theological agenda, ANITEPAM has received financial and moral support from a number of partners in the Anglican Communion which include, among others, the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (SPCK), United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (USPG), Church Missionary Society (CMS), the St. Augustine Trust in Canterbury, the Episcopal Church in the USA, the Anglican Church of Canada, Trinity Church, Wall Street in the USA, as well as Anglican Provinces in Africa and a wide range of interested individuals.32

**Accrediting Council for Theological Education in Africa (ACTEA)-Evangelicals**

The need to ensure quality theological education in Africa with international standards led to the formation of the Accrediting Council for Theological Education (ACTEA) among Evangelical Churches. It was founded in response to the dream of Dr. Byang Kato who was the first African general Secretary of the Association of Evangelicals in Africa (AEA). Dr. Kato saw an urgent need to create an Association for evangelical theological schools in Africa, which could assist them in areas of common need. The groundwork for the creation of ACTEA was laid at a major gathering of theological educators which was convened by Dr. Kato in Nairobi, Kenya in November 1975.

ACTEA was formerly launched in March 1976 by the AEA Executive Committee as a new project. A Council was appointed to initiate and administer the program. Dr. Paul Bowers, a senior lecturer with ECWA Theological Seminary, Igbaja, Nigeria, as appointed to serve as the first coordinator. Since its formation, ACTEA has held meetings in Bouake, Cote d’Ivory (1977); Miango, Nigeria (1978); Chongoni, Malawi (1981); Ndola, Zambia (1987); Limuru, Kenya (1990); Harare, Zimbabwe (1995); Pietermaritzburg, South Africa (2003) and Johannesburg, South (2006).33 ACTEA is well organized in order to ensure effective delivery of its services. It is essentially a ministry of the Theological and Christian Education Commission (TCEC) of the Association of Evangelicals in Africa. Its affairs are governed by the ACTEA Council which consists of 12 to 25 members from all parts of Africa. Members are appointed by the AEA/TCEC. ACTEA has a Chairperson and a Director.34

By and large, ACTEA is a network and support service for evangelical theological education in Africa. As such, its main purpose is to assist evangelical theological schools and programs throughout Africa in their quest for excellence and renewal. It aims to achieve this by (a) serving as a medium of contact and collaboration theological schools and programs and (b) providing various support services for them. From a humble beginning ACTEA has become widely recognized and accepted for its services to theological education in Africa. It has a membership of more than 150 theological colleges and programs in Africa.35

It should be noted that one of the services that ACTEA provide is academic accreditation of programs of theological education in order to stimulate the improvement and standardization of such programs and in order to provide a sound basis for international academic recognition. ACTEA has a published

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accreditation standards and procedures that apply a range of requirements in keeping with accepted international academic norms. This includes, among others, extensive self-study and detailed on-site assessment by external examiners. Ongoing compliance is strictly monitored. ACTEA accredits programs of theological education at post-graduate, post-secondary, and secondary levels. At post-secondary level ACTEA accredits in two categories namely the post-secondary Diploma category and the university first-degree B.Th. Level.36

Apart from accrediting programs of theological education, one of ACTEA’s objectives is to facilitate networking and cooperation among theological schools. One way they do this is by providing an electronic forum for the exchange of ideas pertaining to evangelical theological education. ACTEA provides this forum on a periodic basis for the distribution of brief articles that are proving helpful to schools in their move towards excellence and renewal in evangelical theological education.37

Organisation of African Instituted Churches-Department of Theology

It is interesting to note that the need to provide church ministers with sound theological education has been felt not only among mainline and evangelical churches but also among African Instituted Churches. These constitute a solid Christian block in recent African church history. In The History of the ecumenical movement in Africa the author has indicated that there has been a lot of conflict in the missionary field between mission churches and African Independent Churches. Aware of the fact that unity is power, African Independent Churches came to the conclusion that in order to survive they needed a strong united front which could speak on their behalf to African governments and other international and regional organizations. It was in order to meet this need, that the Organization of African Independent Churches was created. Technically speaking the OAICs was founded in Cairo, Egypt, in 1978. It brought together many heads of churches from Africa, Asia, and Europe, bringing with them diverse obstacles, ideas and suggestions as to how their churches could truly be independent, able to withstand opposition and at the same time not inward-looking, but able to reach out to other churches in Africa and beyond.

The OAICs held its 2nd conference in Nairobi, Kenya on 6th-13th November 1982 and studied and adopted its constitution. It also elected its executive committee with organizing secretary- Bishop Antonious Markos. The organization adopted the following resolutions:

1. The creation of regional units of OAICs to include East, West, North South and Central Africa and participants at the 2nd conference should be the nucleus of these regions with the intention of creating regional offices in the future.
2. That there should be a General Secretariat of the organization to be based in Nairobi for the offices of the organizing secretary and Executive Secretary.
3. Appeal to African Independent Churches in one country to join the OAICs and to form one national body.
4. The organization recognizes the existence of all world (international), African and national Christian organizations, need to cooperate with them in matters of common concern for the spread of the Christian message.
5. To strengthen theological education by extension and its spread to other areas of Africa.38

As indicated above, one of the resolutions adopted by the OAICs in 1982 was to provide and strengthen theological education among its members. This led to the creation of the Department of Theology (DT) within the OAICs as a way of enabling member churches and their associated local communities to make the vision of the organisation a practical reality. As a matter of fact, the DT was created in 1980 and was originally known as the Theological Education by Extension programme (OAIC/TEE). It changed its name

36 www.theoledafrica.org/ACTEA/Programmes.asp (accessed 14/9/09).
37 www.theoledafrica.org/ACTEA/Forum/ (accesses on 14/9/09).
38 Amanze, A history, 257-259.
and vision in 2005 and since then it has been undergoing a process of renewal, intended to broaden and update its objectives in the light of contemporary demands. The Department’s broad objectives are: (a) to work with AICs to enable them articulate their theologies, (b) to facilitate the renewal of these theologies so member churches can address contemporary issues and (c) to continue to support institutional theological training and theological extension programmes for AICs and their members.³⁹ This programme trained Trainers of Trainers (TOTs) from 10 different countries and facilitated AIC leaders to write over 100 TEE texts in a variety of languages of which about 50 have been produced for use in the churches.

It should be noted that traditional theological education in the OAICs has been by means of on-the-job apprenticeship. As a result, there has been very little written and published on the theology of African Independent Churches. In this regard, AICs theological educators are faced with the hard task of formulating a theology that is specifically done from an AICs perspective since there are few formal OAICs theological institutions. The OAIC/TEE has focused on extension programmes and there are hardly any written OAICs theologies. Consequently, many OAICs student, undergoing theological training, tend to be trained by non-OAIC institutions with the result that at the end of their studies a high proportion of them leave their churches and join non-OAICs churches.

In view of this challenge, the task of the Theology Department has been to ensure that the theology it is teaching is rooted in the OAICs founding visions revised to meet contemporary challenges. The DT also provides opportunities for OAICs theological educators to come together in order to develop their theological understanding of critical issues such as their relationship with Islam. The DT works with denominations and national chapters to train their TOTs along the principles of Distance Education methodology. In this regard, one of the visions of the DT has been to produce a manual that can articulate the principles and methods of distance education and the theology of the founding fathers of AICs. In doing this, the DT does not work in isolation. Students and tutors are allowed to mingle with students at non-AICs colleges in order to enable the students to engage positively but critically with the more or less alien theological traditions and church culture that form an unavoidable part of their education in non-AICs colleges.

It is important to note that the main goal of the OAIC Department of Theology is to build the capacity of AICs members to develop appropriate models of theological education for AICs. This is done through (a) workshops with church leaders in association with the Centre for Communication, Research and Reflection (CCRR) to recover and articulate the founding visions; (b) liaison with AICs students in non-AIC Theological institutions and their teaching staff; (c) training of TOTs for distance education; (d) preparation of a Distance Education manual for AIC Theological Educators; (e) workshops for theological educators on critical issues and (e) theological training with an African emerging church.

African Instituted Churches have identified the following as the sources of their theology namely (a) the Christian Scriptures; (b) the Founders’ visions; (c) the sense of the faithful expressed through the elders or other members of the church through their representative bodies; (d) the work of the Holy Spirit in the church as expressed in hymns, sermons, prayers, dreams, visions and prophecies; (d) values, epistemology, and cosmology of the African religious heritage; (e) the process of reflection in particular political and socio-economic contexts and (f) informal and formal dialogue with those of other Christian traditions and other faiths, that is to say, engagement with Christian tradition and teaching throughout history and across the world.⁴⁰

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³⁹ www.oaic.org/content/view/28/43/ (accessed 16/9/09).
⁴⁰ www.oaic.org/content/view/16/31/ (accessed 16/9/09).
Associations Which Promote the Study of Religion In Africa

Apart from associations which promote theological education *per se*, there are also in Africa associations which promote the scientific study of religion in order to provide a better understanding of the African people and humanity as a whole. There are numerous such associations in Africa but information is hard to come by. In this section we shall reflect a few of this and see the seriousness with which they attach to the need to take religion seriously and the need to have it taught at all levels of the school curriculum as a way of understanding people as both cultural and spiritual beings. We shall here look at some of these.

The African Association for the Study of Religion (AASR)

The African Association for the Study of Religion (AASR) is one of the most vibrant academic associations in Africa. Its roots are be traced back to the International Association for the History of Religions (IAHR) Conference, which was held in Marburg, Germany, in June 1988 by Prof. Michael Pye the General Secretary of the Association since 1985. Its theme was “The Institutional Environment of the Study of Religion” and its purpose was to explore the institutional and ideological constraints on the study of religion to be met with in various parts of the world. Among other things, the conference sought to understand why the academic study of religions was strong in rich industrialized nations with a secular constitution and either a liberal Protestant, or laicist, or a Buddhist/Shinto tradition, but weak where Catholic, Orthodox and Marxists traditions held sway. Some of the papers presented at the conference analyzed the African religious situation. The discussion that ensued made people aware of the need to promote the study of religion in the African region. In order to achieve this goal, the Executive of the IAHR commissioned Jan Platvoete to organize a working group towards the establishing of an IAHR affiliated structure for African scholars in religions outside the two IAHR national affiliates in Africa namely the Nigerian Association for the Study of Religions (NASR), which was founded in 1976 and admitted as IAHR affiliate in 1980 and the Association for the Study of Religions in Southern Africa (ASRSA) which was founded in 1979 and also admitted to IAHR in 1980.

The release of Nelson Mandela and the dismantling of the apartheid system in South Africa gave the IAHR the opportunity to organize a conference at the University of Zimbabwe, Harare from 14 to 18 September 1992. This conference was organized by Jim Cox then a Lecturer in the Department of Religious Studies, Classics and Philosophy and Jan Platvoet as international organizer on behalf of the IAHR. Its theme was “The study of the religions of Africa in academic institutions”. The conference was attended by a total of 36 participants from Africa, Europe and North America. In the concluding session, the participants voted unanimously to establish the AASR with a regional and global agenda. It would be regional in a sense that it would be open to any scholar of religions posted in academic institutions in Africa and global in the sense that it would gather in also scholars of the religions of Africa posted in universities outside Africa. From its humble beginnings in 1992 the membership of the AARS had grown to over 120 members by 1994. In 1995 the AASR was formerly admitted to the IAHR during the seventeenth IAHR International Congress which was held in Mexico City from 5th to 11th August. Having formed the Association, a steering committee was formed, which consisted of a coordinator, a treasurer, a publications’ officer and the representatives of the five AARS regions. Since its formation in 1992, the mission of the AASR has been to promote the academic study of religions in Africa and the study of the religions of Africa through the international collaboration of all scholars, whose research has a bearing on the subject. The AASR promotes the academic study of religions in Africa by providing a forum for multilateral communications between scholars of African religions. Coupled with this, it facilitates the exchange of resources and information. In addition to this, it encourages the development of linkages and research contacts between scholars and institutions in Africa as well as between scholars in Africa and

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those overseas. Moreover, it provides publishing opportunities particularly for scholars based in Africa. Apart from this, through its travel fund, it enables scholars to attend academic conferences both in Africa and overseas. Besides, it organizes conferences in Africa on topics relevant to scholars of African religions and panels on the religions of Africa in conferences held outside Africa. Furthermore, it publishes a newsletter and has an internet site as the major medium of communication between scholars of African religions around the globe. It has also a directory of scholars in the filed of African religions. 42

Membership of the Association is open to any scholar with suitable academic qualifications in the study of African religions or in the study of other religions who is appointed to an academic institution in Africa. Membership is open to scholars of religion working in the fields of African Traditional Religion(s), Islam, Christianity, New Religious Movements as well as other religions operating on the African continent such as Hinduism and Judaism. Scholars may reside in Africa or other parts of the world.

Generally speaking, the AASR operates primarily at a regional level (Africa). It includes and seeks to enhance the work of sub-regional and national Associations such as the Association for the Study of Religions in Southern Africa and the Nigerian Association for the Study of Religions. Members are expected to belong to the Associations in their respective countries. By and large, the AASR organizes a major regional conference in Africa at least once every five years normally in conjunction with a national or sub-regional IAHR affiliate in Africa. The administration of the Association consists of a President, Vice-President, General Secretary, Treasurer, Chairperson of publications and regional representatives for West Africa, East and Central Africa, Southern Africa, North and South America and Europe. 43 By and large, the AASR contribute meaningfully towards theological education though its focus is on the study of religions. According to Lovemore Togarasei, the Association is a forum of theological educators and teachers of religion who interact at a professional level. They exchange views about the teaching of theology and religion in the education system. They publish books on theology and religion for seminaries and other theological institutions. It brings together all theological educators and students to participate in a theological dialogue about their subject. The emphasis is on Africanness in the world stage. For example, they are concerned with the application of African religions in understanding theological education in Africa. The Association has an impact at the professional level though their activities have not yet been translated at the grassroots level. The guiding principle or philosophy of AASR hinges on the role that religion plays in Africa. Religion has sunk its roots deep into the African society. In this way religion plays a crucial role in the life of the African people. The Association is a forum for sharing ideas. 44

There are a number of challenges facing the Association. Many local chapters are not active. The people who are driving the Association are located in the western world. The people who are sustaining it are also in the western world. This compromises the Africanness of the Association. The funding is not enough. There is a struggle to raise funds for the Association. Attendance is also not good at conferences because of lack of funds. Many African scholars from Africa are, quite often, absent. Consequently, the majority of the participants at the conferences come from the western hemisphere. Despite these problems, there are lots of opportunities for growth. The Association participates in the American Academy of Religion, works with them and runs meetings with them. The presence of a number of associations in Africa show that interest in religion in Africa is growing. 45

Association for the Study of Religion in Southern Africa (ASRSA)

Another association which promotes the study of religion in Africa is the Association for the Study of Religion in Southern Africa. This is an international scholarly association which seeks to advance the study

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44 Inter. with Lovemore Togarasei, 10/9/9.
45 Inter. with Togarasei, 10/9/9.
of religion. It encourages scholars to embark on research that ranges widely in theme and variation in the study of religion. It is a focal point for comparative, historical and theoretical contribution to the field. The aim of the Association is to promote the scholarly study of religion in Southern Africa and the wider world. Coupled with this, it promotes contacts among scholars in its field of study. In addition to this, it fosters respect for the diversity of religions and worldviews in Southern Africa and internationally. Besides this, one of the aims of the Association is to contribute towards achieving and maintaining a just and peaceful society and promote the study of the effect of religion in the context of the various fields of human existence namely economics, politics, psychology, philosophy, sociology, anthropology and others.

According to David Chidester, ASRSA is dedicated to a study of religion that is open and diverse, interdisciplinary and intercultural and informed by theory. Chidester has intimated that the importance of the study of religion in human societies lies in the fact that theoretically informed description, interpretation, explanation or analysis of religion can illuminate and challenge peoples’ understanding of the different ways of being human. The Association is informed and guided by its philosophy that the academic study of religion in its different ramifications is an important resource for critical and creative understanding of the diversity ways of being human in the world today. In order to perpetuate its presence and relevance, ASRSA holds annual conferences and runs a journal titled *The Journal for the Study of Religion* in which various research findings on religion are published. Membership for the Association is drawn from a number of Universities in Namibia, Angola, Zambia, Botswana, South Africa, Lesotho and Swaziland.46

According to Obed N. Kealotswe, ASRSA, as an interdenominational association, contributes significantly to the study of religion in Africa. It places a great deal of emphasis on the teaching of Religious Education in Primary Schools as well as Secondary Schools. The aim is to come up with a common syllabus that can embrace all religions rather than focusing in one religion and which can be acceptable to all religions. The main concern is to come up with a curriculum that can be used in schools. The Association is highly ecumenical. It pulls together people from diverse religious backgrounds and membership is open to everyone regardless of one’s religious affiliation. The vision is to widen its horizon to encompass people outside of the Southern African ambit. ASRSA has had some impact in the Southern African society. This is seen by the fact that even teachers of religious education in Secondary Schools attend conferences organized by ASRSA which helps them to enhance their teaching skills and curriculum development. The Association also sends deputations to government to express their concerns on how religion is taught. The main idea is to reach people at the grassroots level especially in schools. It also wishes to change the government attitude towards the teaching of religious education in schools which they feel that it must be taught.

The guiding philosophy of ASRSA is that of religious unity regardless of the presence of differences in Southern Africa. It is believed that a united front in the religious sphere can achieve a lot in negotiating with the government on matters of religion. Unity can have some impact when dialoguing with the government on matters of governance. The core business of ASRSA is holding conferences. The conferences are not just for presenting academic papers but for sharing experiences rooted in the areas where people live and work. Papers presented are mainly cases studies though there are some which are theoretical.

ASRSA is completely independent financially. All the membership fees go for the publication of the journal. As a result, the challenge of existence, which bothers so many other associations, is non-existent in ASRSA. The challenge is found in the fact that there is still an element of racial tension in South Africa which prevents black scholars to participate fully in the association. This affects its membership. Not many

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black South Africans are members because of the colour divide despite the new dispensation. Many black members come from neighbouring countries.  

**Associations Concerned with Lay Leadership Training**

*Association of Christian Lay Centres in Africa (ACLCA)*

We have noted above associations which are concerned with theological education in many parts of Africa focusing on ministerial formation. We shall concentrate here on associations which are concerned with the training of lay people *per se* for the purpose of developing lay leaders in the church. This has been done by setting up lay training centres, which currently exist in a number of African countries. The need for cooperation in the training of lay leadership resulted in the formation of the Association of Christian Lay Centres in Africa (ACLCA). This association was founded in 1970 in Kitwe, Zambia. The aims of ACLCA include the following: promoting contact among member centres by common planning to deepen the church’s responsibility in the world, sharing experiences, exchanging of staff and students, strengthening each other’s programme through closer fellowship, coordinating research and common tasks, arranging joint training to develop ecumenical leaders, stimulating production of material and information related to lay training, offering advisory service to develop and establish lay training activities in Africa, developing relations between lay training and ecumenical movement, encouraging dialogue between people of different faiths, and training for transformation with dynamic concern for social welfare and for direction of change and growth in society. Emphasis is on ecumenical learning, lay training and leadership training. Lay training centres work to confront issues of justice and peace, to act as God’s instrument in proclaiming Good News to the poor and taking a preferential option for the poor, the marginalized and the less privileged, and to open their doors to the community. Curricula and methodology of learning are constantly reviewed. Curriculum guides for lay centres cover: theological education, development education and community organization, research and communication skills. The Youth network promotes an ecumenical vision of one world among young people. The Women’s network promotes women’s involvement in lay centres. The association organizes study projects, encounter programmes, youth camps, exchange programmes, workshops, courses and seminars, series of leadership courses. Membership consists of 60 Christian lay centres and contact groups in 22 countries.  

*Mindolo Ecumenical Centre*

This discussion of ecumenical cooperation in lay leadership training would be incomplete without mentioning the Mindolo Ecumenical Centre which for a long time has stood as a shining example of what the African church has achieved in the field of ecumenical relations in Africa. Mindolo Ecumenical Centre is indeed a very important landmark in the history of the ecumenical movement in Africa. This ecumenical centre was established in September, 1958 becoming a successor to the United Missions to the Copperbelt (UMC) and the Copperbelt Christian Services Council (CCSC). Funds were obtained from the World Council of Churches. The first Director was Peter Matthews a youth specialist from the Presbyterian Church in Australia. Under his leadership Mindolo became an ecumenical institution. It served as a neutral ground where all kinds of conferences could be held and ideas exchanged. It also became a centre for various courses for nation-building. The centre was not attached to a particular church. It was formed out of the need to establish an ecumenical institution which could serve the Christian church and the community at large. At present it has become “a community of committed Christians engaged in worship,

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47 Inter. With Obed. N. Kealotswe, Gaborone, University of Botswana 10/9/9.  
reconciliation, reflection, study and action for the purpose of equipping youth, women and men (lay and ordained) to serve God in Africa and elsewhere, by promoting God’s mission of justice, peace and reconciling love in church, community and the world. It is envisaged that this will be achieved by:

1. Leading a transparent and participatory lifestyle in worship, governance, study and action.
2. Welcoming Christians of all persuasions and denominations into fellowship committed to the ecumenical formation of all members of its community and the search for the visible unity on earth of all believers in Christ.
3. Being Pan-African in outlook and in the composition of its staff and participants, while giving due attention to the needs of the host country of Zambia with its churches and communities, and to the importance of strengthening links between Africa and other regions of the south.
4. Being pro-active in helping the churches to move to new frontiers of mission including the socio-political and economic development of the communities and nations which they serve.
5. Relating the mainstream of contemporary African life to the Christian faith.
6. Challenging the churches to be churches of Africa and not merely churches in Africa.
7. Fostering processes of self-discovery and self-reliance in individuals, communities and nations in the search to overcome the dependency syndromes and
8. Promoting South/South solidarity by welcoming representatives from other regions of the South to full participation in the life and work of Mindolo Ecumenical Foundation.

Since its inception Mindolo Ecumenical Foundation has grown into a truly international, inter-denominational ecumenical training organization. It coordinates, arranges and facilitates various training programmes for the church and para-church institutions and non-governmental organizations. The centre offers a number of professional courses. These include, among others, diploma in leadership development for women, diploma in social work, diploma in ecumenical leadership, diploma in preschool teachers and trainers, certificate in studio pottery, certificate in English as a foreign language and others. Over the years, Mindolo Ecumenical Foundation has played an important role in the development of human resource.

Concluding Remarks

This chapter has examined the history and major goals of continental and regional associations of theological schools in Africa. It has been argued that because of the importance and significance that the churches attach to theological education, it has been deemed necessary to start associations that can promote and enhance theological education in order to further the mission of the church. The chapter began by describing associations which operate along ecumenical lines and those which cater specifically for the theological needs of their churches or Christian organizations. It has also been noted that there are associations which promote the training of lay people in order to develop leadership in the church that can ensure the spread, growth and continuity of the Kingdom of God in Africa in time and space.

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THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION IN AFRICAN INSTITUTED CHURCHES (AICs)

John Gichimu

Introduction
This article discusses theological training in African Independent Churches (AICs) under the Organization of African Instituted Churches (OAIC), the umbrella body for these churches. It defines AICs and explores the historical methods of theological training in AICs, and the current and future direction of this training.

African Independent Churches
The terms African Independent or African Instituted Churches (AICs) are used for a large number of heterogeneous faith communities across Sub-Saharan Africa. The OAIC understands an AIC as a church that acknowledges Jesus Christ as Lord, and which has either separated by secession from a mission church or an existing African independent church, or has been founded as an independent entity under African initiative and leadership. The first AICs were formed as popular Christian movements to preach the gospel and to protect African values and forms of society against the impact of colonialism and negative and overly restrictive aspects of the missionary-founded churches. They saw their churches as forerunners of a new, reformed, and more humane form of society that was both African and Christian, and would replace the colonialism that had deprived African people of their initiative, freedom, and sense of self-worth. Recent estimates put the total number of members of these churches at 55 – 60 million across the continent.

Although AICs date back to the 19th century, they began to be founded in considerable numbers from the 1920s onwards. For simplicity, they can be grouped into three broad categories. Some (‘nationalist’/‘Ethiopian’/‘African’) churches were conscious attempts to invoke divine power and to use church and school structures in support of African nationalism in the political arena. Others (Zionist/Apostolic/Spiritual/Aladura) churches were counter-movements to modernity and capitalist values. In these churches the gifts of the Holy Spirit were seen to act as a unifying and cleansing force to safeguard African integrity in the face of the destructive effects of colonial society. Both types of churches, and the third, the more recent ‘African Pentecostal Churches’ which have been founded since political independence, have sought to reassert local control over community morality and access to the divine, and to maintain the values of African communality – often called ubuntu, the moral economy, or economy of reciprocity. These two themes of local control and ubuntu continue as the dominant themes in the oral theologies of AICs to the present day.

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2 Taken from, ‘Facilitating AICs to Articulate their Theologies in the Global Context: A Concept Paper for the OAIC Department of Theology’, 2004/5, 1 & 2. Ubuntu is a philosophy that has been developed from a Zulu proverb ‘a person is a person through (other) persons’.
The Organization of African Instituted Churches

The Organization of African Instituted Churches (OAIC) is an association of AICs that was founded in Cairo in 1978. The International Headquarters of the OAIC is located in Nairobi, Kenya. It works in seven African Regions: East Africa, Southern Africa, Madagascar, the Democratic Republic of Congo, West Africa Francophone, West Africa Anglophone and Nigeria. These Regions are represented on the governing body, the General Assembly, and on the Executive Committee, which meets annually. At country level, OAIC works through Chapters.

The OAIC has programmes in theological education, livelihoods and food security, HIV and AIDS, women’s empowerment, and research. The OAIC is an associate member of All African Conference of Churches and is recognized as an Ecumenical Body in working relationship with the World Council of Churches. It is also a member of the World Conference of Religions and Peace, and the Conference of Christian World Communions.

Historical Leadership Training in African Independent Churches

A former OAIC General Secretary, Rev. Samuel Muhono, pointed out that “the western churches’ and missionary approaches [to Africa] have remained largely at the intellectual and ethical levels of man’s consciousness, without touching the deeper emotional levels through myth and ritual, rhythm and music. It is this failure which creates a need for more indigenous religious expressions, in order that worship and faith may be integrated with experience.”

Consistent with the AICs’ focus on experience rather than on theory, theological training in AICs is grounded strongly in practice. This has its roots in African tutelage which historically was done through listening and doing.

Let us consider, for example, training for the priesthood in the author’s church, the African Independent Pentecostal Church of Africa (AIPCA), which was founded in the 1920s during the Gikuyu nationalist movement against the British colonial authorities in Kenya. Acts of Christian worship and expressions of faith needed to be understood from an African cultural perspective, especially for the majority of people who at that time lacked much formal education in the western mode. Church leaders therefore needed to be trained how to use traditional stories, proverbs and rituals. There was no formal method of training. Ad hoc meetings-cum-seminars were arranged for any person who demonstrated mastery in communicating with the people and acceptance by the congregation. At this point charisma was preferred at the expense of formal knowledge. For example someone who was well versed in mastery of traditional stories and proverbs was considered qualified for leadership and preaching. Such a person could use the many indigenous stories and proverbs to illustrate Bible texts in order to bring the point home. In other words these leaders and preachers needed to show their ability to use popular grassroots discourse – Christian theology as such was picked up largely through constant participation in church rituals and worship.

Before one was admitted for ritual training, it was necessary to undergo initiation. This was largely because in Gikuyu tradition, rituals were performed by people of good repute who were admitted by the traditional council through the shedding of animal blood like that of a goat (mburi ya Kiama), as an oath binding one to the secrets of that ritual. A echo of this can be seen in the AIPCA today where a priesthood

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3 The terms African Independent Churches and African Instituted Churches are used interchangeably within this article. Other common terms are African Initiated Churches, and African Indigenous Churches.


5 This means “Goat for the council of elders”. NB. In this connection, there was no difference between the traditional council and the church council – both were viewed as similar in function.
aspirant is required to provide a goat to those training him in church rituals, and without which a candidate is not accepted for training and ordination.

A related method through which training was done in AICs and continues in many churches up to the present time is apprenticeship. In this the leader of the church automatically becomes the chief tutor or trainer of the church’s personnel. It is difficult however to explain where or how the leader himself was trained. However, it should be noted that some leaders had seceded from established churches with experience in leadership and ritual that was communicable to others. Also there was, and is, very substantial borrowing of leadership methods from those of the surrounding society. In addition quite a few AIC leaders have opted for correspondence courses, however not by church collective arrangement but by individual self-endeavour to develop their skills. The methods of training used previously by AICs though productive, were neither systematic nor methodical. Productive in the sense that it is through such training that the AICs have increased and continue to increase.

Since the 1970s a number of AICs have trained and continue to train a few candidates in theological institutions sponsored by the established churches. The result has often been, however, that these candidates are able to contribute little or nothing to the AICs to which they belong. First, they may complete their courses fully determined for full-time employment just like their colleagues from those historic churches. But this is not an appropriate expectation for ministry in AICs, where one has to work as a volunteer or do some full-time work for self-support and church work full-time. Second, the AIC leadership often views such candidates as threats (as likely to import alien teachings or possibly to challenge their own leadership) and withholds from giving them any responsibility, making them frustrated.

What makes such AIC candidates to expect what their own churches cannot offer? This is very simple. In my observation and as a victim of the same system, it is because the institution at which I was trained had no understanding of AICs to enable me to broaden my understanding of my own church, and to enable me to connect my newly acquired theological knowledge with the reality of AICs. Instead I was left to view AICs through the eyes of established churches. In such situations, the result is often the defection of the new graduates to the established churches.

AICs and OAIC Theological Education by Extension

A key aim of the founding meeting of the OAIC in Cairo was training and theological education for AICs. Hence the first OAIC programme to begin was Theological Education by Extension (TEE). TEE, however, came as the second option, after the funding proposal for a theological institution for AICs sent to WCC was rejected in favour of TEE. Thus the OAIC’s development of a TEE methodology for AICs was necessitated by the decision of the WCC in favour of this model of theological training – a model that fell short of AIC leaders’ aspirations for a residential training institution. This situation in itself reflected the high OAIC’s dependence at that time as an institution on overseas funding by ecumenical partners. By

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6 The word is used to mean the ‘historical’, ‘mainline’ or missionary-founded churches.
7 In Kenya, the National Council of Churches of Kenya for many years ran a programme (now discontinued) for subsidising tuition fees for AIC candidates at St. Paul’s Theological College, Limuru (now St Paul’s University), Carlile Theological College (Anglican, Church Army) and the Kenya Methodist University.
8 The word ‘part-time’ has no meaning for AIC leaders as regards their vocation. Working ‘full-time’ elsewhere enables the leader to work ‘full-time’ for the church.
9 Njeru Wambugu, “The Organization of African Instituted Churches: An Introduction and Brief History”, Nairobi, 1996. The rejection of the request for institutional training was on the grounds of expense and in the belief that even at that time there were more than enough residential theological institutions in Africa.
1980 the United Presbyterian Church (USA) had provided the OAIC with TEE programmers experienced by work in Chile, the Rev. Agustin and Mrs. Rosario Battle. 10

As already noted, theological education among AICs has been traditionally conducted through informal apprenticeship. Indeed, very little AIC theology has been recorded, or even clearly articulated. To suit this context, Rev. Agustin Battle developed OAIC/TEE methodology from Freirean principles of adult education and conscientization. The role of the TEE facilitator was to build the ability of church leaders and members to think theologically, to articulate their theology, to understand the ministry of the church, and to live out more fully their faith and calling as Christians and as church leaders.11

OAIC/TEE programmes were developed on three levels. Level one targeted Christians at the congregational level, level two clergy, and level three the top leadership of the church. (The OAIC facilitators soon learnt the unwillingness of most senior church leaders to sit in the same seminar as their pastors.) AIC members who had already received theological or biblical training in conventional theological institutions were invited to Nairobi for periods of three months to study the Kenyan model, learn its educational philosophy and methodology, write a TEE text in their mother tongue, and plan for the introduction of the programme back in their own denominations and home countries. They became TOTs (Trainer of Trainers). In this way and on a minimal budget OAIC/TEE was introduced into Uganda, Tanzania, Ghana, Nigeria, Cameroun, Madagascar, DRC, South Africa and Botswana.12

Since the mid 1990s there has been a conscious shift in OAIC/TEE towards the training of church ministers at a higher level and a search for certification. It was envisaged that the trained ministers would in turn facilitate TEE in their respective churches, something that initially proved difficult, but after making TEE methodology a core course in the ministerial training with an assignment requirement to start TEE classes, it is currently working well.

At the same time a formal curriculum was developed with the assistance of University of Nairobi lecturers in the Department of Religious Studies.13 Then another question arose – the key question whether OAIC/TEE and the newly-developed curriculum were helping AICs to articulate their theology or were still too strongly based on western theology.

Articulating AICs Theologies

Neither the original OAIC/TEE programme nor the later ministerial model brought with it an already-constructed curriculum for AIC theology. Rather, there was cognizance that if AICs are awakened from an unconscious memory of their being, then surely, the product would probably be some kind of theology for them. (‘Unconscious’ here refers to the AICs’ tendency of doing theology orally and in praxis, but lacking the ability of hypothesizing the same and putting it in print.)15 Although the Battles were not experts in AIC theology, their approach allowed people at the grassroots to state their own needs which determined what course needed to be taught next.15 For them therefore AIC theology was “an oral theology expressed in singing, preaching, dancing, healing, prophesying, exorcising, prayer and conversations.”16 AICs in the

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11 Taken from, ‘Facilitating AICs to Articulate their Theologies in the global Context: A Concept Paper for the OAIC Department of Theology’, 2004/5, 3.
12 Ibid, 3.
13 Under the chairmanship of Prof. Douglas Waruta. Ibid, 3.
16 Ibid, 85.
Batllés’ understanding rejoice openly and freely in the power of the Holy Spirit – the same Spirit all over the world.\textsuperscript{17} For the Batllés, “These churches have discovered support in the Bible from traditional African ways of understanding the world and relating to God. By returning to the traditional forms and practices, they provide their followers with a familiar African context for the biblical claim that God has sent his son Jesus Christ.”\textsuperscript{18}

Tinyiko Maluleke says that, “The basic proposal of many AIC ‘theologians’ is that the praxis of these churches must now be regarded not only as the best illustration of African Christianity, but also as ‘enacted’, ‘oral’, or narrative African theology – a type of theology which is no less valid than written African theologies, they would add.”\textsuperscript{19} He however, laments that authoritative AIC scholars in this century are overwhelmingly white missionaries with Africans themselves taking a back seat, although he sees it as a reparation for the missionary failure that resulted in the emergence of AICs.\textsuperscript{20} In Maluleke’s affirmation AIC theology is actually theology for Africa.

According to West, “The Bible has always been central to Black theology, wherever one begins its story. Whether the story of Black Theology begins in the African Independent Churches or in the Black Consciousness movement of the late 1960s, the Bible has been a primary resource.”\textsuperscript{21} Padwick alludes to vernacular theologies which are developed by churches in particular contexts as they seek to engage with contemporary challenges, and which are not attempts to relate to historic Christian theologies.\textsuperscript{22} According to Nthamburi, “Independent churches insist that local languages are used in worship to enable people to freely express themselves and encourage unimpeded participation.”\textsuperscript{23} Considering the above statements, what is the relevant model of theological education for AICs?

\bf{In Search of Relevant Theological Education for AICs}

The concept of ‘founding visions’ (known initially as ‘founder’s vision’) was first conceived as a way of explaining AIC faith and theologies at an OAIC workshop on development in Johannesburg, South Africa, in 1996.\textsuperscript{24} The OAIC has continued to develop this concept. A recent description states:

For AICs, these visions emerge when people of faith spend time reflecting on the Christian scriptures, under the guidance and sometimes the revelation of the Holy Spirit, seeking to respond to the challenges of their environment. Sometimes one individual, inspired by God, leads this process. Such individuals have often been called prophets / prophetesses or apostles. Sometimes a group of faithful gather together in fasting and prayer to reflect together on their calling, and the vision emerges communally.

The resulting visions of ‘the good life’, ‘the life of the Spirit’, are expressed in African languages and in the contexts of our own cultures and traditions. Such shared visions give to the newly emerging church its central themes, its core teachings, and its motivation for action. Founding visions are communicated through preaching.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{17} Ibid, 85.
\item \textsuperscript{18} Ibid, 85 – 86.
\item \textsuperscript{19} Tinyiko Sam Maluleke, “Half a Century of African Christian Theologies: Elements of the Emerging Agenda for the Twenty-first Century”, http://home.rhein-zeitung.de/~whamm/promission/PM%208%20Half%20a%20Century%20(accessed 29/05/03).
\item \textsuperscript{20} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{21} Gerald West, “The Work of Itumeleng Mosala”, www.hs.unp.ac.za/theology/mosala.htm (accessed 29/05/03).
\item \textsuperscript{24} “From Founding Vision to Contemporary Mission, A Handbook on Developing African Independent Church Theologies for Today”, Editor, Timothy John Padwick, in preparation, 2008/9, 4.
\end{itemize}
prayers, worship, rites of baptism, funerals, or exorcism, in the church’s use of symbols (crosses, robes, pictures, etc), and in many other ways. Since the founding vision is rarely written down in a coherent way, it is through these non-written means that it is spread through space from one community to another, and is passed down through time to subsequent generations.

What informs the founding vision of a particular AIC can therefore set the agenda of the model of theology for that particular AIC. OAIC has therefore been working on founding visions as a way of ensuring a relevant theological foundation for AICs. Currently, under the influence of a new OAIC strategy for 2009-2013, *Visions for a Better World*, the theology programme of OAIC is undergoing renewal. With particular attention to contemporary distance education methodology, expand and improve the curriculum to ensure that it gains proper accreditation.

OAIC will be working with Good News Theological College and Seminary in Accra, Ghana (an institution owned and run by AICs) and the University of South Africa (UNISA) training programme for African Independent Churches. Meanwhile, the OAIC will work to facilitate articulation (or writing) of AIC founding visions, & build a corpus of AIC theologies. To do this, it will

- facilitate AIC leaders, churches, and scholars in the articulation and writing of founding visions at national and regional levels
- facilitate development of theological training materials on founding visions
- promote publications on AIC founding visions
- use theological and academic fora to win acceptance of core concept of founding vision.
- develop an acceptable methodology of building on founding visions to articulate theologies (liaise with other centres of vernacular and oral theologies)
- collect and make accessible a corpus of AIC theologies

Once the above is completed, the OAIC will seek to facilitate conventional theological institutions with resources that will enable them to improve the institutions’ understanding of AICs and to train AICs students. The same material will strengthen the capacity of individual AICs’ training programmes and existing AIC regional theological institutions.

**Conclusion**

This article shows that OAIC continues on a search to develop a relevant theological foundation for AICs. As Friesen says, “Your search is never over until the creator calls you home. Life is a journey and each day is but a step towards its fulfilment.”

**Bibliography**


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This survey aims to offer a guide to developments in theological education in Southeast Asia since the end of World War II. The focus is on initial ministerial formation among Protestant churches. I shall refer to Roman Catholic priestly formation processes for illustrative purposes. This delimitation is deliberate. Protestant mission agencies and training institutions have been sprouting in uncoordinated and random ways across the region, making what is already a diffused situation even more complex. So there is an urgent need to gain an overview of the present situation.

This survey is necessarily illustrative rather than exhaustive. The 1952 Anderson-Smith Report on Theological Education in Southeast Asia remained to be the most thorough field study of theological education in the region. Yorke Allen’s 1960 Seminary Survey built on that Report, offering an important reference point in assessing Protestant developments in the decolonization and nation building periods at the close of the twentieth century. H. P. van Dusen, Kosuke Koyama, and Andrew Hsiao had provided penetrating assessments of theological education. Alec Gilmore’s International Directory of Theological Colleges 1997 contained a useful listing of theological schools, though it was marred by huge gaps in data collection. Interestingly the two regional associations of theological education (the Association of Theological Education in South East Asia [ATESEA] and Asia Theological Association [ATA]) have neither published statistical information, nor undertaken region-wide review of the region. Member schools have not been required to submit statistics on student enrolment and profile; programmes of studies; library holdings, faculty and fee structures on regular basis to the accreditation bodies. So churches, theological educators, prospective students, overseas partners and grant-agencies are often left without a clear map in navigating the complexities in the region.

This survey has in mind Southeast Asian theological educators and church leaders; colleagues from the wider Asian continent; as well as funding agencies and ecumenical partners in the wider Christian world. I shall end by drawing attention to the need in devising longer-term approaches towards equipping full-time ministers for tomorrow’s church.

Description of the Region: Three Undercurrents

A historical and topographical outline of the region is helpful in understanding the complexities, opportunities and challenges in theological education. Southeast Asia is home to 580 million people living across eleven independent states across land area of 4.5 million sq. km. that spread from 28°N at the northern reaches of Myanmar to 10°S at the southern parts of Nusa Tenggara Timur, Indonesia; and from 90°E at Chin State, Myanmar to 140°E at the western border of Papua New Guinea.

East Asia provides an illustrative contrast to the subcontinent. China, Korea and Japan can look back to a shared cultural reference point, in politics, language and philosophical traditions. Historically, hereditary monarchy, classical Chinese, Confucian philosophy and Mahayana Buddhism provided a common basis for social exchanges. Southeast Asia however is different. Southeast Asia is a confluence of thousands of linguistic, ethnic and cultural groups, shaped by nuanced interplay between major world religions (Theravada Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism and Islam) and primal spiritualities. Imperial powers from the West (American, British, Dutch, Portuguese and Spanish) and from the North (China and Japan) have left their particular imprints in the region.

Three undercurrents shape present-day Southeast Asia. The first is the set of topographical conversations between the geologically more stable mainland (Myanmar, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam, peninsular Malaysia and Singapore) and the geologically volatile archipelagos (the Philippines, East Malaysia, Indonesia, Brunei and Timor-Leste). In addition, the lands are rich in mineral resources and natural produces, borne out of the interplay between lowlands and uplands; rivers and oceans; typhoons, earthquakes and volcano eruptions in the region. These geological forces and physical terrains subject inhabitants to live constantly on volatile grounds and dependent on fate. But they also enable communities to live as self-contained and sustainable units separated by seas and mountain ranges.

Secondly, Southeast Asia is marked by a set of religious and linguistic demarcations. From the thirteenth century onwards, traders brought Islam to the Indonesian archipelagos and peninsula Malaysia. Sufi forms of Islam were especially attractive because of its spiritual attraction and of its promise to egalitarian social relations. The previously unified Buddhist-Hindu world of Southeast Asia was then divided into two. Myanmar, Thailand, Cambodia and Laos remained Buddhist-Hindu. But Malaya, Java, Sumatra and the southern Philippine islands came under Islamic influence, except for Bali. This social and religious conversion significantly affected communication within the subcontinent. Sanskrit continued to be the sacred language among peoples in the northern Buddhist-Hindu countries. Malay however became the principal language of the Islamic lands in the south, with Jawi script as the written language for sacred and religious texts.

Fitzgerald argued how the European colonial presence accentuated this religious and language divide. Home offices in London, Paris, Hague and Madrid, as well as the metropolitans in British India and the white rajahs in Sarawak, were able to divide the language map of Southeast Asia artificially according to their interest.

The local educational systems became geared to producing students who could profit from higher education in the ‘home’ country, or, by virtue of their knowledge of the language of the ruling colonial people, could be usefully employed in the clerical services of government and business.5

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Fitzgerald went on to point out how post-colonial governments ironically embraced these divides in their nation building policies. His overall assessment made nearly forty years ago to a great extent is still valid:

The languages of their neighbours, their histories and their culture are not taught in the schools nor even in the universities of Southeast Asian countries. English, French, even still Dutch, remain the languages of higher education in all these countries. It is still to Europe that their students prefer to go if they cannot get to the U.S.A. nationalism is apparently stronger than anti-colonialism in this case.... The culture of the former dominant colonial power remains in high esteem (as no doubt it should) but this respect is not extended to the similar European influence in the next country Malays and Indonesian do not learn French; Cambodians and Vietnamese do not (or did not before the Vietnam War) know English. The intellectual division imposed by the form of education established in the colonial period remains intact.6

The third powerful undercurrent consists of the multiple ways ethnic Chinese communities have been searching for reference points amid the new socio-political situations in the post World War II era. This is important for our present discussions since Protestant missionary efforts in Southeast Asia before World War II had been mainly directed to ethnic Chinese communities. Indeed, as we shall see, the training of Chinese for Christian ministry was the prime motive that led to the developing of theological education infrastructures in the post War years. But the “Chinese” had never been a homogenous group with a nation identity previous to the Sun Yat-Sen Revolution. The sub-ethnic groups (Cantonese, Hakka, Hailam, Hokkien and Teochew) lived as segregated and linguistically-separate communities. The 1911 Revolution in China changed all that. Wang Gungwu showed how aggressive forms of nationalism from China swept through Southeast Asian ethnic Chinese communities in early twentieth century. The Chinese Chamber of Commerce and of the branch of Revolutionary League of China in Singapore, both set up in Singapore in 1906 became rallying points in a common Chinese identity.7 The establishing of Chinese primary and secondary schools, with guoyu (Mandarin) as the common language, was especially significant.8 The sub-ethnic groups became united by a common political cause and a common language. Guoyu united the previously mutually linguistically divided sub-ethnic communities to work against common threats to the Chinese nation. This common identity was further consolidated in face of Japanese militaristic aggressions in the Pacific War.

Decolonization and the emergence of new nation-states brought about new sets of challenges and threats. Recent studies on transformation of ethnic identities in Southeast Asia have highlighted that “ethnic boundaries and identities are constantly being negotiated, and their limits are tested and realigned”.9 Especially for ethnic Chinese communities, their demography, public visibility, economic usefulness to nation-building, and the perceived Communist Chinese threat to the nation have important bearings on nation-building processes. The ability of ethnic Chinese communities in negotiating multiple

6 Ibid., 163.
7 Leo Suryadinata, Tongmenghui, Sun Yat-sen and the Chinese in Southeast Asia: a revisit (Singapore: Chinese Heritage Centre, 2006).
allegiances have been severely tested in the face of discriminatory laws and practices, particularly in Indonesia and Malaysia.\textsuperscript{10}

These three powerful geopolitical and ethno-linguistic undercurrents are often left unspoken, avoided and suppressed in public discussions within Christian circles. However they exercise huge influence in shaping the ways peoples negotiate their spiritual, social and political boundaries, and so in defining what belong to “us” and “them”. Such latent dynamics need to be understood and expressed in public discourse before seminaries can find a secure collaborative platform for common action.

What is clear from this is that global classifications and conventional trajectories such as “liberal-evangelical” and “mainline-charismatic” categories might no longer be effective in interpreting the local theological education scene. The seeming fragmentary and arbitrary ways that new seminaries have been formed in Southeast Asia, especially in Myanmar and in Indonesia, might in fact reveal a longing among ethnic communities for reference points. And so transnational networks, former parent churches, or international alliances might provide them with tangible anchors amid turbulent nation building processes. Aritonang and Steenbrink were too hasty in claiming that “there never was a development towards a truly contextual Chinese Christian Christianity because church leaders did not like to stress this identity [in present-day Indonesia]”. They perhaps looked for this in wrong directions, using “traditional Chinese culture” as reference point.\textsuperscript{11} The ethnic Chinese churches in Indonesia (Tiong Hoa Khie Tok Kauw Hwee) did not merely transform itself into a politically correct multi-ethnic Indonesian church Gereja Kristen Indonesia. Ethnic Chinese Christians in Indonesia are still searching for ways in expressing their multiple loyalties and in preserving their own social identities in turbulent times. This happened especially during Soeharto’s regime when Chinese script was banned and Chinese were mandated to adopt Indonesian-sounding names. The education of the young – and of the next generation – then becomes a crucial concern.\textsuperscript{12} The mushrooming of seminaries in Indonesia might well hint to unexpected ways that “contextual” theology is taking place among ethnic Chinese Indonesians in highly contested and charged surroundings.

\textbf{Developments Since 1945}

Appendix I “Time-line of Theological Education since 1945” and Appendix II “Distribution of Theological Seminaries” in providing the time-space co-ordinates in negotiating theological education terrains in the Southeast Asia.

\textit{Finding regional bearings: ATESEA and ATA}

Appendix I charts the developments in theological education alongside wider ecclesiastical and socio-political currents. Coordinated efforts in theological education began in the post Pacific War years in response to two powerful forces. The first was the need to establish infrastructures in Southeast Asia in containing the Chinese Communist threat. The second related to the new situations that churches faced amid the “Asian Revolution” in the post War years.

The 1953 Anderson-Smith Report on Theological Education in Southeast Asia set off a series of region-wide consultations that culminated in the formation of the Association of Theological Schools in South East Asia (ATSSEA) in 1959, which was renamed the Association for Theological Education in South East Asia.

\begin{footnotes}
\item Jan S. Aritonang and Karel A. Steenbrink, A history of Christianity in Indonesia (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 903, 915.
\end{footnotes}
Asia (ATESEA) in 1981. ATESEA’s institutional achievement has been impressive. Its membership grew from 16 founding members in 1959 to twenty-nine in 1974, and then rapidly increased to 81 in 2001, swelling to 101 by 2008. Member schools in the main come from Southeast Asian countries, but also include those from the wider Pacific seaboard and South Asia (Sri Lanka and Pakistan). Gerald Anderson reported in 2001 that 9,000 students studied in ATESEA member schools. The 1960s saw the establishing of the South East Asia Graduate School of Theology (SEAGST) and accreditation standards. These two infrastructures lay the foundation for later developments. ATESEA’s accreditation is the most widely accepted accreditation body in the region. The South East Asia Journal of Theology (now renamed Asia Journal of Theology) testified to the birth of contextual theology in the foundational years. Shoki Coe and Kosuke Koyama have been two most influential Asian theologians in those years. And indeed ATSSEA’s rise coincided with a period of optimistic growth in ecumenical and regional cooperation.

ATSSEA programmes had been funded mainly by the Theological Education Fund (TEF) and the Foundation for Theological Education in South East Asia (FTESEA). Following the publication of TEF Third Mandate in 1970, the World Evangelical Fellowship convened a Theological Assistance Program Consultation in Asia in the same year. The aim was to set up evangelical infrastructures in Asia to counter the overwhelming ecumenical presence in the region. This led to the founding of the Asia-wide ATA. ATA programmes and structures are in fact an evangelical alternative to ecumenical counterparts. ATA has been trying to match ATESEA stride by stride: in establishing rival accreditation body and graduate school of theology (AGST), and in matching its own consultations against ATESEA’s seminar-workshops, as Appendix I reveals. ATESEA and ATA are backed up by their sets of international networks. ATESEA has strong links with ecumenical bodies, while ATA finds its resources through the International Council for Evangelical Theological Education (ICETE). Appendix II gives a list of ATESEA and ATA accredited schools.

Charting new coordinates: the rise of national associations and transnational alliances

But region-wide initiatives are only part of the story. Ecumenical-evangelical demarcations are less pronounced by the end of the twentieth century as they were in the 1960s and 1970s. Charismatic renewals have to some extent swept away ecclesiastical and denominational distinctions. As Appendix II shows, seminaries began to receive accreditation from both ATESEA and ATA. Evangelical schools also no longer see the need in identifying with region-wide evangelical bodies. Of the more than eighty Indonesian institutions associated with the evangelical Persekutuan Antar Sekolah Teologia Injili (PASTI), only eleven are linked to ATA.

Indeed there are more pressing concerns at the home front. The first arises from the need in meeting standards set by regulatory authorities of local governments. For example, the Philippine Commission on Higher Education oversees all degree-granting programs in all tertiary educational institutions in the Philippines. Indonesian seminaries have to be approved by Departemen Agama (the government religious bureau), and by Departemen Pendidikan Nasional (department of education) if degrees are to receive state recognition. National associations began to emerge. Perhimpunan Sekolah-Sekolah Teologi di Indonesia (PERSETIA) was formed in 1963, followed by the Philippine Association of Bible and Theological

13 For a fuller account of ATESEA’s history, see my essay “The Association for Theological Education in South East Asia (1959-2002): A pilgrimage in Theological Education” to be published by the Foundation of Theological Education in South East Asia.
Schools (PABATS) in 1968, the Association for Theological Education Myanmar (ATEM) in 1986, and The Malaysian Association of Theological Schools (MATS) in 1999. Member schools of respective national bodies are listed in Appendix II. These national associations become platforms for united action and mutual support. Small stand-alone schools in remote places especially are drawn to these national associations.

Seminaries too face a second set of concerns, that is, the demand for church workers in world evangelization programmes. Hundreds of bible colleges and training centres are emerging in Southeast Asia (and perhaps disappear within short periods) without clear coordination with one another and with little regard for standards and governance. Nuhamara pointed out that of the 200 theological seminaries and Bible schools in Indonesia in 2007, only 120 belong to PERSETIA and PASTI.

Globalization has to a great extent made this possible. Transnational networks shortcut the need in developing long-term local faculty and infrastructures. Faculty and material support can be met by short-term deployments and information-technology instruments. Here the contrasts in theological education landscape between the present and the 1950s are shown in clearest terms. ATESEA founders had in mind the developing of ministers who are able to meet the long-term intellectual need of churches in the new situations in the post-colonial world. So faculty, curriculum, and library development were their main concerns. For those who are interested more in evangelization of “unreached peoples” within this generation, globalization has made these infrastructural developments unnecessary.

Taking Stock

In the above I have outlined salient points in interpreting the historical developments outlined in Appendix I. In what follows, I shall explore how these developments are connected with a practical concern for Southeast Asian churches. How able are seminaries in preparing ministers for tomorrow’s churches?

There is no ready answer. Appendix II “Distribution of Theological Seminaries (geographical and church affiliation)” re-presents the membership lists of major regional and national associations according to geographical region and church affiliation. What is immediately clear is the radical shift in theological and ecclesiastical landscape. Table I shows the impressive growth in the five decades since the late 1950s.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Number of seminaries affiliated with national or regional associations</th>
<th>Number of seminaries listed in Allen’s 1960 A Seminary Survey</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cambodia</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Myanmar</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnam</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>155</strong></td>
<td><strong>23</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Numerical growth of accredited schools of course does not tell the whole story. Appendix II groups the seminaries according to geographical areas. In the main, seminaries are populated among the islands rather than mainland Southeast Asia. Table II shows the four geographical regions with highest concentrations of seminaries. Over one-third of the schools with affiliation to national or regional bodies are located in Luzon and Java. Similarly Yangon State and the former Malaya Peninsula (Singapore and West Malaysia) make up of one-fifth of the schools. The distribution of SEAGST faculty members in the four regions is also tabulated as an indicator of relative faculty strength.18

### Table II: Distribution of seminaries by geographical region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Geographical region</th>
<th>Number of Seminaries affiliated with national or regional associations</th>
<th>SEAGST Faculty Strength</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Luzon Island</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Java</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yangon State</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singapore and West Malaysia</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table III: Distribution of seminaries among metropolitan cities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metropolitan</th>
<th>Number of Seminaries affiliated with national or regional associations</th>
<th>Total number in nation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yangon</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metro Manila</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jakarta</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baguio</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In terms of urban concentrations (Table III), Yangon (19), Metro Manila (13), Singapore (9), Jakarta (8) and Baguio (6) are the top five “metropolitans”. This is understandably so. All five are highly urbanized cities; among which Metro Manila, Singapore and Jakarta are national capitals. English and Bahasa Indonesian are the two major languages of instruction in Southeast Asia. Indonesia with its huge school concentration forms an obvious entity, while the rest of Southeast Asia is chiefly English-based. Interestingly, Lal Tin Hre, ATEM Executive Secretary pointed out that “most [ATEM] member schools use English as the medium of instruction, but used their respective dialect for explanations”.19

Are seminaries adequately preparing ministers for tomorrow’s churches? Based on membership statistics, the answer is clearly “yes”. ATESEA and ATA have devoted much attention to establishing accreditation guidelines.20 Contextualization has been a keystone in Asian theology. The Critical Asian Principle in theological education, first proposed in the early 1970s, was meant to give concrete expressions to it. The SEAGST and AGST doctoral programmes were to spearhead faculty development within Asian contexts. Anderson reported that by 2001 that SEAGST had provided “opportunities for

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18 SEAGST faculty list is based on the information published on the ATESEA website, www.atesea.org (accessed 13/10/09).
19 Lal Tin Hre, e-mail message to author, 25 September 2009.

Part II: Regional Surveys of Developments in Theological Education Since 1910
contextualized graduate studies in Asia”. It has produced 67 doctors of theology and doctor of pastoral studies since 1978.21

But in what ways have these achievements been translated to strengthening teaching programmes? Tables IV to VI analyze the faculty profile in Southeast Asia, using SEAGST faculty as an indicator. The tabulations include only those with earned Ph. D. and D. Theol. degrees. Adjunct faculty is also excluded.

Table IV: Distribution of SEAGST faculty doctoral degree-holders according to the period their degrees were awarded

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Doctorate earned</th>
<th>To 1980</th>
<th>1981-1990</th>
<th>1991-2000</th>
<th>2001-</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaysia-Singapore</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Myanmar</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table V: Distribution of SEAGST faculty doctoral degree holders according to location of degree-granting institutions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Doctorate earned</th>
<th>SEAGST Asian seminaries</th>
<th>UK</th>
<th>USA</th>
<th>Europe</th>
<th>Australia</th>
<th>Others</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaysia-Singapore</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Myanmar</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table VI: Distribution of disciplines among SEAGST faculty doctoral degree-holders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discipline</th>
<th>Indonesia</th>
<th>Malaysia-Singapore</th>
<th>Myanmar</th>
<th>Philippines</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Biblical</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theology</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missiology</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religions/Islam</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pastoral</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethics</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table IV shows most seminaries have been upgrading their faculty to doctoral levels. The number of doctoral degree holders has markedly increased in the past two decades. Indonesia, Singapore and Malaysia are especially successful. Where did seminaries send their faculty for further training? Table V shows that except for Indonesia, faculty development generally-speaking takes place outside Asia. Nearly sixty per cent of Indonesian SEAGST faculty earned their degrees in Asia; this compared with ten per cent in Malaysia and Singapore. Most non-Indonesian seminaries prefer sending their candidates to former colonial and ecclesiastical metropolitans, bearing out Fitzgerald’s observations. So for example Singapore and Malaysia send candidates to the United Kingdom institutions. Remarkably only Indonesian seminaries have embraced the SEAGST D. Theol. programme to be a preferred route in faculty developments. Overall

only 29 SEAGST D. Theol. degree-holders are serving in SEAGST faculty despite Anderson’s positive assessment; among whom 26 are in Indonesia!

Table VI further breaks down the SEAGST faculty according to disciplines and countries. Understandably the biblical and theological disciplines have the highest concentrations. Southeast Asia faculty is weak in missiology and history. There is hardly any specialist in Islamic studies and in Asian religions outside Indonesia. In fact, Indonesian seminaries have the most balanced faculty.

These observations draw attention to deep-seated problems that have not been highlighted in recent discussions on theological education. ATESEA began to revisit the Critical Asian Principle in 2004 because of “the changed context of today’s Asia”. Such includes religious fundamentalism, gender justice issues, ecological and health problems, globalization and empire building, colonization, spirituality, identity and power struggle, people movements and ecumenism, information and technological change, social changes, and reclaiming indigenous identity and minority rights. Accordingly new “Guidelines for Doing Theologies in Asia” (GDTA) was adopted. New ATESEA accreditation criteria should embody the following features:

1. Responsive engagement with the diverse Asian contexts.
2. Critical engagement with indigenous cultures and wisdom for the preservation and sustenance of life.
3. Reflective engagements with the sufferings of the Asian people in order to provide hope for the marginalized, women, indigenous people, children, the differently able people and migrant workers.
4. Encourage to restore the reality of the inter-connectedness of the whole creation.
5. Helpful to promote interfaith dialogue and intra faith communion and communication for the fullness of life and the well-being of the society.
6. Enhance capacity building in order to serve the people experiencing disaster, conflict, disease and those people who suffer physical, emotional, and mental disabilities.
7. Prophetic resistance against the powers of economic imperialism.
8. Equipping Christians for witnessing and spreading the gospel of Jesus with loving care and service to fulfil Christian mission of evangelism.22

Huang Po Ho, a chief architect of the Guidelines, also argued that SEAGST should “shift its concentration of theological education to its D. Theol. Programme”. To him, SEAGST should focus on becoming a “distinguished and experimental theological school for advanced study of Asian theologies”, leaving the tasks of training of ordained pastors to member schools.23

Roman Catholic approaches in recent years provide an illustrative contrast to these Protestant proposals. The 2006 Philippine Program of Priestly Formation (PPPF), published by the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of the Philippines after more than ten years of consultation, represents a major Southeast Asian undertaking in theological education. The Catholic bishops put theological education within an overall vision of renewal: renewal of seminaries, leading to renewal of priests, then of the church and of the nation. PPPF consists of two parts. Part One deals with the context, vision and objectives of priestly formation. Part Two discusses the stages and aspects of seminary formation. Augusto Jesus Angeles’s review of PPPF offered important insight in Catholic priestly formation processes.24 He highlighted seven features of the updated PPPF:

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1. Both rooted in tradition and responsive to the signs of the times
2. Clear vision and objectives
3. Continuity of the different stages in priestly formation
4. Seminary formation linked with the ongoing formation of the priests
5. Contextualized and inculcated
6. Integrated and interactive
7. Agents of formation identified

**Nurturing a Successor Generation for Tomorrow’s Church**

Reading GDTA alongside PPPF reveals fundamental concerns in equipping ministers for tomorrow’s churches in Southeast Asia:

*Are seminary formation processes connected with a clear pastoral and catechetical vision?*

Here the Roman Catholics are in more secure footings than Protestants. Priestly formation takes place within a clear dogmatic and hierarchical context. John Paul II’s 1992 post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Pastores Dabo Vobis* (“On the Formation of Priests in the Circumstances of the Present-Day”) has been normative to present-day Roman Catholic polices in priestly formation. *Pastores Dabo Vobis* underlined four aspects in priestly formation: human, spiritual, intellectual and pastoral (*PVB*, sections 43-64). The publication of *Catechismum Catholicae Ecclesiae* (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*) in the same year underscored the central role of catechetical tradition in formation. The teachings of the church are not a matter for private interpretation; they are a possession of the universal and apostolic church. So formation is set within clear ecclesiastical directives. Seminaries and places of formation are under conferences of bishops, and are eventually connected to the Congregation for Christian Education, the Congregation for the Clergy, and the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples of the Roman Curia. A list of Roman Catholic seminaries in the world is published yearly in *Annuario Pontificio* of the Roman Curia.

Such ecclesiastical structure allows the Roman Catholics to place contextual concerns with a clear pastoral and ecclesiological context, as the opening two opening chapters of PPPF clearly shows. To be sure GDTA updated the new Asian situations. However it is difficult to see how the new emphasis can be translated into concrete accreditation guidelines, as the Critical Asian Principle had been unable in providing concrete directions for carrying out and assessing SEAGST D. Theol. theses. The health in theological education, at last analysis, is not determined by accreditation notations. It rather stands or falls on whether such benchmarks are coordinated with a clear ecclesiological vision at the service of the churches in Asia. The Roman Catholics take a more deliberate approach to forming their successor generation, giving them the ecclesiastical framework and pastoral vision in integrating their formation processes. In contrast, Protestant seminaries are in fragmentation, as Appendix II shows. It is increasingly difficult for denominational churches to find suitable seminaries for their candidates. This problem is especially acute for churches with strong liturgical and dogmatic foundations. For instance, Saint Andrew’s Theological Seminary is almost the only Anglican institution in Southeast Asia. At present, future ministers of denominational churches are increasingly unclear and insecure with their own traditions, with the prospect of intensifying ecclesiastical disputes and fragmentation in coming generations, as the present Anglican Communion crisis shows.

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Are formation processes taking into account the complex linguistic, pedagogical and social situations in Southeast Asia?

Communication is fundamental to theological education. This happens synchronically in the teacher-student and student-student exchanges in seminaries.

Here Roman Catholics and Protestants face similar concerns. The challenges in communication take several forms. The varying educational standards among Southeast Asian countries present huge pedagogical difficulties. First-year cohorts from urban and rural areas may come with contrasting language and educational readiness. Postgraduate students from educationally less prepared countries, even if they had received outstanding grades from home seminaries, may not be educationally prepared to study in seminaries in urbanized areas or in another Southeast country with different educational standards. These factors have huge ramifications for assessment criteria and in pedagogical methods. At worst, these problems lead to grade inflation and standard depreciation. After all it is hard to monitor and insist on standards in the complex situations in Southeast Asia. (Who would be so cold-hearted to fail candidates who carry huge expectations from home churches and countries?)

But there is also a diachronic dimension in communication: that is, in attending to, inheriting and in passing on faithfully and reflectively to the faith of forebears in the Christian past. Ministerial formation (especially for denominational churches) demands competence in European languages. After all, books in Asian languages cannot sustain seminary study programme. Imagine for example how Anglican or Roman Catholic candidates can learn about their traditions without access to English, European (and Latin) literature? Students outside urban areas in West Malaysia, the Philippines, and Singapore would then face huge language barriers. For example, how can students, for whom English is a third or fourth language, and who are from the Greater Mekong Region and from indigenous churches in Sarawak, receive satisfactory formation for service in their own churches? The theological formation of Chinese-speaking pastors in Southeast Asia presents another difficulty. For outside Malaysia, present-day Southeast Asians do not have the Chinese competence in embarking on a Chinese-language programme of study. National educational policies have prevented this.

The language divide between the Bahasa Indonesian and English-speaking worlds in Southeast Asia also present another set of problems. It impedes seminaries from cross-fertilization when regional exposure and understanding is most needed. Future ministers are then left without the opportunity in understanding the theological worlds at the other side of the linguistic-cultural divide.

Making plain these often unspoken concerns is a first step is dealing with them in more deliberate ways. It calls for closer attention in formulating clearer paths and processes of formation. Are the regional and national bodies able to work together with churches in building up strong programmes and institutions for the diverse needs in Southeast Asia? Our analysis shows that seminaries should focus in solid programmes for initial ministerial formation. Faculty development, curriculum design and accreditation criteria should be closely coordinated in offering a pastoral vision in forming a successor generation of intellectually, linguistically, and spiritually equipped ministers who are able to engage theologically with movements of thought that have not appeared at the present horizons.

The temptation, of course, is for seminaries to adopt a homogenous developmental grid, taking the offering of doctoral programmes as the crown of achievement. So seminaries might be anxious in implementing doctoral programmes and research centres of all sorts. Status and prestige might be behind such moves. The complex geopolitics in the subcontinent might also steer proximate institutions away from closer coordination. Such pursuits often divert precious staff time in maintaining postgraduate degrees that may not have direct benefit in faculty developments. In any case, faculty development in the main still takes place outside Asia.
How well are churches and seminaries working together to develop centres of ministerial formation across Southeast Asia?

The establishing of accreditation standards has been a major achievement of the regional and national associations of theological education. Regional associations have also provided a platform in offering help to seminaries in times of huge transitions. For instance ATESEA has been instrumental to the success of the ATEM Ten-Year Faculty Development Programme in the 1990s and of the continuing Vietnamese TEE Programme.26

These regional and national instruments need however to reassess their models of partnership if they were to be sensitive to the undercurrents and divides that I pointed out at the outset of this survey. ATESEA, ATA and other national bodies emerged over the past fifty years in response to particular ecclesiastical and political challenges in the time of decolonization. By and large, ATESEA and ATA have been grant-driven, supported by Western ecclesial and doctrinal interests. Both face looming financial difficulties. ATA Associate General Secretary Benjamin Pwee frankly recognized that “the membership fee payments of 200 member schools are sporadic and not reliable”27. Leadership and financial troubles in 2008 have also brought ATESEA to an even more serious crisis. Overall, churches have not offered substantial support to regional bodies. Seminaries outside Indonesia have dismissed the SEAGST D. Theol. programme a preferred route to faculty development, as Table V shows. This lack of support to the showcase ATESEA programme speaks volume to lack of Asian ownership. In other words regional and national associations are in danger of becoming grant-application and accreditation-service agencies, rather than to be a forum and crucible of regional partnership.

In other words, national and regional associations might wish to steer away from an elitist vision, as if selected premier schools on their own could serve the complex ministerial and mission needs in the region. The “centre of excellence” concept, first appeared in a restricted way within scientific communities in 1968, is now often used indiscriminately for other purposes, theological education included. Such concept might be not fit well with the complex ecclesiastical and geopolitical maps in the twenty-first century. For “centres” easily conjure threats of metropolitan authority and power-relations that are harmful to partnership in a multi-polar world.

How can churches and seminaries work together in fostering stronger and more fitting formation programmes?

a) Developing bilateral ties between seminaries. ATESEA and ATA accreditation criteria in the main are directed to individual schools. Faculty issues, curriculum design, and library resources are often singled out in accreditation reports to be main areas that need improvement.28 To be sure, ATESEA includes relationships with other schools in its assessment (Accreditation Notation 8). However there is no mechanism for sub-regional assessment? Can accreditation visits encourage bilateral ties, for example, in how seminaries within the same region or across regions can strengthen and complement one another?

b) Developing region-specific expertise and resources. Table VI identifies history, missiology and religions to be the three disciplines that need urgent attention. These three disciplines of course are crucial to contextualized formation. Future ministers cannot serve well without having a solid grasp of the history of Christian mission and present mission practice within the religious worlds in Southeast Asia.29 To do

29 One example of such reflections is Robert Hunt, “Christian Theological Reflection and Education in the Muslim Societies of Malaysia and Indonesia,” Studies in World Christianity 3, no. 2 (1997): 202-225.
this well, faculty and students to be linguistically equipped – not only in the Biblical and European languages, but in Bahasa Indonesian, Tagalong, Thai and other Southeast Asian national languages. Language competence is essential in contextualization.

To end, this “rough guide” aims to offer a compass in finding directions and in locating experiences. Southeast Asian theological education is in flux, driven by vortices and undercurrents of the subcontinent. The fact that two regions with highest concentrations of seminaries (Luzon State and Java) are geologically and climatically vulnerable suggests the volatile situations in the region. How can theological education take place amid systemic instabilities and tensions? But volatility carries with it the promise and hope of life. For Christians life is a continuing journey of transformation into God’s own divine life. Southeast Asian theological education might provide important lessons for the global church as it ventures forward beyond the institutional security and stability of the age of Christendom. The challenge is to move beyond familiar ideological divides, and to affirm the one hope and one human community in Christ.

Appendix I: Time-line of Theological Education since 1945

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Theological Education in South-East Asia</th>
<th>Christian world</th>
<th>Socio-political situation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1945</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>End of World War II; Japan surrendered</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Indonesia proclaimed independence; <em>pancasila</em> became the political foundation of the new nation state</td>
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<tr>
<td>1946</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The Philippines became independent</td>
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<tr>
<td>1948</td>
<td>Trinity Theological College, Singapore established</td>
<td>World Council of Churches formed; First Assembly, Amsterdam: Man's Disorder and God's Design</td>
<td>Burma became independent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>C. S. Smith’s Report to the Board of Founders on the Program of the Nanking Theological Seminary with relation to Work Outside of China</td>
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<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Event Description</td>
<td>Details</td>
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<tr>
<td>1952</td>
<td>Anderson-Smith Report on Theological Education in Southeast Asia</td>
<td>East China Theological Education Forum convened; Nanjing Union Theological Seminary formed out of union of seminaries in East China. K H Ting became first principal.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1955</td>
<td></td>
<td>World Non-alignment movement began under Sukarno’s leadership.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>EACC Conference on Theological Education in Southeast Asia, Bangkok</td>
<td>Founding of Nanyang University in Singapore, the only Mandarin-medium university in SE Asia.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1957</td>
<td>1st Theological Study Institute: Urbanisation in Asia, Singapore; Provisional Constitution of the Association of Theological Schools in South East Asia (ATSSEA) drafted in Singapore</td>
<td>East Asia Christian Conference (EACC) formally established. Conference on “The Common Evangelistic Task of the Church in East Asia”, Prapat. The Federation of Malaya (peninsular Malaysia) gained independence.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958</td>
<td>Theological Education Fund (TEF) established after the International Missionary Council Assembly at Ghana, Charles Ransom became the first TEF director</td>
<td>The First Mandate of the TEF: 1958-1965.</td>
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<td>Year</td>
<td>Event</td>
<td>Event Details</td>
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<tr>
<td>1959</td>
<td>The South East Asia Theological Librarians’ Workshop, Silliman</td>
<td>Launch of The South East Asia Journal of Theology (SEAJT)</td>
<td>General Election in Singapore; People’s Action Party won</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>University, Philippines</td>
<td>First Meeting of ATSSEA, Singapore</td>
<td>Conversion of Chinese-medium school structure in Singapore into English-medium, multi-ethnic structure</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>John Fleming became ATSSEA’s first Executive Director</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2nd Theological Study Institute: The People of God in the World, Singapore</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Inaugural EACC Assembly “Witnessing Together”, Kuala Lumpur</td>
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<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>3rd Theological Study Institute: Christ and Culture – The Encounter</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>in East Asia, Singapore</td>
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<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td></td>
<td>International Missionary Council united with WCC</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>WCC Commission on World Mission and Evangelism formed</td>
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<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td>4th Theological Study Institute: Christian Ethics and decision in a</td>
<td>Nanking Theological Seminary Board of Founders renamed The Foundation for Theological Education in South East Asia (FTE)</td>
<td>Burma under military government; beginning of isolation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rapidly Changing Social Situation of South East Asia, Singapore</td>
<td>WCC Third Assembly, New Delhi; Jesus Christ – the Light of the World</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Vatican II (1962-1965)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>5th Theological Study Institute: Church History – Teaching and</td>
<td>EACC Situation Conferences held at Madras, Singapore and Amagisanso</td>
<td>Left-wing leaders arrested in Singapore</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Writing, Singapore</td>
<td></td>
<td>Sabah, Sarawak and Singapore joined the Federation of Malaya to form Malaysia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Perhimpunan Sekolah-Sekolah Teologi di Indonesia (PERSETIA, The</td>
<td></td>
<td>Indonesia-Malaysia Conflict <em>(Konfrontasi)</em> over the future of Borneo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Association of Theological Schools in Indonesia) established</td>
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<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td></td>
<td>EACC Assembly “The Christian Community within the Human Community”, Bangkok</td>
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<tr>
<td>Year</td>
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<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>Henry van Dusen’s Accreditation Commission Report to ATSSEA</td>
<td>EACC Consultation on Theological Education in South East Asia held in Hong Kong, resulting in A Statement on Joint Action for Theological Education. The Second Mandate of the TEF: 1965-1970. C. H. Hwang left Taiwan and became TEF’s Associate Director; Hwang adopted the name Shoki Coe. C. S. Song succeeded Shoki Coe as Principal of Tainan Theological College. Singapore became independent republic. US sent combat forces to Vietnam. Violence in Indonesia from 1965-1966: Communist party (PKI) banned.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>The Fifth Biennial Meeting of ATSSEA, Singapore</td>
<td>Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand founded The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).</td>
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<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td></td>
<td>John Stott founded Langham Trust Scholarship in the United Kingdom.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>The Sixth Meeting of ATSSEA, Hong Kong</td>
<td>First Theological Assistance Programme International of the World Evangelical Fellowship Consultation (TAP-Asia) held in Singapore</td>
<td>Shoki Coe became director of TEF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TAP-ASIA Office established in Singapore, Bong Rin Ro became first General Secretary</td>
<td></td>
<td>The Third Mandate of the TEF (Ministry in context): 1970-1977</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>2nd TAP-ASIA Consultation, Singapore: decision to establish a joint post-graduate level theological seminary in Asia</td>
<td>C. S. Song left Taiwan</td>
<td>Admission of PRC to the United Nations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>John Stott founded the Evangelical Literature Trust</td>
<td>President Ferdinand E. Marcos of Philippines (1965-86) declared martial law</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The New Economic Policy in Malaysia</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SEAGST offered Th.D. programme</td>
<td>Singapore Anglican Bishop Chiu Ban It received the “baptism of the Holy Spirit” while attending the World Council of Churches Conference (Salvation Today) in Bangkok (December 1972-January 1973)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9th and final Theological Study Institute: Christian Social Ethics, Singapore</td>
<td>The New Economic Policy in Malaysia</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The Association for Promotion of Chinese Theological Educators established</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>First Consultation of Chinese Theological Educators and Church Leaders, Hong Kong</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>3rd TAP-ASIA Consultation, Hong Kong: Biblical Concept of Salvation Establishment of ATA Accreditation</td>
<td>EACC became the Christian Conference of Asia (CCA)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>Year</td>
<td>Event</td>
<td>Location</td>
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<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>TAP-ASIA renamed Asia Theological Association (ATA)</td>
<td></td>
<td>\begin{itemize} \item Lausanne International Congress on World Evangelism \item John Stott’s Ministries founded in the USA \end{itemize}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>ATSSEA Headquarters moved from Singapore to Manila</td>
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<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>Emerito Nacpil became ATESEA Executive Director</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>ATSSEA Commission on Non-traditional Study (1974-1977) established</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>ATA Office moved to Taiwan</td>
<td></td>
<td>\begin{itemize} \item WCC Fifth Assembly, Nairobi: Jesus Christ Frees and Unites \end{itemize}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>\begin{itemize} \item Fall of Saigon to North Vietnam \item The Philippines’s diplomatic recognition of PRC; filipinization of Chinese schools in the Philippines, ethnic Chinese gained Filipino citizenship \end{itemize}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>4th ATA Consultation, Hong Kong: Suffering and Persecution</td>
<td></td>
<td>\begin{itemize} \item The First Chinese Congress on World Evangelisation Hong Kong \end{itemize}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>Finalisation of ATA Accreditation</td>
<td></td>
<td>\begin{itemize} \item Mao Zedong died; End of the Cultural Revolution in China \end{itemize}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>ATSSEA Triennial Meeting, Manila: decision to reorganise ATSSEA</td>
<td></td>
<td>\begin{itemize} \item WCC’s Programme on Theological Education replaced TEF \end{itemize}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>ATSSEA Report of the Commission on Non-traditional Study</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>First ATA Visitation Evaluation Team (VET) Visits: Singapore bible College, Singapore; Asian Center for Theological Studies, Seoul; China Graduate School of Theology, Hong Kong</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>5th ATA Consultation, Singapore: Gospel and Culture</td>
<td></td>
<td>\begin{itemize} \item Lausanne Consultation on Gospel and Culture, Willowbank \end{itemize}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>ATSSEA Institute of Advanced Pastoral Studies established</td>
<td></td>
<td>\begin{itemize} \item Social reform in China began under Deng Xiaoping \end{itemize}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>\begin{itemize} \item John Paul II, Catechesi Tradendae (Catechesis in our Time) \end{itemize}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>ATESEA Constitution amended. General Assembly became quadrennial</td>
<td></td>
<td>\begin{itemize} \item US's diplomatic recognition of PRC \end{itemize}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>\begin{itemize} \item China Christian Council (CCC) established \item International Council for Evangelical Theological Education formed \end{itemize}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>\begin{itemize} \item Nanyang University merged into the National University of Singapore; tertiary education in Singapore became entirely in English \end{itemize}</td>
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<td>Year</td>
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<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>ATSSEA formally became the Association for Theological Education in South East Asia (ATESEA)</td>
<td>Nanjing Union Theological Seminary reopened</td>
<td>End of martial law in the Philippines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yeow Choo Lak became ATESEA Executive Director</td>
<td>K H Ting and CCC leaders met CCA officials in Hong Kong at the start of CCC’s first overseas visit</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ATESEA Headquarters moved from Manila to Singapore</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>6th ATA Consultation, Seoul: Bible and Theology in Asian Context</td>
<td>Third World Theologians Consultation, Seoul: Contextualisation and Theology</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Seoul Declaration: Toward an Evangelical Theology of the Third World (ATA, Theological Commission of the Association of Evangelicals in Africa and Madagascar, and the Latin American Theological Fraternity)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>SEAJT merged with <em>The North East Asia Journal of Theology</em> to form <em>The East Asia Journal of Theology</em> (EAJT)</td>
<td>WCC Sixth Assembly, Vancouver: Jesus Christ – the Life of the World</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Programme for Theology and Cultures in Asia (PTCA) founded</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1st ATESEA Theological Seminar-Workshop: Doing Theology with Asian Resources, Hong Kong</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ATA Consultation on Christian Response to Ancestor Practices, Taipei</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>2nd ATESEA Theological Seminar-Workshop: Doing Theology with Asian Folk-Literature, Hong Kong</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ATA Asia Graduate School of Theology (AGST) established in Hong Kong</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AGST-Philippines established</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>7th ATA Consultation, Manila: God the Creator and Redeemer</td>
<td>The Communion of Churches in Indonesia temporarily withdrew from CCA membership, in protest of CCA’s stance on East Timor</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3rd ATESEA Theological Seminar-Workshop: Doing Theology and People’s Movements in Asia, Kyoto</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AGST-Japan established</td>
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<td>Year</td>
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<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>AGST-Indonesia established (in cooperation with PASTI)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>EAJT became <em>The Asia Journal of Theology</em></td>
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<td></td>
<td>4&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; ATESEA Theological Seminar-Workshop: Doing Theology with the Religions of Asia, Hong Kong</td>
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<td></td>
<td>The Myanmar Council of Churches established the Association for Theological Education Myanmar (ATEM)</td>
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<td>1987</td>
<td>5&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; ATESEA Theological Seminar-Workshop: Doing Theology with Cultures of Asia, Kyoto</td>
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<td></td>
<td>8&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; ATA Consultation, Singapore: Theological Education for Urban Ministry in Asia</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Amity Press established in Nanjing</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Singapore government closed CCA headquarters in Singapore; staff deported</td>
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<td></td>
<td>“Marxist Conspiracy” in Singapore</td>
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<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>6&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; ATESEA Theological Seminar-Workshop: Doing Theology with People’s Symbols and Images, Jogjakarta</td>
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<td>1989</td>
<td>7&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; ATESEA Theological Seminar-Workshop: Doing Theology with God’s Purposes in Asia, Hong Kong</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Lausanne II, Manila: Proclaim Christ until He Comes: Calling the Whole Church to Take the Whole Gospel to the Whole World</td>
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<td></td>
<td>National Council of Churches Singapore terminated CCA membership</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Fall of the Berlin Wall</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Aung San Suu Kyi put under house arrest</td>
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<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>Ken Gnanakan became ATA Executive Secretary; ATA Office moved to Bangalore</td>
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<td></td>
<td>9&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; ATA Consultation, Seoul: Salvation in Asian Contexts</td>
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<td></td>
<td>8&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; ATESEA Theological Seminar-Workshop: Doing Theology with the Spirit’s Movement in Asia, Seoul</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ATEM Ten Year Faculty Development Program (TYFDP) launched</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Bong Rin Ro became international director of World Evangelical Fellowship Theological Commission</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Singapore Government published the “Maintenance of Religious Harmony Act”</td>
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<td>1991</td>
<td>The Forum of Asian Theological Librarians (ForATL) founded</td>
<td>9th ATESEA Theological-Seminar Workshop: Doing Christian Theology in Asian Ways, Chiang Mai</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>WCC Seventh Assembly, Canberra: Come, Holy Spirit – Renew the Whole Creation</td>
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<td>The Second (Roman Catholic) Plenary Council of the Philippines (PCP-II) mandated to update the “Philippine Program for Priestly Formation”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>China Christian Council became a member of the World Council of Churches; CCA Office relocated to Hong Kong</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Aung San Suu Kyi awarded Nobel Peace Prize</td>
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<td>1992</td>
<td>10th and final Theological Seminar-Workshop: Doing Theology with the Festivals and Customs of Asia, Quezon City</td>
<td>John Paul II, <em>Pastores Dabo Vobis</em> (On The Formation Of Priests in the Circumstances Of The Present Day)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Publication of <em>The Catechism of the Catholic Church</em></td>
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<td>Singapore's diplomatic recognition of PRC</td>
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<td>1993</td>
<td>ATESEA General Assembly, Hong Kong</td>
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<td>1994</td>
<td>ATESEA Occasional Paper No. 13: Doing Theology with the Festivals and Customs of Asia (final occasional paper during Yeow Choo Lak’s tenure)</td>
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<td>1995</td>
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<td>Vietnam admitted to ASEAN; Vietnam and USA restored full diplomatic relations</td>
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<td>1996</td>
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<td>The people of Taiwan elected Lee Teng-hui as president by popular vote</td>
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<td>1997</td>
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<td>Lausanne Consultation “Gospel Contextualisation Revisited”, Haslev</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Hong Kong returned to China</td>
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<td>Laos and Myanmar admitted to ASEAN</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Asian economic crisis</td>
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<td>1998</td>
<td>ATESEA Headquarters moved from Singapore to Manila</td>
<td>WCC Eighth Assembly, Harare: Turn to God – Rejoice in Hope</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Anti-Chinese riots in Jakarta</td>
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<td>President Soeharto resigned in Indonesia</td>
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<td>1999</td>
<td>The Malaysian Association of Theological Schools (MATS) established</td>
<td>John Paul II, <em>Ecclesia in Asia</em> (On the Church in Asia)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Cambodia admitted to ASEAN</td>
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<td>2000</td>
<td>Derek Tan became ATA General Secretary; ATA Office relocated to Singapore</td>
<td>Chen Shui-bian, leader in the movement for Taiwan’s independence, elected president of the Republic of China</td>
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<td>2001</td>
<td>ATESEA General Assembly, Seremban</td>
<td>John Paul II, <em>Novo Millennio Incante</em> (On the Beginning of the New Millennium)</td>
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<td>September 11 attacks, USA</td>
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<td>2002</td>
<td>Sientje Merentek-Abram became ATESEA Executive Director</td>
<td>Timor-Leste became independent</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Bali terrorist attack</td>
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<td>2004</td>
<td>AGST-MST (Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand) established</td>
<td>Earthquake off Sumatra triggered a massive tsunami that swept across SE Asia</td>
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<td>2005</td>
<td>ATESEA General Assembly, Chiang Mai</td>
<td>CCA Office relocated to Chiang Mai</td>
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<td>2006</td>
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<td>WCC Ninth Assembly, Porto Alegre: God in your grace, transform the world</td>
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<td>Publication of the (Roman Catholic) <em>Philippine Program of Priestly Formation</em> (PPPF)</td>
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<td>Publication of US Conference of Catholic Bishops, the Program of Priestly Formation, 5th edition</td>
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<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Joseph Shao became ATA General Secretary; ATA Office moved to Manila</td>
<td>Nay Pyi Taw became Myanmar’s new capital</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ATESEA “Guidelines for Doing Theologies in Asia” adopted</td>
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<td>2008</td>
<td>ATESEA financial and administration crisis: Sientje Merentek-Abram resigned as ATESEA Executive Director</td>
<td>Global financial crisis</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Anna May Say Pa became acting Executive Director</td>
<td>Cyclone Nargis devastated South-West Burma</td>
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<td>2009</td>
<td>ATESEA General Assembly, Malang, Indonesia. Limuel Equina became interim Executive Director</td>
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<td></td>
<td>ATA Consultation, Malang: Globalisation and Religious Pluralism in Asia</td>
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<td>2010</td>
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<td>Lausanne III, Cape Town</td>
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### Appendix II: Distribution of Theological Seminaries (geographical and church affiliation)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country - Region</th>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Institutional Affiliation</th>
<th>ATA</th>
<th>ATESEA</th>
<th>National</th>
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<tr>
<td>Cambodia</td>
<td>Cambodia Methodist Bible School, Phnom Penh</td>
<td>Methodist</td>
<td>ATESEA</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Phnom Penh Bible School, Phnom Penh</td>
<td>Cambodian Ministries for Christ</td>
<td>ATA-Associate</td>
<td>ATESEA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>Institut Agama Kristen Protestan Sumatera Utara (IAKPU), Medan</td>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>PERSETIA</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pendidikan Theologia Ekstensi Pematangsiantar</td>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>ATESEA</td>
<td>PERSETIA</td>
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<td>Sekolah Pendeta HKBP, Tapanuli Utara</td>
<td>Protestant Christian Batak Church (HKBP)</td>
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<td>STT Abdi Sabda, Medan</td>
<td>Lutheran</td>
<td>ATESEA</td>
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<td>PERSETIA</td>
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<td></td>
<td>STT GMI, Sibolangit</td>
<td>Methodist Church Indonesia (GMI)</td>
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<td>STT Huria Kristen Batak Protestant (HKBP), Pematangsiantar</td>
<td>Protestant Christian Batak Church (HKBP)</td>
<td>ATESEA</td>
<td>PERSETIA</td>
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<td>STT Sundermann, Gunungsitoli</td>
<td>Nias Protestant Christian Church (BNKP)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jakarta</td>
<td>IFTK Jaffray</td>
<td>Christian and Missionary Alliance</td>
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<td>Institut Theologia dan Keguruan Indonesia</td>
<td>Bethel Church (GBI)</td>
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<td>STT Amanat Agung</td>
<td>Church of Christ Jemaat Mangga Besar (GKJMB)</td>
<td>ATA-Associate</td>
<td>PERSETIA</td>
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<td>STT Iman</td>
<td>Ling Liang Worldwide Evangelical Mission</td>
<td>ATA-Associate</td>
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<td>STT Jakarta</td>
<td>Indonesian Christian Church (GKI)</td>
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<td>Java West</td>
<td>Institut Alkitab Tiranus, Bandung</td>
<td>Yayasan Persekutuan Untuk Pekabaran Injil (YPUPI)</td>
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<td>Java Central</td>
<td>STT Cipanas, Cipanas-Sindanglaya</td>
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<td>FTUK Duta Satya Wacana, Salatiga</td>
<td>Indonesian Christian Church (GKI)</td>
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<td>Program Pascasarjana Sosiologi Agama &amp; Masyarakat, Universitas Kristen Satya Wacana, Salatiga</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Institut Pendidikan Theologia Balewiyata, Malang</td>
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<td>Institute Theologia Aletheia, Lawang</td>
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<td>Seminari Alkitab Asia Tenggara, Malang</td>
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*Handbook of Theological Education in World Christianity*
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<th>Region</th>
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<th>Type</th>
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<td>Papua West</td>
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<td>STT Gereja Kristen Injili di tanah Papua (GKI) Izaak Samuel Kijne, Jayapura</td>
<td>Evangelical Christian Church in Tanah Papua (GKITP)</td>
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<td>Christian Evangelical Church of Halmahera (GMIH)</td>
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*Handbook of Theological Education in World Christianity*
### Theological Education in Asia

#### Part II: Regional Surveys of Developments in Theological Education Since 1910

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*Part II: Regional Surveys of Developments in Theological Education Since 1910*
Introduction

The history of formal theological education in South Asia1 is less than 200 years old, and yet there have been tremendous developments. The purpose of this paper is to highlight the development of theological education in the region. It has two limitations: (a) it is limited to theological education programmes among the Protestant churches, and (b) although the Asian Theological Association (ATA) is a growing theological network, I have not mentioned it except for a few passing remarks. Therefore, this paper primarily discusses the theological education history of the Board of Theological Education of the Senate Serampore College (University).

Theological Networks

There are hundreds of theological colleges and seminaries with a variety of mission emphases and orientations throughout South Asia. The first group may be considered as colleges and training centres/institutes sponsored by one person or family or by a single church. Such schools put a strong emphasis on church planting, evangelism and soul-winning. They think that the college exists solely for evangelistic purposes and, therefore, they feel no need for affiliation or accreditation from any theological network (though some of these colleges have sought accreditation from ATA in recent years). The second group is nondenominational seminaries started by several evangelistic groups, revival groups or prayer groups; they follow a curriculum that reflects a strong concern for church planting – i.e. to Christianize others. They claim to be evangelical schools and many of these colleges are accredited with ATA. The third group is denominationally sponsored colleges. A large number of colleges in South Asia are denominationally oriented with curricular offerings mandated by their denominations. Such denominational seminaries, although open to admitting students from other denominations, emphasize a curriculum that reflects their specific denominational content and focuses on church growth of the particular denomination. The majority of these schools have been affiliated with the Senate of Serampore College (SSC) and several are accredited with the Association of Theological Schools in South East Asia (ATESEA). A few of the colleges have dual affiliation/accreditation. The fourth group is ecumenical colleges or those colleges sponsored by several denominations. All these colleges are affiliated with SSC.

There are two major theological networks to which most of the mainline Protestant colleges/seminaries in South Asia are connected:

(a) ATESEA: Due to growing religious fundamentalism and other political situations in the region, the government of India does not grant student visas for religious studies. This has caused colleges in South Asian countries to seek affiliation with Serampore University. Several colleges sought accreditation from ATESEA which began in 1957 with 16 mainline Protestant schools as founding members. Two colleges in Pakistan, one college in Bangladesh and one college in Sri Lanka have been accredited by ATESEA. Today, ATESEA has a membership of 105 schools in 16 countries, with approximately 30,000 students and more than 1,100 faculty members; it has broadened its membership to include Evangelical, Pentecostal

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1 The South Asian countries include India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, Sri Lanka and Maldives. Christians constitute less than 5% of the population in these countries.
and Adventist schools. ATESEA has expanded its work into additional geographical areas as well. They are: the Indonesia Area, the Philippines Area, the Malaysia-Thailand Area, the Myanmar Area and the Hong Kong-Taiwan Area. Recently, it has created a new region for Sri Lanka under the South East Asia Graduate School of Theology (SEAGST).

Apart from its various degree programmes, ATESEA responds to the changing needs of theological education by offering programmes through its different members to meet the needs of theological education in a particular region. Some of its present programmes include the improvement of the management and administration of schools, the search for a new spirituality in Christian formation, new patterns of theological education, the promotion of closer relationships between seminary and church, the search for a more adequate understanding of excellence in theological education and the development of Asian perspectives and insights in Christian theology through seminar workshops. It also gives special emphasis to empowering women, as women have assumed considerable leadership roles in theological education in South East Asia.

The Foundation for Theological Education in South East Asia (FTESEA) plays a significant role in China and South East Asia. The FTESEA is an ecumenical agency that provides financial support to ATESEA and SEAGST in the on-going development of theology and education in the region. Established in the 1930s to support Nanjing Theological Seminary in China, FTESEA expanded its work to South East Asia in the 1950s. Today, FTESEA continues its relationship with Nanjing Theological Seminary and the Commission on Theological Education of the China Christian Council, as well as with its partners in South East Asia. The FTE continues to play a major role in (a) developing Christian theologies that arise from the specific contexts of China and South East Asia; (b) educating theologically equipped Christian leaders who provide competent leadership to their communities of faith; and (c) encouraging Christian churches to share the Good News of the gospel with enthusiasm and relevance. The accredited colleges in South Asia also receive financial support from FTESEA through the Resource Commission of AESEA.

(b) BTESSC: The Board of Theological Education of the Senate of Serampore College (BTESSC) is a theological network based in India. No name is more honoured in the history of modern mission than that of William Carey, the founder of Serampore College. As a result of the vision of Carey and his successors, the Senate of Serampore College became a reality through the Bengal Legislative Act IV, 1918. Today, the BTESSC is one of the major representative bodies of churches legally constituted and responsible for administering theological education in South Asia. It stands as a unique example of the ecumenical participation of churches and theological institutions in curriculum planning and the evaluation of common degree programmes providing holistic training for ministry.

Unlike ATESEA and ATA, Serampore is an affiliating university as opposed to an accrediting institution. As such, it has to take the necessary steps in maintaining control over each course syllabus and examination. It has granted semi-autonomy to its affiliated colleges so that they can conduct examinations and evaluations for half of the courses offered for the degree programme. It is one of the first universities in India/South Asia to grant such autonomy to any of its affiliated colleges.

Currently, the SSC offers the following degree programmes through a full-time residential study: Bachelor of Theology (B.Th), Bachelor of Divinity (B.D.), Master of Theology (M.Th.), Doctor of Theology (D.Th.), and Diploma in Clinical Pastoral Counseling (D.C.P.C.). These degree programmes are designed to train Christian leaders in various forms of ministry, and to offer opportunities for theological

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2 Some schools in Korea, Hong Kong and Taiwan are also members of ATESEA though they are part of North East Asia region.

3 In the early 1960s, the SSC had residential courses of Bachelor of Religious Studies (BRE), Master of Religious Studies (MRS) and Master of Ministry (M.Min). The later two programmes were created for training candidates who would not necessarily enter ordained ministry, but serve the church in other ministries. It was mainly a programme for training laypersons for full-time ministry in the churches.
study and reflection in the light of the challenges faced by them in their particular situation. Besides these residential programmes, the SSC also offers three non-residential courses through its extension department.\(^4\)

Fifty-one colleges and federated faculties throughout India, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh are affiliated with the Senate of Serampore College (University) and it reaches over 8,000 students in English and major regional languages. There was one college from Nepal affiliated with SSC in 2006, but its affiliation was withdrawn due to a shortage of students and a lack of qualified faculty members.

To promote women in theological education and Christian ministry, the BTESSC has created an entity, namely, the Association of Theologically Trained Women in India (ATTWI). It is a regional ecumenical body consisting of more than 600 members, all of whom are theologically trained women and mainly graduates of Serampore affiliated colleges. The Association is divided into regions, namely, Andhra, Karnataka, Kerala, Chennai, North India (2 regions) and North East India. ATTWI is an interdenominational organization and it strives to uplift women and girls, deal with issues pertaining to women and female children’s rights, to hold dialogues with the concerned organizations, and make representations on their behalf in order to help the society to develop a healthier community. ATTWI conducts seminars and writers’ workshops based on such issues in various regions. Indian Women in Theology (IWIT) is the publishing wing of ATTWI and was established in 2001.

The Board of Theological Education of the Senate of Serampore College (BTESSC)

The beginning of theological education – Serampore College\(^5\)

William Carey and his colleagues, Joshua Marshman and William Ward, established their base for mission work in Serampore, then a Danish Colony, in 1800. At a time when the British East India Company did not allow missionary work within their colony, the Danish authorities supported missionary activity and Carey and his colleagues used this to their advantage. Among the missionary endeavours of the Serampore Trio was the founding of Serampore College in 1818. This milestone laid the foundation for formal and higher theological education in South Asia. At a time when South Asian countries were under the onslaught of European colonies and their commercial enterprises, being divided into several small kingdoms of Hindu

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\(^{4}\) These non-residential programs are: (i) Diploma in Christian Studies (Dip. C.S.) introduced for the benefit of people from different religious traditions and ideologies so that they could study Christianity in its indigenous faith, history and practice. (ii) Bachelor of Christian Studies (B.C.S.) offered for equipping and training of the laity. The programme is designed to give the laity a better understanding of Christian faith and to deepen their commitment to service in the context of their vocational persuasions. Through these extension programmes, the University reaches over 2,000 students. (iii) The Doctor of Ministry (D.Min) is coordinated directly by the Senate through the Senate Centre for Education and Pastoral Research (SCEPTRE). The Senate is currently planning for a Master of Christian Studies (M.C.S) programme.

\(^{5}\) Serampore College can be referred to as a university as it has University Rights and the power to award degrees. The founders’ vision and mission regarding Senate of Serampore College was reaffirmed and stated as “We believe that the Triune God has offered the possibility of renewal of life and hope for the entire creation in and through Jesus Christ and that, as an instrument of God, the church is called to be involved in God’s mission of liberation, reconciliation and community building among all people through varied forms of ministry. Set in the midst of people of other faiths and ideologies as well as situations of life-negating forces, we are called upon to equip the whole people of God to respond to the contextual challenges critically and creatively by being faithful to the gospel of Jesus Christ. In the light of this faith and self-understanding, we seek to equip ministers, leaders, scholars and the whole people of god to be committed to creative discernment of and active participation in God’s liberative mission in the world at large and in South Asia in particular by providing programmes of theological study and ministerial formation at various level through affiliated colleges and institutions”. See Constitution: One National Structure of Theological Education in India (Serampore: Senate of Serampore College, 2005, 4-5).
and Muslim rulers, when the caste systems, sati practice, patriarchy and feudalism dominated society, and when religion was characterized by cumbersome rituals and practices, Serampore College became a beacon of light educating people in the humanities, science and theology.6

As spelled out in its preamble, the College was started for “the instruction of Asiatic Christians and other youths in Eastern Literature and Western Sciences”. The primary objective of the college was to provide instruction in every branch of knowledge to promote the welfare of the people. The College was made accessible to all, declaring that no caste, colour, or country shall bar anyone from admission into the college. Given a Danish Royal Charter by King Frederick XI of Denmark in 1872, the college was granted university rights and the power to award degrees. In 1857, the universities of Calcutta, Bombay and Madras were founded and Serampore was affiliated with Calcutta University for Arts and Science degrees. The affiliation was revoked in 1883. However, under the principalship of George Howells, the original charter was revived, resulting in the opening of higher theological departments preparing for the B.D. degree in October 1910 and restarting intermediate Arts classes in affiliation with Calcutta University in 1911. The B.D. Degree was conferred in 1915 and the Diploma Licentiate in Theology was instituted in 1916. Howells was instrumental in enabling the passage of the 1918 West Bengal Act providing a council of up to 16 members and a Senate of up to 18 members to determine eligible candidates for the award of degrees.7 The revised structure made it possible for colleges in South Asian countries to affiliate with Serampore; the United Theological College did so in 1919 and Bishop’s College in 1920 and so on. Thus, the Serampore College not only became the first university, but also the only theological university in India. The Charter, granted by His Royal Danish Majesty in 1927, and the Serampore College Act-1918 of the Bengal Legislative Council, are the legal documents in its support. They are printed as modified, from time to time, with the latest one made available in 1997.

**The Board of Theological Education of the Senate of Serampore College (BTESSC)**

When the British East India Company came under pressure from the British Parliament to open its doors to missionary work in 1813, different missionary bodies started mission work in South Asia. As a consequence, many denominations set up Bible schools/training centres to train evangelists, catechists, deacons, elders and pastors. Gradually, some of these grew up to become theological colleges and seminaries seeking affiliation with Serampore; the United Theological College did so in 1919 and Bishop’s College in 1920 and so on. Thus, the parallel theological education programmes came into existence.

The National Council of Churches created the Board of Theological Education of National Council of Churches in India (NCCI) in 19648, which was formed in 1955, to bring together all Bible schools and seminaries from all Christian traditions under one umbrella. After a series of joint consultations with Serampore, the Board of Theological Education of NCCI decided to form one national structure for theological education in India, namely, the Board of Theological Education of the Senate of Serampore College. The intention was to meet the demands of ministry and help create new patterns arising out of

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8 The Board was formed in 1975 to promote the following tasks: (a) reflection and pioneering on new methods and style in theological education in relation to the need of the country and of the churches. (b) production of theological literature in general especially in regional languages. (c) promotion of the welfare of theological teachers and students. (d) development of ecumenical co-operation among theological institutions and their libraries. (e) promotion of relationship between churches, theological institutions and study centres. (f) any other issues related to theological education.
new challenges of society, being an agent of change in the structures of theological education for the sake of the mission of the church, encouraging reflections, articulation and communication of the faith in Christ, related to concrete life situations in South Asia, and with a view to promoting self-reliance and self-determination.\footnote{James Massey, “Introduction” in \textit{Church’s Ministry and Theological Education}, ed. by Samson Prabhakar (Bangalore: BTESC/SATHRI, 2005), 2.} The Union Biblical Seminary, the first evangelical college in India, was also affiliated with Serampore in 1973 at B.D. level, paving the way for other evangelical colleges to seek affiliation with Serampore. Today, the SSC has 51 institutions affiliated with it including two in Sri Lanka and one in Bangladesh. It has blossomed into an ecumenical university having affiliated institutions from various Christian traditions - Baptist, Orthodox, Mar Thoma, Church of South India, Church of North India, Presbyterian, Brethren, Methodist, Lutheran, Evangelical Church of India and Pentecostal. All of them follow the rules, regulations and curricula of the SSC, yet they enjoy a semi-autonomous status having the provision to offer special contextually related papers. The wide range of expressed theological perspectives is recognized as the strength of the Serampore system. Concerning the relationship between the Board and the Senate, it has been said:

\begin{quote}
Considering the composition of the Board, the \textbf{Act of Serampore College} should recognize the Senate as a \textbf{river} and the members of the Board as its \textbf{tributaries}. This perception of the relationship between the BTESC and the Senate alone will provide basic value for common pursuits.\footnote{M.J. Joseph and J.S. Sadananda, “The Board of Theological Education – The Senate of Serampore College (BTESC) – An Evaluation” in \textit{Church’s Participation in Theological Education} (Bangalore: BTESC/SATHRI, 2003), 11.}
\end{quote}

The creation of one national structure also opened the possibility for centres of various types to join the Serampore family for wider ecumenical interaction among the theological colleges and other Christian centres.\footnote{Such as Christian Medical Association of India (CMAI), Indian Society for Promotion of Christian Knowledge (ISPCK), National Council of Churches in India (NCCI), Ecumenical Christian Centre (ECC), Christian Counseling Centres (CCC), Inter-church Service Agency (ICSA), Henry Martin Institute of Islamic Studies (HMI), and Centre for Dalit/Subaltern Studies (CDSS).} They are contributing much to the overall ministry of the Senate under the wider umbrella of BTESC. Since the formation of the BTESC, there have been healthy attempts to make a creative blending of the theological and pastoral dimension in ministry.

Another significant contribution of BTESC is the creation of a common platform for the involvement of the church in a ministerial formation programme. Theological education is primarily meant to equip the people of God in ministering to the people of God. In its attempt to evolve a common Christian vision as a sign of Christian commitment to the Kingdom of God and its pilgrimage in solidarity with human kind towards its fulfillment, the church leaders have a tremendous role to play in the theologizing process. However, there has been a big gulf between the theological educator of the institutions and the pastor of the congregation. The gulf has been narrowed down by allowing the participation of the church leaders in the decision-making process of the Senate at various levels. The BTESC continues to provide an occasion for the decision-making bodies of the institutions to learn from each other. Learning and unlearning, and interacting with each other go hand in hand for a greater vision of the future. This has given a moral impetus to the theological teachers in discovering and promoting the rich diversity and heritage of ecclesial and religious traditions in the country.

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The South Asia Theological Research Institute (SATHRI)\(^ {12} \)

The 1970s saw the first scholars earning Doctor of Theology (D.Th.) degrees from the SSC, but it was a very limited number\(^ {13} \). The concern for advanced theological research was expressed four decades ago to develop M.Th. programmes in affiliated colleges of Serampore. In the 1980s, the Board and the Senate saw the urgency to establish one national advanced research centre in the sub-continent in order to develop, co-ordinate and facilitate research at doctoral and non-degree levels, emphasizing its indigenous and contextual character. A national consultation with the participation of several mission partners from abroad was held in 1987. Intense planning and negotiation thus led to the establishment of the South Asia Theological Research Institute (SATHRI) in 1989 at Bangalore.

It is in this context that the Research wing of the BTESSC came into being to deal with the promotion of contextualized higher theological research both at the degree and non-degree levels, faculty development, strengthening centres for research, production of basic tools for theological education and publishing research works.

The need for a higher theological research centre was further intensified as a number of theological colleges upgraded themselves to B.D. and M.Th. levels, which created the need of qualified teachers with doctoral degrees. Teachers with doctoral qualifications were required to train people at M.Th. and D.Th. levels to give leadership in theological colleges. Hence, the SATHRI was formally inaugurated in 1989 with its base at the United Theological College, Bangalore. Its objectives were as follows:

1. To co-ordinate and guide formal research at the doctoral level under the guidance of the Committee for Research and with the co-operation of doctoral centres.
2. To organize programmes that are aimed at strengthening the relationship between theological education and the churches, strengthening inter-disciplinary research and answerability to burning problems of the church and society.
3. To facilitate non-formal research through consultations, seminars, conferences, symposia, colloquia and research projects.

SATHRI completes 20 years of its ministry with theological education this academic year (2008-2009). It started with three students and currently it has 130 doctoral students (27 women and 103 men) enrolled in six centres. During the last two decades 96 scholars – 17 women and 79 men have received doctoral degrees. In addition to the regular publication of SATHRI Journal and Asia Journal of Theology, SATHRI has published 45 books, mostly doctoral theses and non-formal research undertaken as part of the SATHRI programme. The research publications continue to generate new theological thinking and are making a great impact in the life of the church and society.

As an enabling and national coordinating body, SATHRI continues to play the role of an ecumenical link with churches, theological movements, overseas ecumenical mission partners and other theological associations.\(^ {14} \) It also promotes ecumenical relations with the help of resource persons drawn from Protestant, Orthodox and Roman Catholic institutions as well as secular universities both from within India and outside of it.

Theological degrees offered by the Senate of Serampore College (University) are relevant and contextual, and of high quality, but considering the changed global scenario of the ecumenical movement, SATHRI will be shifted to Serampore as of the next academic year – 2010. It is expected that this move will strengthen the research programme of the Senate.

\(^{12}\) See for details in “Regulations Relating to the Degree of Doctor of Theology” (Bangalore: SATHRI, 2005).

\(^{13}\) Prior to the 1970s most of the academically bright persons and ecclesial leaders were sent to foreign countries for higher theological studies.

\(^{14}\) Such as: Congress of Asian Theologians -CATS, Programme for Theology and Culture in Asia – PTCA, ATESEA, North East Asia Theological Schools (NEATS), South Pacific Association of Theological Schools (SPATS), etc.
Apart from the formal and non-formal research programmes, SATHRI’s innovative programmes have brought in a new range of theological issues such as the question of pluralism and inclusivism, gender justice, ecological concerns, persons with disabilities, HIV/AIDS, and the range of persons and perspectives represented in theological colleges and the pedagogical implications of diversity in every aspect.

Theological Education Beyond Campus – Theological Education by Extension

Theological education takes place within the well-protected campus. The main objective of the majority of the theological institutions within the Serampore family, until the early part of the twentieth century, was to train pastors. This was achieved through residential training programmes. In other words, students would have to reside on the campus of a theological institution for a period of time until they finished a prescribed course. In most cases, candidates undergoing education in residential theological institutions were mission or church sponsored candidates. This implied that all the expenses of the candidates were taken care of by the sponsoring agencies. In some cases, theological institutions offered scholarships. The SSC also started offering scholarships to some candidates doing theology at the B.D. level (women), M.Th. and Doctoral levels. However, what has been realized over time is that theological education is an expensive training; very few individuals can afford to bear the cost of such education. Many churches were receiving foreign support earlier themselves and now find it difficult to sponsor candidates for residential theological studies. With the increasing cost of living, the lowering of interest on bank deposits and other effects of globalization having an impact, residential theological education has become an expensive proposition. It has become a reality that theological institutions cannot run without financial support of mission agencies abroad.

Since residential theological education was meant for training full-time church workers, mainly pastors, the concept of external (non-residential) theological education during the first half of the twentieth century generally implied that some theological education needed to be imparted to lay people. Some of the churches and theological institutions made such education available through Bible Correspondence Courses. Such courses were taught in topics focusing on the understanding of salvation, Christian living, and other important articles of faith and practice. Such courses, whether in English or in regional languages, were largely modelled on the programmes conducted in the West.

Right until the 1980s, the SSC offered External B.Th. and External B.D. programmes. These programmes were, in fact, replicas of the residential B.Th. and B.D. programmes as far as the course material and their syllabi were concerned. However, the external candidates were not subjected to the rigour of periodic academic tests, submission of assignments, practical work requirements and college examinations. All that they were required to do was to take the university examinations at the end of the academic year. This provision of external studies provided an opportunity for qualified laypersons to go through the same academic learning as candidates in residential institutions. Such a programme has its problems. It facilitated academic education without the personal formation and practical training that was provided in a residential institution. The SSC realized that the external programme was creating an obsession among some of the laity for obtaining a degree, or it was fostering a professional objective without a vocational spirit. Hence, there was a need to bring a change to the external studies programme of the SSC; this was realized, towards the end of the 1980s, by inaugurating the Senate Centre for Education and Pastoral Research (SCEPTRE) in Kolkata.

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15 See Roger Gaikward, “The Extension Programme of the Senate of Serampore College” in Diversified Theological Education: Equipping all God’s People, 91-107.
16 Roger Gaikward, op. cit., 93.
17 Ibid., 94.
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Extension Education and Pastoral Research

The primary role of theological education is forming and equipping people in the local congregation for faith, witness and service. Hence, theological education ought to take place “together with people”, which includes all sections of the society – rich and poor, young and old, Christians and non-Christians. Very often we tend to think that the Christian faith of a community is fostered by providing it with a good catechism or Sunday school programme and familiarizing it with the Biblical stories. These traditional means are inadequate. Theological education has to take place together with people. It is for an entire community. It is meant to strengthen the relationships between people. Ultimately this means strengthening the solidarity and dialogical approaches in theological education. In today’s circumstances, every Christian needs to be enabled, in his, or her, own way, to engage in Christian praxis through the interpretation of the gospel. In a situation where we are confronted with endemic poverty and oppression, the marginalization of weaker ones, ethnic conflicts, the nefarious effects of globalization, the suppression and exploitation of women – all these call for responses from the local Christian communities. The catechism and Sunday school knowledge of the Christian faith may not come to the aid of the Christian community in responding to these formidable challenges. Christian communities need to be accompanied, then, by a theological education. It demands a shift in the whole process of theologizing, which should take into account the actual experience and context of the people. Also, this paradigm shift will help the whole of theological education in filling the gap between theological education and people. Therefore, new ways – structures and means – need to be devised, so that Christian communities are nurtured and sustained through appropriate theological education. This will help the communities to reflect critically on their present practices and engage themselves in new practices that will transform themselves and the society around them. This calls for a theological education that is firmly based on a critical solidarity with the victims. This should be the hallmark of the theological education, in this time of globalization, with the increasing divide between those who profit by it and those who are its victims.

Considering the above mentioned challenges, limitations and recognizing the importance of ecumenical theological education in the multi-religious context, SSC launched a programme, namely “The Senate Centre for Education and Pastoral Research” in 2003. The shift was toward theological education “together with people”, including all sections of the society – rich and poor, young and old, Christians and non-Christians. The programme is meant to strengthen the ministries of those who are already working in the churches, or in the secular world with different vocations and callings. This means the theological education offered by the Senate is meant to strengthen the relationship with the people, so that those who go through the process of such education will be able to work not ‘for’ the people, but ‘together with the people’. Ultimately, this means strengthening the solidarity and dialogical approaches in theological education. It demands a shift in the whole process of theologizing, which should take into account the actual experience and context of the people. Also, this paradigm shift enables the whole theological education to fill the gap between theological education and people. This means both teachers and students have to spend their time with the people by living with them. To foster this wider ecumenical theological education, the SSC runs three programmes consisting of three component elements – inter-church, inter-religious and cosmic.

The first programme is:

(i) Diploma in Christian Studies (Dip.C.S.) – This programme is open to all, i.e. to Christians as well as people of other faiths and ideologies.

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19 The aim is to:
The academic requirements for pursuing the diploma course were kept low, requiring only the successful completion of higher secondary school. Those who had completed only high school studies were eligible to register, providing that they had completed either two years of other studies, or five years of employment. Subsequently, the SSC resolved that those who have not been able to complete high school can also join the programme, providing that they pass an entrance examination and are at least 20 years old.

The second programme is:

(ii) Bachelor of Christian Studies (B.S.C.) – This programme is meant for Christians who are in different forms of ministry and lay leaders in various secular vocations.20

The admission requirement for the B.C.S. programme is university graduation. There is a provision for non-graduates to join the programme provided they are 25 years old or older, and have successfully passed an entrance examination. This also gives opportunity for persons who have completed the residential B.Th. course to register for the B.C.S. programme. Thus, some full-time church workers, including pastors, are provided with an opportunity to refresh and upgrade their credentials through the B.C.S. programme.

Both programmes aim to build a just and inclusive community in the context of the people of other faiths and ideologies, and the wholeness of God’s entire creation. Through these programmes, SSC reaches out to the whole people of God and collaborates with our parishes, church leaders and civil societies to educate God’s people theologically and ‘re-inculcate’ in them the spirit of service, justice and love.21

The third programme is:

(iii) Doctor of Ministry (D.Min.) – This programme is meant only for those who are in full-time Christian ministry.22

Full time Christian ministers who have completed five years of service after B.D. or B.S.C. are eligible to register for this course provided they pass the entrance examination. From 1998 through 2009, the number of candidates registered for D.Min. is 192.

Apart from their external programmes, SCEPTRE makes a serious attempt to respond to the changing demands of South Asia by organizing workshops and consultations. Conscious efforts have also been made

(i) Provide an opportunity in the Indian/South Asian context for study of Christianity, its history, faith and practice;
(ii) Make aware of the life, teaching and work of Jesus Christ in the Indian/South Asian context;
(iii) Interpret the Bible, its formation, and its significance to Christian faith in the Indian/South Asian context;
(iv) Provide opportunity for the study of the interaction of Christianity with people of other faiths and cultures;
(v) Study the interaction of Christianity with the socio-economic and political realities of South Asia/India.

20 It aims to:
(i) Develop “Kingdom of God” values (with special reference to justice, peace and integrity of creation);
(ii) Create critical consciousness and openness, to analyze cultural, social, economic, political and ecclesiastical values;
(iii) Provide tools for interpreting the Word of God in different contexts in society;
(iv) Enable persons to become effective witness in the context of their varied and diversified vocations;
(v) Provide theological education as a transforming influence in personal, ecclesial and societal life.

21 The SSC is presently engaged in a process of curriculum revision. In a couple of years the Dip.C.S and B.C.S may have different orientation content and format. It will hopefully affirm much more vigorously and vibrantly that theological education is for all people of God and that theological education should endeavour to be holistic.

22 The objectives of the D.Min programme are:
(i) To analyze the candidate’s own behaviour patterns, to deepen personal formation, to engage in critical reflection, and to equip with necessary academic and professional skills needed for the ministry;
(ii) To make the candidate’s own ministerial involvement and experience a basis for theological learning and reflection;
(iii) To provide tools to analyze the contemporary socio-political, religio-cultural contexts of the society and interpret their missiological implications for the Christian faith.

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to develop a new spirituality in ministerial formation, South Asian theological methodologies, theological reflections from marginalized perspectives – Dalit, Minjung, tribal, etc., a new pattern of theological education such as peace education, development studies etc., the promotion of a closer relationship between the seminaries and the churches, and the empowerment of women. We can see that the emphasis given to marginalized groups, women’s studies and other related fields have brought about significant changes in theological education. SCEPTRE is committed to meeting the demands of modern ministries effectively by responding to current social challenges and evolving newer patterns of theological education and research.

Curriculum Transformation

Until recently, the Serampore system pursued theological education based on a professional clerical paradigm. Under this system, students are trained to become the ‘maintenance crew’ replacing the old crew within the given structure. Theology is also perceived as a ‘science’, a discipline of systematic inquiry and exposition. As such, theology becomes the work of experts with departments of specialized branches. It reduces the whole theological education to a professional formation of a few select people for the church’s ministry, ignoring the whole people of God. It rather creates a hierarchical distinction between ordained clergy and laity in the church, and gives a notion that Christian ministry strictly belongs to the ordained clergy, but not to the whole people of God. It limits active lay participation in the ministry.

Since the 1970s, SSC started giving special attention to issues related to economic poverty, the indigenization of faith and practice, the plurality of religions and cultures, and the re-definition of mission. Gradually, other issues have also been included in the curricula for special consideration: patriarchy, the caste system, tribal concerns, urbanization, ecology, globalization and the communication and information technology revolution. However, the impact of the teaching and practice of the Western missionaries is so deeply rooted, people’s love for traditions is so strong, and the ecclesial structures are so dominant, that the acceptance of what is being attempted through the curricula of the SSC is rather gradual. Furthermore, the attractions of globalization, prosperity gospel preaching and the phenomenon of charismatic cults are posing a greater challenge to the theological education programmes of SSC.

In spite of all these challenges, the Serampore curriculum still follows the Western model. It reflects the colonial missionary pattern of education, borrowed from the established universities in England, with the sole purpose of producing assistant pastors and missionaries for their masters in the way Macaulay proposed. There have been sincere attempts to move away from such goals and objectives, but they have not been so successful, as the core of the structure remained the same and the changes were always tentative and cosmetic. If one goes through the Serampore curricula and syllabi, it is not difficult to see that they do not reflect the context of their times; freedom and national movements, war situations, attempts for indigenization, the utopia of independence, democratic and federal structures of governance, secularism, the emergency, globalization, and communalism. In the present context, some of the issues and concerns – women, Dalits, tribal, contextual theologies etc. - did force themselves into the theological curricula, but they are not fully incorporated into the course contents of each syllabus.

26 Ravi Tiwari, op. cit., 91.
27 Ibid., 92.
To be relevant in the Indian/South Asian context of the third millennium, theological education needs to change with the demands of the times, otherwise it will find itself sidelined. There is also urgency in developing and formalizing a link in training between the academic and practical formation that is supposed to be reflected in the present curricula. The four-fold division of subjects – Biblical studies, Theology, History and Pastoralia, is now out-dated and far from adequate. Such models of theological education cannot address our present crisis. The disciplinary approach makes it very difficult to add new courses and emerging problems and challenges such as globalization, religious fundamentalism, peace and conflict resolution, gender concerns, HIV/AIDS etc., are crucial in the South Asian context. It is precisely for this reason that the Senate should undertake the task of reviewing, updating, contextualizing and revising the curricula and syllabi of various degree programmes at least once every ten years. In the context of such an exercise, one cannot avoid related questions of contextualities of our various degree programmes, their nomenclatures, their relatedness and relation to similar programmes in secular universities and theological institutions.

During the last few years, SSC was in the process of revising its Bachelor of Divinity (B.D) curriculum. Most of the revisions that took place in the past were more in the nature of ‘addition and subtraction’ to the existing ones, so much so, that they were often termed ‘cosmetic’ changes. It resulted in the proliferation of subjects, courses and branches of studies in theological curricula at B.D. level with a heavy burden on the students, a growth that needed to be pruned. Curriculum revision exercises, which began with a discussion at the Board and Senate meetings in 2006, has been unique in many ways. It was a ground-breaking event that changed much of the previous thinking and principles of theological education in India. It involved in its discussions a wide cross-section of people who are actively engaged in theological education – church leaders, theological college administrators, teaching staff, students, activists and secular educationists. The papers presented at various consultations, and discussions that followed at various levels of decision-making, have greatly helped SSC to plan for the future direction of theological education in the sub-continent.

The new curriculum included its recognition of the importance of the context in which we live, and aimed at providing skills and tools to the students in understanding the same with a view to be an efficient minister to the people among whom he/she lives and witnesses. This recognition requires that our syllabi should be relevant to the context and it should be able to provide answers to the questions raised, and demands exerted, in such a context. It is for this reason that courses in social analysis, disciplinary methodologies, personal and vocational formation, study methods, and remedial language courses are offered to the students as they commence their theological studies.

In the new curricula revision, conscious effort is made in freeing the students from the clutches of departmental/branch-wise studies and a new concept of cluster is applied to make use of inter-dependence and inter-relatedness of the courses in the theological discipline. The inter-related branches of studies, used earlier, are grouped together in one cluster. Some courses are meant to be in interdisciplinary; it is suggested that they are taught by a team of teachers. Where two or three clusters are grouped together, they are meant to be integrated courses and to be taught through seminars and panel discussions. In the new curriculum, the following clusters are formed:

- Cluster I: Old and New Testament Studies with Languages
- Cluster II: Studies in Theology, Social Analysis and Ethics
- Cluster III: Historical-Missional Studies

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28 Ibid., 91.
29 Ibid., 92.
30 Ibid., 95.
31 Ibid., 96.
32 Ibid.
Cluster IV  Religion, Culture and Society  
Cluster V  Ministerial-Communicative Studies

It is to be noted that the departmental and branch-wise studies are left for higher theological studies. The revision of the post-graduate programme is yet to be undertaken.

Attempts have been made to reduce the risk of proliferation of subject/courses, branches and departments in the first degree level of the university. The concerns and issues of new branches of studies, as far as possible, have been included into the existing clusters of subjects and courses. Wherever it is felt that subjects and courses are important, and should be taught at B.D level, they are offered as half courses or incorporated as integrated and inter-disciplinary courses. This is the case in the ministry – communication cluster where the importance of B.D programme as basic ministerial programme has not been over-looked.33

Importance of Field Education

Field education has now been made an integral part of the ministerial training in which faculty and students will be actively involved. Two kinds of field education are envisioned: concurrent and intensive. As far as the concurrent field education is concerned, along with a regular weekly practical ministry programme, candidates may be required to have meaningful practical exposure and reflection in relation to some of the subjects they study during the academic year34.

Field education is given credit, not merely in terms of the number of hours, but in terms of the different kinds of practical work: rural, urban, church-related, inter-faith, social action/reform movements, etc. As far as intensive field education is concerned, it will be conducted for 20 days in a year. Such intensive practical work could be conducted during the semester break, or during the winter (Christmas) vacation, or during the summer vacation (after the annual examination)35.

Teaching Methodology

Teaching theology in a South Asian way demands a methodology “from below”. It means using insights gained from our commitment to the struggle of the marginalized – Dalit, Minjung, tribal, women and the rural people for their justice and human dignity. Before we talk about historical criticism, form criticism, higher criticism, lower criticism, cross textual readings of the Bible, etc., it is important that we talk about how the poor people – the workers, tribals, Dalits, the poor and powerless – would read a given passage in the Bible. We read the Bible, contemporary stories and religious stories together to discover spiritual resources for peace, justice, community life, healing and the wholeness of life. Theological education in South Asia requires the integration of subaltern perspectives into the academic discourse. It also demands reading the history of Christianity from the receivers’ perspective, not from the senders’ perspective. Instead of reading the history of early Western church history, the Roman church to the Middle Ages, the Reformation, the Enlightenment period and on to the 16th century, we can read the history of Christianity from the South Asian perspective: how we have received the Bible, how we have read the Bible, how we have created Christian communities, how we have challenged our own cultures and societies, and how we have transformed ourselves as a people and as a society as a whole. Reading history from the receiver’s perspectives involves the deconstruction and reconstruction of history from the experience of marginalized people. Their hopes and visions of the fullness of life become crucial in the reconstruction of history and

33 Ibid., 95.
34 Ibid., 95.
35 Ibid.
also in doing theology. When we integrate our interpretation of the Bible and our histories, our direction and goal of how to teach Christian theology (systematic theology) becomes clear. The goal is to bring about a transformation in our churches, in our immediate communities, in our politics, economic relations and also with God’s entire creation. This is to envision the reign of God and realize it here and now. This again demands a new way forward in our teaching-learning process. We acknowledge the positive values in disciplinary approaches and that a grasp of the basic disciplines is necessary. However, considering the multi-dimensional context of South Asia, a disciplinary approach alone will not be sufficient to unravel the complexity of our realities. An issue-centered and interdisciplinary form of teaching/learning is more helpful.

SSC has introduced many new ideas through a new curriculum. It is expected that a new pedagogy, using innovative and refreshing methodology in the learning process, will be instituted by the teachers. Some stimulating and inspiring departures from the old pattern of examination and evaluation is anticipated to take place. It is expected that an interdisciplinary and integrated approach will be extensively used as a teaching method.36

Practical work has been an integral part of ministerial formation; it was not, so far, given any credit. It has been given four credits under the new curriculum. New ways of involvement in ministerial training and evaluation through reflection have to be worked out.

Freedom to Initiate New Courses

The new curriculum provides enough scope for colleges to offer a few extra courses in fields they would like to specialize in and of special concern. Denominational colleges can now develop and offer courses dealing with their theology, liturgy, history and other concerns. There are some colleges that are interested in developing courses for a special ministry to the church and society; they will have the freedom to do so and establish themselves as professional centres in their own right. These courses, if requested, can be recognized by the Senate, and can run concurrently as certificate or diploma courses.37

Looking Ahead

1) Gender Justice. It is a matter of concern that the structure of theological education under SSC is mainly male dominated: 80% theological students; 90% teachers; 90% members of the governing board. In several theological schools, women’s studies have been incorporated as a separate branch or department at the graduate and post-graduate levels of study. However, it is obvious from our experience that we have not achieved gender justice either in theological colleges or in other forms of Christian ministry. The colleges have not given adequate attention to gender issues and concerns in their form, content or pedagogy. The present trends show that an addition of one subject or department alone is not enough to bring gender justice to the church and society. Not “addition”, but “integration” into the main areas of teaching becomes important. The integration of women’s perspectives in the process of theological education will create awareness of discriminatory gender realities and help people to do something concrete to change the oppressive structure currently prevalent. It is imperative that we struggle together with women toward integrating feminist perspectives in different programmes, in life and action.

2) Promote Networking. To promote South Asian contextual research and strengthen institutional standards for global credibility and acceptability, it is essential to promote ecumenical exchanges, especially within the South-South programmes. A better support system and mechanism among theological associations and universities, and with other theological movements and networks such as the Programme

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36 Ibid., 95-96.
37 Ibid., 96-97.
for Theology and Culture in Asia (PTCA), the Congress of Asian Theologians (CATS), the Institute for Advanced Study in Asian Cultures and Theologies (IASACT), the World Conference of Association of Theological Institutions (WOCATI) needs to be strengthened. This will help in catering to the fast growing demands for higher quality theological education and leadership in the churches.

3) Resource Sharing: Libraries play an important role in developing, preserving and promoting contextual theology and ecumenical formation. The new digital convergent technology is able to convert, collect, preserve and make resources available in digital text, including their availability online. A better mechanism for resource sharing among colleges will facilitate South Asian scholars to access resources in different parts of the world at a reasonable cost and hopefully help to promote teaching and learning of South Asian histories, the reading of the Bible and contextual theologies.

4) Promote Common Good. Theological education is accountable to the people and it is to be socially responsible. It should contribute to the common good of the society. How do theology and theological education express their social responsibility today? Unfortunately, the academic position of theology is isolated from the larger, secular academic world. There is no serious theological encounter taking place with secular learning. The founders of Serampore College envisioned that theological education should take place within the wider secular studies. This vision needs to be carried on. We need to broaden the scope of theological education and interact with secular learning. In other words, theological education should be located within the larger secular context on the principle of “common good”. Interaction with the secular learning process will reinforce the commitment of moral and ethical values. It will also challenge spurious spiritualities through critical academic research. The relocation of theological education from “four-walled” campuses to wider secular learning contexts will promote mutual learning and life-affirming values.

Appendix: The Senate Affiliated Colleges and Degree Programmes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the College</th>
<th>Degree Programme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Academy of Integrated Christian Studies, Mizoram</td>
<td>B.D.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Allahabad Bible Seminary, Allahabad</td>
<td>B.Th., B.D.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Andhra Christian Theological College, Hyderabad</td>
<td>B.D.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Baptist Theological College, Pilsen</td>
<td>B.Th., B.D.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Believers Church Theological Seminary, Tiruvalla</td>
<td>B.D.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Bethel Bible College, Guntur</td>
<td>B.D.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Bethel Bible Institute, Danishpet</td>
<td>B.D.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Concordia Theological Seminary, Nagercoil</td>
<td>B.D.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Calcutta Bible Seminary, Kolkata</td>
<td>B.Th.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Dharma Joythi Vidya Peeth, Faridabad</td>
<td>B.D.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Federated Faculty for Research in Religion and Culture, Kottayam</td>
<td>M.Th.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Gossner Theological College, Ranchi</td>
<td>B.Th.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Gujarat United School of Theology, Ahmedabad</td>
<td>B.Th.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
22. Indian Theological Seminary, Chennai  B.Th.
23. John Roberts Theological Seminary, Shillong  B.D.
24. Karnatakaka Theological College, Mangalore  B.D.
26. Leonard Theological College, Japalpur  B.D.
27. New Theological College, Dehra Dun  B.D.
28. North India Institute of Post Graduate Theological Studies
   (NIIPGTS), Kolkata  M.Th.
29. Madras Theological Seminary & College, Chennai  B.Th., B.D.
31. Manipur Theological College, Kangpoki  B.D.
32. Master’s College of Theology, Madhurawada  B.Th., B.D.
33. Mar Thoma Church, Episcopal Jubilee Institute of
   Evangelism, Tiruvalla  B.D.
34. Mar Thoma Theological Seminary, Kottayam  B.D., M.Th.
35. Mennonite Brethren Centenary Bible College, Shamshabad  B.D.
36. Methodist Bible Seminary, Vasad  B.Th.
37. Orissa Christian Theological College, Gopalpur  B.Th.
38. Orthodox Theological Seminary, Kottayam  B.D., M.Th.
39. Santal Theological College, Domka  B.Th.
40. Serampore College, Serampore  B.D., M.Th.
41. Southern Asia Christian College, Chennai  B.Th.
42. Regional Extension Centre, St. Andrew’s
   Theological College, Dhaka  B.Th.
43. St. Thomas Orthodox Theological Seminary  B.D.
44. Tamilnadu Theological Seminary, Madurai  B.D., M.Th.
45. Theological College of Lanka, Pilimatalawa  B.Th., B.D.
46. Trinity Theological College, Dimapur  B.D.
47. Trulock Theological Seminary, Imphal  B.D.
49. United Theological College, Bangalore  B.D., M.Th.
50. United Theological Seminary of Maharasthra  B.Th.

Professional Centres:
1. Christian Medical College & Hospital, Vellore
2. Christian Medical Association of India, New Delhi
3. Thomas mar Association of India, Kottayam
4. Life Enrichment Counselling & Training Centre, Thodupuzha

Doctoral Centres
1. South Asia Theological Research Institute (SATHRI), Bangalore
2. Federated Faculty for Research in Religion and Culture (FFRRC), Kottayam
3. Gurukul Lutheran Theological College and Research Institute, Chennai
4. North India Institute of Post Graduate Theological Studies (NIIPGTS), Kolkata
5. Tamilnadu Theological Seminary
6. United Theological College, Bangalore
7. Union Biblical Seminary, Pune

Institution other than Affiliated Colleges
1. The Indian Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, Delhi
2. BUILD, Mumbai
3. ATTI, Madurai
4. Ecumenical Christian Centre, Bangalore
5. SCMI, Bangalore
6. Interchurch Service Association, Chennai
7. Henry Martin Institute of Islamic Studies, Hyderabad
8. ATTWI, Bangalore
9. NCCI, Nagpur
10. Centre for Dalit/Subaltern Studies, New Delhi
11. The Leprosy Mission Trust India, New Delhi

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THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION IN HONG KONG: A POSTCOLONIAL READING

Simon S. M. Kwan and Archie C. C. Lee

Introduction

In an essay we wrote:

Some local critics lament that theological education in Hong Kong is not context-sensitive. Both curriculum structures and contents clearly reflect a Western paradigm of theological education. Most of the theological students here have to go through, as compulsory subjects, the studies of the works of Augustine, Luther, Calvin, Schleiermacher, Barth, and Tillich, and so on. Theology proper still means almost exclusively the doctrine of God, the doctrine of sin, Christology, soteriology, pneumatology, eschatology, the doctrine of the church, etc. The majority of the lecturers/professors received their own theological training in the Western world. Research into the history of local Christianity is so uncommon that almost no seminary offers a course in this area. Courses in contextual theologies, Asian theologies, feminist theologies, liberation theologies, and so on are rarely offered and if offered, it is only as an elective. The European and North American four-fold curriculum pattern (i.e., Bible, church history, dogmatics, and practical theology) is still taken as an irreplaceable model.¹

All this may give the impression that theological education here is only an appendix of the Western model, but we argue that it would certainly be far too simplistic to arrive at such a conclusion.² The discourse of theological indigenization, for example, has a long currency in Hong Kong. For sure, the formation of theological education in Hong Kong has been a correlate of the local context. In this essay, the local context will be conceived of as an in-between space engendered by a variety of historical forces in different periods of its history, which has resulted in a dynamic hybrid cultural identity – the Hongkongee identity.³ In several dimensions, in what follows, we shall give a generic sketch of the present situation as well as the history of theological education in Hong Kong. In doing so, we will be able to catch a glimpse of how historical processes have shaped theological education here.

¹ S. M. Simon Kwan, ‘Contextual Theology and Theological Education: Hong Kong, SAR’, in David Kwang-sun Suh, Annette Meuthrath, and Choe Hyondok (eds), Charting the Future of Theology and Theological Education in Asian Contexts (Delhi: ISPCK, 2004), 59-69.
² Kwan, ‘Contextual Theology’.
Hong Kong – A Stepping Stone

Throughout its history, Hong Kong was often used as a stepping stone by different groups of people for various reasons. Many, though not all, missionaries, both Protestant and Catholic, in the mid-nineteenth century were surely among those. Christianity has a short history of slightly more than one and a half centuries in Hong Kong, and it came along with the preliminary cessation of the Hong Kong Island, which is a portion of Hong Kong, to the United Kingdom on 25 January 1841 under the Ch’uenpi Convention. In April 1841, a group of twenty-two clergymen headed by a Catholic missionary, who was a Swiss named Theodore Joset, arrived. Shortly after that, on 22 April 1841, Fr. Joset was appointed prefect apostolic of the then newly established prefecture. Then, on 29 August 1842, Hong Kong Island was founded as a crown colony under the Treaty of Nanjing. In that same year, land was granted to Joset by the colonial government for the establishment of a church and a seminary to train Chinese Catholic priests.

The Protestant missionaries who had been waiting impatiently for China to be opened to them also welcomed the colonization. Shortly after the Ch’uenpi Convention, a group of eight Protestant missionaries sailed for Hong Kong to scout the trail. Months later, Jehu Lewis Shuck and Issachar J. Roberts of the American Baptist Missionary Union came. In the same year, the colonial government granted a piece of land to the trustees of the Morrison Education Society for the purpose of establishing a school in Hong Kong.

The prelude to the history of Protestant theological education began in 1843, when James Legge of the London Missionary Society transferred the Society’s Malacca College to Hong Kong. This school was, years later in 1848, developed into the Anglo-Chinese (Ying Wah) Theological Seminary for the training of Chinese ministers. In 1950, another seminary, called St. Paul’s College, was founded by the first colonial chaplain, aiming also at training Chinese ministers. However, both theological seminaries, to borrow James Legge’s words, “so far as the special object contemplated by it was concerned, proved a failure”. None of those, who received training in Legge’s Anglo-Chinese Theological Seminary, went on to be a preacher. St. Paul’s College faced a very similar situation. Most students eventually wanted to use their connections and knowledge of English to their own advantage – to make money. The seminaries were, in this way, used as stepping stones to the business world by the students. Legge’s school was closed in 1856, and St. Paul’s College was later transformed into a general school. Of course, we may also acknowledge that these two theological seminaries were also used by the missionaries only as stepping stones; they were not for Hong Kong, but to support the missionary work in mainland China.

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5 “Hong Kong” is conventionally divided into three regions – the Hong Kong Island, Kowloon, and the New Territories. Cession of Kowloon to the UK was in 1860, and the New Territories was leased in 1898.
6 Anthony Sweeting, *Education in Hong Kong: Pre-1841 to 1941 Fact and Opinion: Materials for a History of Education in Hong Kong* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1990), 143.
8 Sweeting, *Education in Hong Kong*, 143.
9 The London Missionary Society members in Hong Kong in this year wrote a letter to the first Hong Kong Governor expressing the idea of establishing an educational seminary. See Anthony Sweeting, *Education in Hong Kong*, 17-20.
10 Anthony Sweeting, *Education in Hong Kong*, 174.
12 Fuk Tsang Ying, *Introduction to Christian Church History of Hong Kong [in Chinese]* (Hong Kong: Alliance Bible Seminary, 2004), 51-53.
Interestingly, it was not only the seminaries that were stepping stones but also Hong Kong as a whole. Ying’s historical analysis reveals that nearly all the missionary societies, at that time, came to Hong Kong for the sole purpose of missionary work in mainland China. Founding and developing churches in Hong Kong was only marginally their intention. Hong Kong was largely treasured, but only as a strategic base. As a matter of fact, the Chinese-speaking church in Hong Kong grew only slightly. English-speaking congregations were still bigger than Chinese-speaking ones, even in the 1870s, after Christianity had been on the soil for more than thirty years; and in 1908, there were only slightly more than 2,000 Chinese speaking-Christians. Hong Kong was certainly not an important missionary field. It was, at most, a small and insignificant area that happened to be included in the Southern China missionary zones of various missionary societies. In regard to this, Sweeting’s remarks hit the nail on the head:

There can be no doubt that some missionaries were interested primarily in the mainland of China and considered the field offered by Hong Kong too limited and uncertain. It is also true that, even if they were prepared to devote themselves to Hong Kong, an excess of proselytizing zeal was sometimes considered to be counter-productive.

Let us turn to one other aspect of Hong Kong’s early history – the population in the early period was fluid. The colonial treasurer, in 1844, reported that the Chinese population was unsettled, and people were continually moving to and from the colony without any interest or stake in its prosperity. During this period, the Chinese population remained predominantly male and adult. Most of them had come here to make some money and then return home with their savings after a few months’ labour. Some wealthier Chinese merchants also came and took Hong Kong as a sanctuary from the political instability in mainland China. Hong Kong was used by many as a stepping stone, or a lifeboat, for various purposes. Most residents at that time saw themselves as willing subjects of a colonial government, and their primary concerns were with local issues that would affect their daily existence – issues of national or international import would not be paid much attention to by ordinary people, for their identity was never Hongkongee. This fluidity remained until the Second World War. Government statistics revealed that, in 1881, only 3.2% of the population was born in Hong Kong. In 1931, only 6.4% of the population had been residing in Hong Kong for over thirty years. Due to the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945) and the Nationalist-Communist Civil War (1945-1949) that followed, a major influx of refugees from mainland China occurred in the 1940s. In 1931, the population in Hong Kong was around 850,000; but in 1946, it grew to 1,600,000; and in 1956, the figure rose to 2,500,000. It was shortly after this period that the truly first generation of Hongkongee appeared.

The Christian church also grew significantly during and after the Second World War. Ying estimated that, toward the end of the 1930s, the total congregation size was around 10,000; however, in 1955, a

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15 Ying, *Introduction to Christian Church History of Hong Kong*, 1-29.
16 Sweeting, *Education in Hong Kong*, 141.
17 Sweeting, *Education in Hong Kong*, 140.
18 Sweeting, *Education in Hong Kong*, 140, 82.
22 Ying, *Introduction to Christian Church History of Hong Kong*, 34.
survey reveals that it had grown to 53,917; in 1960, it reached 74,470; and in 1962, 112,200. At this point, the Chinese community began to have its own settled church. Both Hong Kong people and its local church came into being in this “borrowed time, borrowed space”. Most of these people, willingly or not, settled down in Hong Kong. In the midst of very complicated cultural, social, political, and economical processes, the Hong Kong consciousness and the Hongkongee identity eventually emerged and consolidated in the 1970s – that is, more than a century after Hong Kong’s colonization. The fact that the identity emerged in the 1970s is crucial because it makes the identity highly hybridized. Back in the 1960s, when Chinese immigrants decided to settle down in Hong Kong, the political movements on the mainland virtually cut off Hong Kong’s ties to its motherland. Since the 1960s, Hong Kong was gradually integrated into the Western economy of capitalism as a global city, leaving its socialist motherland farther and farther behind. As an identity, Hongkongee has become almost Chinese but not quite, and almost Western but not quite. It is an in-between identity. In Lee’s words:

After about some 150 years of British colonial rule, the identity of being a people of Hong Kong is highly hybridized. It is a hybrid identity of being culturally Chinese and yet pragmatically British (in terms of its laissez faire economy and its British legal structures), both a strong sense of identification with China and an unexplainable fear of being national Chinese.

As we shall see, this piece of historical experience has a significant impact on the style of local Christianity and has inscribed itself into the curricula of local theological education.

**Seminaries in Hong Kong – Diasporic Communities**

We may conclude from the above that Hong Kong is a city of immigrants. Its theological education also shares this history of immigration, especially during its formative phase. Approximately, there are currently forty seminaries, Bible colleges, and ministry training institutes in Hong Kong. Fourteen of

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25 A phrase coined by Suyin Han (a novelist and medical doctor, born in Beijing. She studied medicine at Beijing, Brussels, and London, and practiced in Hong Kong until 1964) and adopted by Richard Hughes in his book Richard Hughes, *Hong Kong: Borrowed Place, Borrowed Time* (London: A Deutsch, 1968). This phrase is later popularized and has been frequently invoked by local writers and cultural critics as a metonym to talk about the transient situation of Hong Kong.
28 Rey Chow, “Things, Common/Places, Passages of the Port City: On Hong Kong and Hong Kong Author Leung Ping-Kwan”, *Difference* 5:3 (1993), 179-204.
29 Space limitation forbids us to give a detailed account of such hybridity here, which we have done somewhere else. See, Kwan, “Collaboration as an Alternative Mode” (thesis), ch. 1.
31 Advanced Learning Institute for Vitalizing and Equipping, Alliance Bible Seminary, Asia Baptist Graduate Theological Seminary, Asia Lutheran Seminary, Bakke Graduate University Hong Kong, Bethel Bible Seminary, Bible Seminary of Hong Kong, China Baptist Theological College, China Bible Seminary, China Graduate School of Theology, Chinese Christian Seminary, Chinese Mission Seminary, Christian Churh Ministry Institute, Christian Ministry Institute, College of Church Development and Leaders Enrichment, Concordia Seminary, Divinity School of Chung Chi College The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Ecclesia Bible College, Evangel Seminary, Full Training of Christian Workers Seminary, Global Chinese Bible Institute, Holy Spirit Seminary College of Theology and
them are members of the Hong Kong Theological Education Association (HKTEA), indicating that they are relatively more well-established – offering full-time degree courses with full-time teachers and students. HKTEA was founded in 1991 by eleven seminaries. Eight of these eleven founding schools migrated to Hong Kong from mainland China before the 1970s, that is, before the emergence of the Hong Kong consciousness and identity. Table 1 contains some basic information of the HKTEA member schools:

Table 1: Basic Information of HKTEA Member Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Seminary</th>
<th>Year of Establishment/Place of Origin</th>
<th>Year came to/established in HK</th>
<th>Denominational Background</th>
<th>Regional Association</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Divinity School of Chung Chi College, CUHK</td>
<td>Re-organized in 1963 (origin: 1864)</td>
<td>Shortly after WWII</td>
<td>Supported by Anglican Church, Church of Christ in China (Hong Kong Council), Tsung Tsin Mission, Methodist Church, Hong Kong and Pentecostal Holiness Church</td>
<td>Degrees conferred by the Chinese University of HK &amp; SEAGST33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hong Kong Baptist Theological Seminary</td>
<td>Re-organized in 1951 (Origin: 1870)</td>
<td>1951</td>
<td>Baptist Convention of Hong Kong</td>
<td>Accredited by ATESEA34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alliance Bible Seminary</td>
<td>1899</td>
<td>1949</td>
<td>Christian and Missionary Alliance Church Union of Hong Kong</td>
<td>Accredited by ATA35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Philosophy, Hong Kong Baptist Theological Seminary, Hong Kong Bible Research and Education Centre, Hong Kong Catholic Biblical Institute, Hong Kong Cell Church Ministry Training College, Hong Kong Internet Theological College and Seminary, Hong Kong Pentecostal Theological Seminary, Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui Ming Hua Theological College, Hong Kong Truth Theological Seminary, Hong Kong Voice of Prophecy Bible Correspondence School, International Christian Leadership School, King’s College and Seminary, Lutheran Theological Seminary, New York Theological Education (HK) Centre, South Asian Lutheran Seminary, Timothy Bible College, Tung Fook Bible College, United Wesleyan Graduate Institute, Yan Fook Bible Institute. Source: Inland Revenue Department HKSAR, ‘List of Charitable Institutions and Trusts of a Public Character Which Are Exempt from Tax under Section 88 of the Inland Revenue Ordinance as at 30 November 2009’, www.ird.gov.hk/eng/pdf/e_s88list_emb.pdf (accessed 30/11/09).


33 The South East Asia Graduate School of Theology.

34 Association for Theological Education in South East Asia.

35 Asian Theological Association.
## Lutheran Theological Seminary
- **Year:** 1913
- **Location:** Mainland China (Shekow)
- **Established:** 1948
- **Affiliations:** Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hong Kong, Chinese Rhenish Church, Tsung Tsin Mission, Taiwan Lutheran Church
- **Accreditation:** Accredited by ATESEA & ATA

## Bethel Bible Seminary
- **Year:** 1925
- **Location:** Mainland China (Shanghai)
- **Established:** 1938 & 1947
- **Affiliation:** Bethel Mission of China (Hong Kong)
- **Affiliation:** Affiliated to Acadia University

## China Bible Seminary
- **Year:** 1930
- **Location:** Mainland China (Shanghai)
- **Established:** 1964
- **Affiliation:** Nil
- **Affiliation:** --

## Evangel Seminary
- **Year:** 1932
- **Location:** Mainland China (Guangzhou)
- **Established:** 1937 & 1949
- **Affiliation:** Evangelical Free Church of China
- **Accreditation:** Accredited by ATA

## Ecclesia Bible College
- **Year:** 1947
- **Location:** Mainland China (Guangzhou)
- **Established:** 1949
- **Affiliation:** Managed by Ecclesia Ministries Ltd
- **Accreditation:** Accredited by APTA & affiliated member of ATA

## Bible Seminary of Hong Kong
- **Year:** 1952
- **Location:** HK
- **Established:** --
- **Affiliation:** Founded by Christian Nationals’ Evangelism Commission
- **Collaboration:** Collaborate with International Theological Seminary to offer MA degree

## Chinese Mission Seminary
- **Year:** 1978
- **Location:** HK
- **Established:** --
- **Affiliation:** Inter-denominational
- **Accreditation:** Accredited by ATESEA

## China Baptist Theological College
- **Year:** 1966
- **Location:** HK
- **Established:** --
- **Affiliation:** Founded by Association of Baptists for World Evangelism
- **Affiliation:** --

## China Graduate School of Theology
- **Year:** 1975
- **Location:** HK
- **Established:** --
- **Affiliation:** Nil
- **Accreditation:** Accredited by ATESEA and ATA

## Christian Ministry Institute
- **Year:** 1995
- **Location:** HK
- **Established:** --
- **Affiliation:** Originated from the Peace Evangelical Church
- **Affiliation:** --

## United Wesleyan Graduate Institute
- **Year:** 2001
- **Location:** HK
- **Established:** --
- **Affiliation:** Founded by OMS International, Hong Kong Evangelical Church, Free Methodist Church of Hong Kong, Church of the Nazarene Hong Kong District, Church of United Brethren in Christ, Salvation Army Hong Kong and Macau Command, Wesleyan Church North America
- **Affiliation:** Credits transferable to Southland College (Australia)

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36 Asia Pacific Theological Association of the Assemblies of God.

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**Part II: Regional Surveys of Developments in Theological Education Since 1910**
Besides the above-mentioned seminaries, some others had already been closed down decades ago for various historical reasons. After the closing of the earliest two seminaries mentioned above, there were no seminaries in Hong Kong until the 1930s, when one was founded by the China Peniel Missionary Society. In the 1940s, another was founded by the then Pentecostal movement. Both closed down, however, in and before the 1950s. Also, in the 1930s and 1940s, three girls’ biblical seminaries migrated to Hong Kong from mainland China to escape from the political turmoil in mainland China. All closed down shortly after the Japanese occupation of Hong Kong in the 1940s. This situation repeated itself several times before the end of the 1970s.37

According to Andrew Hsiao’s periodization, Hong Kong’s theological education came to its consolidation phase in the 1970s38 when the Hong Kong consciousness and identity came into being. Among the many important developments, two in particular deserve our attention. First, the indigenization of the leadership and the teachers began in the 1970s. At present, nearly all seminaries are headed by local people, and more than ninety percent of the full-time faculty members hold a permanent Hong Kong identity card. Secondly, more and more faculty members have earned higher degrees in theological training, and many of them have received doctoral training in the Western world. All of this implies that, within the past four decades, local seminaries have begun to be headed, both managerially and academically, by those first-generation immigrants and their offspring, that is, the second generation,39 who have received Western theological training. These two generations of people are those whose horizons were heavily shaped by the liminality of the historical process of becoming aware of the Hong Kong consciousness and identity. All this, to a great extent, has been giving form and substance to local theological education.

Challenges Ahead – The Not-Quiteness of Hong Kong’s Theological Education

Indigenous leaders but Western curriculum

As mentioned above, the indigenization of the seminary leadership began in the 1970s. Yet, the Schleiermacherian four-fold way of organizing theological sciences – Bible, church history, dogmatics, practical theology – still holds full sway in most seminaries. Local curriculum planners seem relatively uninformed about the debate concerning the fragmentation of theological education that has resulted from this four-fold pattern,40 on the one hand, and they also neglect the voices coming from the contextual theological movement that any curriculum be structured according to one’s own particular context41 on the other. Geographically, Hong Kong is part of Asia, and quite a number of its seminaries are member schools of the ATESEA and the ATA. Yet, Asian theology as a subject is offered by only a few of the seminaries; and wherever and whenever it is offered, it is offered only as a non-core subject. Curricula are far from being structured in accordance with the Asian context. Local Christian communities are still largely ignorant about the Asian contextual theological movement. It is true that after Hong Kong returned to

38 Andrew Hsiao, A Brief History of Chinese Theological Education Development [in Chinese] (Hong Kong: Taosheng, 2006), ch. 6.
39 For a sociological analysis of the four generations of Hong Kong people, see Lui, Xianggang.
41 For the most representative voice, see Shoki Coe, ‘Contextualizing Theology’, in Gerald H. Anderson and Thomas F. Stransky (eds), Third World Theologies (New York: Paulist, 1976), 19-24.
mainland China in 1997, the curriculum emphasis on Chinese cultures and Christianity became more significant; it seems, however, more of a renovation than an innovation. To borrow Chao’s phrase for our purpose:

…any attempt to ‘improve’ the present form of theological education is not enough. What we need is not renovation, but innovation. The whole philosophy and structure of theological education has to be completely reshaped.\(^\text{42}\)

The present situation of the theological education here is quite reflective of Hong Kong’s liminality and “not-quiteness”, as we mentioned above – Hong Kong is Chinese (Asian) but not quite; Western but not quite.

Theological indigenization but not-quite

The Chinese theological indigenization discourse has been a local concern for years, and, as mentioned above, has been blended into the curricula of various local seminaries after the emergence of the 1997 issue. The discourse, which gained wide currency in mainland China since the early twentieth century, was brought to Hong Kong by the immigrants several decades ago. It was, however, depoliticized on Hong Kong soil. The central concern of the discourse was originally socio-political.\(^\text{43}\) After it came to Hong Kong, however, it was largely turned into a discourse on inter-cultural and inter-religious dialogue. The indigenization discourse now being taught in some seminaries is the Chinese-but-not-quite one. We shall account for this not-quiteness in the coming paragraphs.

Western theologies with the destabilizing ones excluded

The theology taught here is largely a Western import. Works of Augustine, Luther, Calvin, Schleiermacher, Barth, Tillich, and others constitute the major texts. Theology proper still means, almost exclusively, the doctrine of God, the doctrine of sin, Christology, soteriology, pneumatology, eschatology and the doctrine of the church. “Christianity in Hong Kong”, as a subject, is being taught only at one or two seminaries. Practical theology courses are still teaching Howard Clinebell, Seward Hiltner, and Jay E. Adam. However, theological discourses that are more or less destabilizing, such as liberation theologies and feminist theologies, are, interestingly, almost excluded. Only one to two seminaries provide courses on feminist theologies. Two seminaries have recently used the name ‘feminist theology’ for some of their programmes, but the contents, which are gender insensitive and blind to the patriarchal cultural and social arrangements, reflect that these are merely programmes that are designed specifically for females. It is true that most seminaries in Hong Kong claim themselves to be more evangelical than ecumenical; yet, this fact is far from an adequate reason for the said exclusion, which, we contend, demands a cultural explanation. Lau characterizes the cultural mode of Hong Kong society as “utilitarianistic familism”. This term refers to:

the normative behavioral tendency of an individual to place his \([\text{sic}]\) familial interests above the interests of society and of the other individuals and groups in such a manner that the furtherance of his familial interests is


the overriding concern. Moreover, among the familial interests, material interests take priority over non-materialist interests.44

Accordingly, a peculiar political aloofness permeates the Hong Kong consciousness. In fact, it is not only aloofness – it is a fear of political instability. M. K. Lee gives its background:

If the riot of 1967 could be regarded as a major class confrontation between the capitalist class and the Colonial government on the one side and the working class led by the left-wing unions on the other, it would be the last of its kind in the history of Hong Kong.45

He further argues, convincingly, that radical ideology no longer captivates the people of Hong Kong. Theologies that are destabilizing, therefore, find no audience in a society where the immigrant mentality is so widespread and deep-rooted.

The above are listed only as challenges but not shortcomings. It is well argued in post-colonial literature that in-betweeness, not-quiteness, and hybridity, if taken creatively, can be sites that engender a third space via which alternative voices can be heard. So, the challenge of challenges is whether our theological educators will work with our people to turn all these into sites where the Hong Kong experience and its particular spirituality can be expressed.

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Seminary Official Webpages (only the HKTEA member schools)
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When I studied at the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Hong Kong, I had a very good relationship with the European missionaries who worked there. I got to know the European theological understanding of mission. I found their understanding of mission profound, as it gave full respect to non-Christian traditions and embodied the spirit of tolerance and fraternity which is embedded in Christianity. It is very different from the concept of mission which is employed by some missionary organizations who intend to use Chinese people to do mission in Muslim countries with imperialistic methods. China’s church does not oppose Christian mission, but it stresses, as a first task, to evangelize among its own people, and especially to take the social service of the church seriously. We are really illuminated and inspired by the idea of upholding the academic study of theology and social services as developed in European churches.

The China Christian Council (CCC) and the National Committee of the Three-Self Patriotic Movement (TSPM) held a transitional conference in February, 2008. During this occasion, a new leadership of the two national church organizations was elected. New leaders are now much younger than the older generation. In order to work more effectively, CCC/TSPM has established twelve commissions for special ministries. The Commission on Theological Education is one of them. As one of the vice-general secretaries of CCC and director of the Theological Educational Commission, my responsibility is to assist the general secretary, Rev. Kan, in his ministry.

The Situation of China’s Christian Theological Education

China’s Christian theological education was reinstated with the reopening of Nanjing Union Theological Seminary in 1981. Now there are nineteen theological seminaries and Bible schools operating and more than 1700 students on the campuses. From 1981-2009, more than 10,000 students graduated from the theological seminaries, most of them working in the local parishes, some of them ordained as pastors. Most of the leadership of local churches today belongs to the new generation. This makes the Chinese church look younger and younger.

What about the situation of China’s theological education then? I would like to use the English word “NOW” to summarize my observations. “N” means new, “O” means opportunity, and “W” means work.

“New” – new faces of Chinese theological education

a. New leadership: today most of the seminaries and Bible schools are in the charge of leaders who come from the new generation. Even if some theological seminaries are still led by old ministers, the daily work has been carried out responsibly by the young deans and vice-presidents.
b. New teachers: most of the theological professors grew up in the 1980s and some of them have substantial overseas study experience. They are young of age and full of energy, and have instilled their enthusiasm into China’s theological education.
c. New campuses: many Chinese theological seminaries have moved to new campuses with the general conditions of schools being improved. For example, Nanjing Union Theological Seminary has just moved to its new campus. The property of the new campus occupies about 200 Chinese acres and it can accommodate more than 500 students. Thus, it will recruit more new students from next semester onwards.
If we sometimes say there are many old buildings in Europe, China, on the contrary, will make you feel like everything is new. The theological seminaries give you such impressions.

d. New thoughts: China’s church has preserved Christian tradition, but at the same time it has been renewing its theology. The new generations are developing in a way that does not care for the rigidities of denominations. They easily accept new ideas. This is a characteristic feature of the post-denominational age.

The Chinese church has been undertaking a process of theological renewal for ten years now. The purpose of theological renewal is to promote a contextual rethinking of theology. We held the tenth anniversary on the theme of theological renewal and realized that Chinese Christian theological ideas were renewed to a large extent, including the ministers, who had left the old theology and absorbed a new type of theology to adapt to the changing social situation. The most obvious phenomenon is that younger ministers came to appreciate and support Chinese traditional culture, and that they identified themselves with Chinese society by taking up their responsibilities within the social context. Many began to combine their heavenly identity as Christians with earthly citizenship. This, indeed, is great progress and a renewal for China’s church. Today, theological students can also serve the society beside or outside their pastoral ministries. This was impossible in the past. The believer’s offering can be used both for church members and also for non-believers. Last year, Chinese Christians donated 150 million RMB to help communities affected by the devastating earthquake in Sichuan Province on May 12th, 2008. This shows an impressive change in China’s theology. It is, today, very different from the old type of theology which was concerned only to extend love to fellow-church members. It is significant when the spirit of tolerance, inclusiveness, and fraternity is being established among China’s Christians. It means nothing less than that Christianity begins to take root in Chinese soil.

“Opportunity” – New chances for Chinese Christianity

China’s Christianity meets new and healthy opportunities today. Firstly, it should be noted that the Chinese government affirms religions, including Christianity. In recent years, the official leadership has emphasized publicly that it takes religions seriously, and has shown a willingness to let religions play their positive roles in society. The government has also emphasized its support for promoting and educating the new generation of religious leadership. No doubt all of these emphases are of benefit to China’s church and theological education. For instance, it would not have been possible, without the support of the central government, for Nanjing Union Theological Seminary to accomplish its new campus. And, at the local government level, many authorities have rendered assistance to the local seminaries. The help and support of the government structures are providing a good opportunity for the seminaries in a context of poverty and resource limitations.

Secondly, there is a movement of intellectuals in China who are beginning to take an interest in the study of Christianity. Many Christian centres have been established in the public universities. A lot of books about Christianity were issued recently. Such studies and publications provided very helpful material and have enhanced theological education.

Thirdly, with the improving relations between mainland China and Taiwan, exchanges in the area of theological education have been made possible. On May 27th-28th of 2009, the CCC sent a delegation to Taiwan for “The Forum between Two Sides of the Strait on the Development of Theological Education”. The exchange was effective and we came to a consensus at last. Since we speak the same language and belong to the same culture, this development holds the prospect of some very good opportunities.
“Work” – the agenda ahead

The new leadership of CCC/TSPM is full of enthusiasm and works effectively. Besides embarking on a new orientation, they also participate hands-on in the day-to-day church affairs. They work hard and have surpassed the achievements of their predecessors.

In the area of theological education, we have a number of projects. Our priorities include publishing a set of textbooks for theological seminaries and promoting theological teachers’ training courses. About twenty years ago, we published a set of theological textbooks, but these are now out of date. So we are preparing for the publication of new literature, and we have begun to take the training work very seriously: We are training the leadership of the provincial churches to improve their stewardship abilities. Moreover, we are opening up intensive courses to Christian ministers in North-Western areas. We are also planning to train theological teachers during the summer and we are ready to invite leading professors from abroad to assist us in this programme. At the same time, we plan to send more seminary teachers to study abroad, some to do full degree courses and others to avail themselves of shorter-term opportunities for research.

Future Challenges to Theological Education in China

Where we meet opportunities, we also see challenges. Opportunities and challenges co-exist in our field.

Pattern adjustment

The pattern of our seminaries was developed in the 1980s. Without much to model our institutions on, we first established a national theological seminary, the Nanjing Union Theological Seminary. As soon as we realized that this alone would not satisfy our needs, many regional theological seminaries were established, to be followed by the opening of provincial theological seminaries. That is why we today have theological seminaries on the national, regional and provincial levels. This three-level pattern was developed within our own experience, not according to any educational rules, so it is not scientific in itself. With the growth and further development of the church, the shortcomings in our theological education are becoming more and more apparent. We realize the need to adjust the pattern according to the requirements and circumstances of the contemporary Chinese church. The objective is to operate seminaries relevant to our situations and the seminaries should be developed according to their own characteristics.

Degrees of students and grades of teachers

As theological education does not belong with national education in China, and is not accredited by overseas academic standards, innovation in administering student degree programmes and delineating faculty functions is a priority. In the past, the church did not take the question of degrees seriously. Many held the view that degrees contributed only to the church ministers’ arrogance. Any serious consideration of introducing degrees to our theological establishments was, therefore, deferred. But today, we realize the need to adapt theological education to the contemporary social educational system. We think it is necessary to make a deliberate effort to do the leg-work of defining degrees and introducing the appropriate grading systems.

Most teachers are too young and not mature enough

Since most of the professors are young, they do not have much experience at either the academic or pastoral level. Only a few outstanding individuals are ready to take up leadership as we upgrade our institutions. Our tutors need further education and more training opportunities to put their theory into practice.
Enriching the pedagogical model

The congregations of the Chinese church increase rapidly in numbers, especially amongst the educated young people. However, this has not translated into a groundswell of eager recruits for our seminaries. On the contrary, most theological seminaries are below their targeted enrolment levels. There are two reasons for this. Firstly, the salaries of church ministers are lower than the average salary, so this is a disincentive to the younger generation. Secondly, we have up to now only recruited full-time students who are ready to become pastors. But society has changed to become more liberal and diverse. Some people do not want to become pastors, but just want to improve themselves and increase their own theological knowledge. These are a potential target market, but, as of now, they are shunned by the seminaries. My feeling is that we should adapt to the possibilities, and change the patterns (and admission processes) of theological education.

Strengthening dialogue with scholars who are studying religions in universities

Today, there are a lot of institutes of religious studies in China, and there are many excellent scholars who are studying and teaching about religions. Some of them are called “Cultural Christians”. I consider this to be a wonderful act of God, whatever the motives or attitudes of these scholars. They are of benefit and an asset to theological education in China. At the same time, these Cultural Christians are also becoming a challenge to theological education in China.

It may be, in some cases, scholars in religious studies are much better academics than theology professors teaching in church-related seminaries. But I do not think we should compare the different disciplines. As theological professors, we do theological research within our Christian belief system and inner experience. That is different in comparison with the nature of theological research of scholars in the universities. Of course, we can develop more dialogue between us, but we are fulfilling different roles.

Chinese theological education is different from Germany. In Germany, all theological faculties are attached to secular universities and they have high academic standards. This is closer to the model of centres of religious studies in China. But the church related theological seminaries in China are independent. Their goal is to train the pastors not only for academic knowledge, but also for church ministries.

Bishop K. H. Ting once said that our seminaries should train Christian intellectuals, pastors, and citizens who both love the country, and love the church. Ting stressed the importance of the interaction between theological education, academic research, and social responsibility. In the 1980s, Nanjing Union Theological Seminary and the Center of Religious Study of Nanjing University used the same campus and the same professors. There were a lot of talented personnel that emerged from the Center. So many universities followed that model of establishing centres of religious studies and research. Today, the Center of Religious Study of Nanjing University has disengaged from Nanjing Seminary, but a lot of religious study centres are disengaging from the universities in any case. When we look back in retrospect, we find that while in the beginning, Chinese theological education had strongly emphasized academic research, with the development and growth of the Chinese church, the church members turned their expectations to well-trained church ministers. We are to some extent backward academically today. We should rise quickly to the challenges and opportunities to be academically relevant. In that way, we can restore and increase the dialogue with the scholars in the universities.

We have some major achievements in theological education already in China, but we still have a long way to go in our contribution to the process of a changing society. Thus, we should humble ourselves, work diligently, and learn from others. Only then can we successfully run the Chinese church.
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THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION IN SOUTH KOREA

Choong Koo Park

The Religious Background

There are three major religions that have been significant in Korean religious tradition before the introduction of Christianity: Shamanism, Buddhism, and Confucianism. Shamanism has been a religion for the lower class people. The shamanistic ritual has played the role of consoling the suffering of the Korean Minjung – the Han-ridden people. Minjung theologians named the suffering of Minjung ‘Han,’ an accumulated, unresolved feeling of the powerless. Minjung theologians claimed that Korean people were Han-ridden throughout their history under Confucian, Chinese, and Japanese rule. The uneducated Korean Minjung were oppressed, exploited, and alienated by the ruling class. Some biblical scholars argued that Minjung could be comparable to the biblical terms, ochlos in the New Testament, or amhaaretz in the Old Testament. Namdong Suh contends that the stories of Korean Minjung are comparable to Thomas Muentzer’s stories of the Western common folk. For this reason, Sunkyoung Park argues that it was natural for the Korean Minjung to accept the Christian gospel as an alternative worldview that could change their destiny. Shamanism has influenced the formation of a Korean religious ethos, one way or the other.

Buddhism spread into Korea in the 4th century and was assimilated into Korean political culture. Until the 13th century, the Buddhist worldview was deeply embedded in Korean religiosity. On the one hand, it supported the ruling elite but, on the other hand, it taught people silence, detachment, and submission to their fate. These ideas were fused into Korean politics for almost ten centuries until Sunggae Lee, the first King of Yi Dynasty, came to power through a coup in 1392. Immediately after the coup, Lee called for a cultural revolution. He attempted to change the fundamental social and ideological principle of Korean society from Buddhism to Confucianism. He considered Confucian social and moral values, such as loyalty, filial piety, righteousness, sincerity, and so forth, as effective virtues for re-vitalizing and re-ordering the whole society. Unfortunately, over time, Confucianism in Korea also became too associated with the politics of the status quo. As a result, it served only the interests of the ruling class, providing a theory of classism, sexism, and hierarchy between elites and common people, men and women, the young and the old, and the king and his subjects. Needless to say, the suffering of the people was an inevitable outcome of this Confucian society. The Confucian domination for over 500 years led Korean people to long for a new world, which was one of the causes of the Dong Hak Revolution in 1884. Dong Hak was a peasant revolution which took place in the 1880s against the harsh exploitative environment. According to a Minjung poet, Jiha Kim, the central theme of the Dong Hak Revolution was the unity of the divine and revolution, and that the ultimate goal of history was the unity of the divine and revolution by the Minjung, not by the ruling class.1

Introduction of Christianity

The Roman Catholic Church marks 1784 as the beginning of the Catholic faith in Korea with the arrival of Seunghoon Lee, who was a young Confucian scholar and officer dispatched to Beijing. He was the first Korean who was baptized by a Jesuit priest in China. Despite severe persecution against the Catholic faith

in Korea, those who accepted the Christian faith spread the gospel passionately to their family, friends, and neighbours. This was an unusual incident in the history of Christian mission because native Koreans, not missionaries, started the evangelization of Korea. In 1795, there were about 4,000 Catholics in Korea. The Yi Dynasty of Korea began to persecute the Catholic Church in 1799 and 300 Catholics were martyred. In 1827 another great persecution began and over 200 Catholics, including a French bishop and two French priests, were killed. In 1866, one French bishop was executed along with more than 8,000 martyrs, which were about a half of the Catholic population. Yet, by 1910, there were 69 churches, 71 priests including 15 Korean clergy, 41 seminarians, 59 nuns, and more than 73,000 believers.

The Protestant mission in Korea began at the end of the 19th century when American missionaries set foot on the Korean peninsula. In 1884, a Methodist missionary, R. S. Maclay, came first to Korea, and then a Presbyterian, Horace N. Allen, followed as an official medical doctor dispatched by the American government. Later, the Korean Presbyterian Church acknowledged him as the first Presbyterian missionary in Korea, although his official status was primarily a medical doctor for American diplomats. Therefore, historically speaking, the Protestant church was first introduced to Korea in 1884. In 1885, the Methodist Episcopal Church sent Rev. and Mrs. Henry G. Appenzeller, and Dr. and Mrs. W. B. Scranton, to Korea. Korea was a hermit monarchy ruled by the Yi Dynasty for over 500 years and many Western colonial powers had urged Korea to open its gates to the Western world. Before the 19th century, Korea had established a long saga of political and cultural relationships with China and Japan. On the one hand, Korea had been under the political and cultural influence of China for a long time. On the other hand, Korea had influenced Japan with an advanced Buddhist culture since the 4th century. Yet, by the end of the 19th century, China and Japan became virtually the only windows through which Korea looked at the outside world.

At the end of the 19th century, the Yi Dynasty adopted Confucianism as a national ideology and religion, which reinforced classism, grounded on the people’s origin of birth. Korean people began yearning for a new world without classism. Some Korean elites were introduced to the Catholic faith while they were dispatched to Beijing as diplomats, before the Protestant mission started in Korea. They found that the Christian gospel could be a viable alternative to the rigid Confucianism as a religion and philosophy. Both the elites and common people were in search of an alternative to Confucianism. Christianity in Korea was then able to meet the needs of the people who yearned for an alternative.

**Beginning of Theological Education and its Associations**

Protestant missionaries began their Christian mission by founding churches, hospitals, and schools in Korea. This mission movement heavily influenced the development of the modern consciousness among the Korean people. The missionaries began training Korean converts into leaders for the newly founded Korean churches. In 1886, Rev. Appenzeller founded the first boy’s school, *Bae Jae Hak Dang*, and also began the first theological class at *Bae Jae Hank Dang* in Seoul in 1887. Later the class became the first theological seminary in Korea, the name of which has changed from Methodist Theological Seminary to Methodist Theological University in Seoul. The Presbyterian missionaries also founded a theological school in 1901 at Pyongyang, which became later the Presbyterian Theological Seminary in Seoul. Seoul Theological Seminary was founded in 1911, and the department of theology at *Sung Kong Hoe* University (Anglican Church) was launched in 1914.

Each theological school runs its own curriculum according to its denominational and theological tradition. Since the government grants the accreditation of the schools, however, every accredited

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3 For the other theological schools and seminaries, see the table 2 at the end of this essay.
Theological schools must comply with the accreditation standards set by the Ministry of Education of Korea. Theological schools adopt a semester system like other institutions of higher education in Korea. In order to complete a B.Th. degree, for instance, one must study eight semesters (four years) to fulfill the required credits, which range from 125 to 135 credit hours. For a Masters programme, one must study at least four semesters to complete 36-40 credit hours. It is not surprising to see that most theological schools in Korea are heavily influenced by the Western theological curriculum, which is divided into seven or eight parts: Biblical studies, systematic theology, church history, Christian ethics, practical theology (pastoral care and counselling, Christian education, homiletics and liturgy), or philosophy of religion, etc. Recently many denominations began requiring a higher academic standard for those planning to become ordained. To be ordained in the Korean Methodist Church, for example, one must complete three to six years of theological education. Therefore, one who holds a B.Th. degree must complete two more years of theological education for an M.Th., whereas those who have bachelor degrees in areas other than theology must complete the requirement for a Master of Divinity Degree (M.Div.) programme to become ordained. Moreover, after completing three to six years of theological education, the candidates for ordination must also complete a two-to-three-year pastoral practicum.

Two associations and a theological publishing company are important in reviewing theological education in Korea. The Korea Association of Accredited Theological Schools (hereafter KAATS) was formed in 1965, its primary goals being the discussion of common issues surrounding advanced theological education in Korea. KAATS publishes an English language journal, the “Korea Journal of Theology”. The association has 800 individual members and 40 accredited theological schools and seminaries as its member institutions. There is also an academic association for Korean theologians, the Korean Association of Christian Studies (KACS), which was formed in 1973. The KACS publishes a quarterly journal in the Korean language, and an annual journal in English. Theologians and theological institutions in Korea have actively influenced each other through the exchange of theological discourses through these associations. In addition to these two associations, I would like to add some notes on one publishing company, which has dedicated itself to the advancement of Korean theological education. In 1890, the Christian Literature Society in Korea (CLSK) was founded for the publication of Christian literature. In 1953, the CLSK began to publish a monthly journal, “Christian Thought,” which has been one of the most important journals for theologians and pastors in Korea. Throughout the history of Korean churches, this journal has played a great role not only in promoting “indigenous” theological discourses, but also for introducing various theological discourses from outside Korea.

Korean Theologies and the Growth of Protestant Churches

Korean theologians have tried to theologize the Korean context in various ways. The representative Korean theologies can be Minjung theology and To-chak-hwa [indigenization] theology. “Minjung” literally means “people,” but the Minjung theologians conceptualized Minjung as ‘Han-ridden” people who are politically oppressed, economically exploited, culturally marginalized, educationally uneducated, and religiously alienated. Minjung theology is a Korean indigenous liberation theology that attempted to theologize the unjust social and political situation during the 1970s, its proponents including such theologians as Namdong Suh, Byungmu Ahn, David Suh, and Yongbok Kim. In 1975, these Minjung theologians issued a statement entitled “The Declaration of Korean Christians”. In it, they called on Korean Christians to stand against the dictatorial government of the day, in order to seek the justice of God. Those who participated in the anti-government statement, mostly professors, were dismissed from their teaching posts as a result.

5 Website of KACS: www.kacs.or.kr.
6 Website of “the Christian Thought” and CLSK: http://clsk.org.
They theologized the notion of Minjung as the subject of history. Under the dictatorship, numerous Minjung theologians were imprisoned and persecuted.⁷

Whereas Minjung theology primarily focused on the political context of Korea, To-chak-hwa theology, first developed by a Korean Methodist theologian, Sungbum Yun, focused on the religious context. Yun tried to construct a Korean theology combining Confucianism with Christianity and interpreting Christian teaching in the light of Confucianism. Dongshik Ryu re-interpreted Christian theology in dialogue with Taoism, and Sunwhan Pyun did likewise with Buddhism. These theologians believed that God worked for the salvation for Asians through various religions even before Christianity was introduced to Asia. Korean To-chak-hwa theologians raised a consciousness about the significance of theological independence from the Western theologies that often ignored other religions and cultures in their theological construction.

Despite the Japanese colonial domination for 36 years and the three-year Korean War, Korean Protestantism grew dramatically. In 2009, the number of Korean Protestant churches reached about 50,000. Christian evangelization in Korea seemed successful. In 1890, the total number of Korean Protestant Christians was only 17,577. But by 1995, the number had increased to 8,760,336.⁸ If we add to that number the 4.5 million Catholics, then the number of Korean Christians can be put at more than 13 million, a figure that amounts to roughly 30 percent of the Korean population.

Since the 1970s, Korean churches have been sending out missionaries to different parts of the world. According to statistics from the Korean World Missions Association (KWMA), 14,014 missionaries were sent in 2006 alone.⁹ However, a lack of theological depth in Korean missionaries has often created serious cultural and religious conflicts in the mission field.

Table 1: The Growth of Korean Protestant Population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>17,577</td>
<td>43,441</td>
<td>73,517</td>
<td>215,032</td>
<td>372,000</td>
<td>1,257,428</td>
<td>2,197,336</td>
<td>5,850,000</td>
<td>8,760,336</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Since 2000, growth has declined in Korean Protestant churches, for various reasons. One of the crucial reasons is that the churches have started to lose credibility. Korean Christianity has paid too much attention to the quantitative growth of the church itself rather than the qualitative growth, and people began questioning the motives and ethics of ministries. Even the concepts of Minjung and To-chak-hwa theology began losing their lustre, particularly as most churches did not regard these ideas as “authentic” theological voices. Prosperity theology, on the other hand, had a successful reception in the Korean church, popularized by Yonggi Cho of the Yoido Full Gospel Church. Not only Pentecostal churches, but most churches in Korea adopted the prosperity theology as the authentically “biblical” teaching of Christianity. Prosperity theology has contributed to the successful growth in number of churches in Korea, especially in the 1970s and 1980s.

**Challenges and Tasks of Theological Education in Korea Today**

According to statistics provided by KAATS in 2008, there are 40 accredited theological schools in Korea. About 630 full-time faculty members with mostly Ph.D. or Th.D. degrees are now teaching in seminaries

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⁹ Cf. the website http://kwma.org.
and university-based theological schools. Most of these schools offer B.Th., M.Div., D.Min. or Th.D. degree programmes. In addition, there are also approximately 150 non-accredited seminaries or bible schools in Korea. It is important to note that theological education, through both the accredited and non-accredited schools, has contributed to the rapid church growth by supplying pastors and church leaders who individually planted churches. However, theological education in Korea has recently been challenged by both the church and society when people began questioning the moral failure of the church leadership. It becomes clear that the new task of theological education in Korea is to thoroughly re-examine the curriculum, which has been designed under Western influence, so that the pastors and church leaders can be groomed into those who are able to connect Christian teachings to the Korean context with a theological and ethical maturity. Unless the Korean churches theologically and ethically renew themselves, the church will continue to lose its relevance in Korean society. Theological education is responsible for the very ethical problems that the churches have created in Korean society, in which clerical authoritarianism, nepotism, or misuse of church finances by pastors and church leaders have become commonplace.

Another challenge that theological education faces is a surplus of seminary graduates, as there are too many theological schools. Due to excessive church planting, the competition between churches has become somewhat problematic. Financial disparities between the “rich” pastors of the mega-churches and the “poor” pastors of the small assemblies are growing wider. About half of the churches are financially unstable. These all seem to point to specific problems within the Korean Christian church. As Helmut Richard Niebuhr mentioned in his book, The Social Sources of Denominationalism, economic factors sometimes betray the spirit of the founder of a religion itself.

Korean Christianity is now at a stage of deep stagnation, challenged by both inner and outer demands for reform. It is clear that theological education could be a very strong force that could drive Korean Christianity out of this deep stagnation. I would like to propose three directions that Korean theological education could take in response to the crisis. First, Korean theological education should put more emphasis on developing a new spirituality that connects the church to the world on the behalf of humanity. Second, reflecting the tradition of liberation theology, theological education should be able to expand the depth and width of basic values of freedom, justice, equality, and solidarity into all aspects of society. Third, theological education in Korea should be designed to meet the needs of humanity by providing the foundation of peace: peace among people, peace with nature, and peace with the next generation.

Table 2: List of Accredited Theological Institutions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Institution</th>
<th>Year of Foundation</th>
<th>Denomination</th>
<th>Homepage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Methodist Theological University</td>
<td>1887. 9. 18</td>
<td>Korean Methodism</td>
<td><a href="http://www.mtu.ac.kr">www.mtu.ac.kr</a> <a href="mailto:mts1887@mtu.ac.kr">mts1887@mtu.ac.kr</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>2 Kangnam University, College of Theology</td>
<td>1946. 8.1</td>
<td>Ecumenical</td>
<td><a href="http://www.kangnam.ac.kr">www.kangnam.ac.kr</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>3 Keimyung University Department of Theology</td>
<td>1953.6.11</td>
<td>Ecumenical</td>
<td><a href="http://kmu.ac.kr">http://kmu.ac.kr</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>4 Korea Christian University</td>
<td>1958. 4.19</td>
<td>Church of Christ</td>
<td><a href="http://kcu.ac.kr">http://kcu.ac.kr</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Korea Nazarene University</td>
<td>1954. 9.14</td>
<td>Nazarene Church of Korea</td>
<td><a href="http://kornu.ac.kr">http://kornu.ac.kr</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>6 Daejeon Theological University</td>
<td>1954. 8. 25</td>
<td>Presbyterian Church</td>
<td><a href="http://www.daejeon.ac.kr">www.daejeon.ac.kr</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Luther University</td>
<td>1958</td>
<td>Korea Lutheran Church</td>
<td><a href="http://www.ltu.ac.kr">www.ltu.ac.kr</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>8 Pai Chai University, Dept. of Welfare and Theology</td>
<td>University 1885; Dept. 1993</td>
<td>Ecumenical</td>
<td><a href="http://www.pcu.ac.kr">www.pcu.ac.kr</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Asia Life University</td>
<td>1996. 10. 26</td>
<td>Korean Jesus Gospel Church</td>
<td><a href="http://www.alu.ac.kr">www.alu.ac.kr</a></td>
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</table>

### Theological Education in Asia

#### Part II: Regional Surveys of Developments in Theological Education Since 1910

<table>
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<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>University Name</th>
<th>Year Established</th>
<th>Type/Church-affiliation</th>
<th>Website</th>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Pusan Presbyterian University</td>
<td>1953</td>
<td>Korea Presbyterian Church (integrated)</td>
<td><a href="http://www.bpu.ac.kr">www.bpu.ac.kr</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Sahmyook University, College of Theology</td>
<td>1906</td>
<td>Seventh Day Adventist</td>
<td><a href="http://www.syu.ac.kr">www.syu.ac.kr</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Seoul Christian University</td>
<td>1937</td>
<td>Korea Church of Christ</td>
<td><a href="http://www.scu.ac.kr">www.scu.ac.kr</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Seoul Theol. University</td>
<td>1911</td>
<td>Korea Christian Holiness Church</td>
<td><a href="http://www.stu.ac.kr">www.stu.ac.kr</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Seoul Women's University, Dept. of Christian Studies</td>
<td>University 1957, Dept. 1993</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>Seoul Jangsin University</td>
<td>1954, 4</td>
<td>Korea Presbyterian Church (integrated)</td>
<td><a href="http://sjs.ac.kr">http://sjs.ac.kr</a></td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>Sungkonghoe University, Dept. of Theology</td>
<td>1914</td>
<td>Korea Episcopal Church</td>
<td><a href="http://skhu.ac.kr">http://skhu.ac.kr</a></td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>Bible Baptist Theol. Seminary</td>
<td>1963</td>
<td>Bible Baptist Church</td>
<td><a href="http://www.bbts.ac.kr">www.bbts.ac.kr</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Sooungsil University, Graduate School of Christian Studies</td>
<td>University: 1987.10 Dept: 1997</td>
<td>Korea Presbyterian Church (integrated)</td>
<td><a href="http://www.ssu.ac.kr">www.ssu.ac.kr</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Graduate school of practical Theology</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Ecumenical</td>
<td><a href="http://www.gspt.ac.kr">www.gspt.ac.kr</a></td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>Asian center for Theological studies and Mission</td>
<td>1974</td>
<td>Ecumenical</td>
<td><a href="http://www.acts.ac.kr">www.acts.ac.kr</a></td>
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<td>21</td>
<td>Anyong University, College of Theology</td>
<td>1948</td>
<td>Korea Presbyterian Church (daesin)</td>
<td><a href="http://www.anyang.ac.kr">www.anyang.ac.kr</a></td>
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<td>22</td>
<td>College of Theology, Yonsei University</td>
<td>University: 1915 Theology: 1945</td>
<td>Interdenominational</td>
<td><a href="http://yonshin.yonsei.ac.kr">http://yonshin.yonsei.ac.kr</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Presbyterian College and Theological seminary</td>
<td>1910</td>
<td>Presbyterian</td>
<td><a href="http://www.pets.ac.kr">www.pets.ac.kr</a></td>
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<td>24</td>
<td>Jeonju University, Department of Christian studies</td>
<td>1953</td>
<td>Ecumenical</td>
<td><a href="http://www.jeonju.ac.kr">www.jeonju.ac.kr</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Central Theological University</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Central Conference of Korean Presbyterian church</td>
<td><a href="http://www.ctu.ac.kr">www.ctu.ac.kr</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Korean Baptist Theological University/Seminary</td>
<td>1953</td>
<td>Korea Baptist Church</td>
<td><a href="http://kbtus.ac.kr">http://kbtus.ac.kr</a></td>
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<td>27</td>
<td>Pyeongtaek University, Dep. Of Theology</td>
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<td>Ecumenical</td>
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<td>Han Nam University, Dep. Of Christian Studies</td>
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<td>Presbyterian(integral)</td>
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<td>29</td>
<td>Hansei University, Dep. Of Theology</td>
<td>1953</td>
<td>Korea Church of God</td>
<td><a href="http://www.hansei.ac.kr">www.hansei.ac.kr</a></td>
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<td>30</td>
<td>Hansin University, College of Theology</td>
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<td>Korea Presbyterian Church</td>
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<td>31</td>
<td>Hamil University &amp; Presbyterian Theological Seminary</td>
<td>1923</td>
<td>Presbyterian(integral)</td>
<td><a href="http://www.hamil.ac.kr">www.hamil.ac.kr</a></td>
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<td>32</td>
<td>Hyupsung University, School of Theology</td>
<td>1977</td>
<td>Korea Methodist Church</td>
<td><a href="http://www.uhs.ac.kr">www.uhs.ac.kr</a></td>
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<td>Honam Theological University and Seminary</td>
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<td>34</td>
<td>Hoseo University, the Divinity School</td>
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<td>35</td>
<td>Torch Trinity School of Theology</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Ecumenical</td>
<td><a href="http://www.ttfst.ac.kr">www.ttfst.ac.kr</a></td>
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<td>36</td>
<td>Mokwon University, College of Theology</td>
<td>1954</td>
<td>Korea Methodist Church</td>
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<td>37</td>
<td>Yonsei University United</td>
<td>1958</td>
<td>Ecumenical</td>
<td><a href="http://ysugst.yonsei.ac.kr">http://ysugst.yonsei.ac.kr</a></td>
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<td>Year</td>
<td>Type</td>
<td>Website</td>
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<td>Yongnam Theological College and Seminary</td>
<td>1953</td>
<td>Presbyterian(integral)</td>
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<td><a href="http://www.ewha.ac.kr">www.ewha.ac.kr</a></td>
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**Bibliography**


Protestant Theological Education in Post-Soviet Central Asia: Major Developments and Challenges

Insur Shamgunov

Religion in Central Asia

The term “Central Asia” is commonly used of five countries of the former Soviet Union – Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan. All these countries gained their independence from Russia in 1991. These countries are diverse ethically, with a predominantly Muslim population. According to the International Religious Freedom Report 2009, 1 Uzbekistan (population 28.2 million) is 90% Muslim, 5% Russian Orthodox. Kazakhstan (population 16.4 million) is 65% Muslim, one-third Russian Orthodox. Kyrgyzstan (population 5.2 million) is 80% Muslim, 8-11% Russian Orthodox. Tajikistan (population over 7 million) is 97% Muslim, the second largest group is Russian Orthodox (numbers unknown). Turkmenistan (over 5 million) has a majority of Muslims (numbers unknown), and the second largest group is Russian Orthodox (numbers unknown). All Central Asian countries have a small number of Roman Catholics, Lutherans, Korean Presbyterian, Baptists, Adventists, independent evangelical and Pentecostal Christians, but the exact numbers of those are unknown.

The post-perestroika period has seen a dramatic growth of Islam in the region; according to one expert, the number of mosques in the region grew from about 300 in 1990 to more than 10,000 in 2000. 2 Such a dramatic rise could be explained by the interests of the regional governments in the early 1990s, when in order to gain access to the international political scene they actively courted Muslim countries such as Turkey, Iran and the Arab nations 3 and welcomed a large number of Muslim missionaries. In subsequent years this trend was revised due to the fear of radical Islamic factions. However, Abazov maintains that society in Central Asia still remains divided with regards to the role of religion in social life. While the older generation, which was raised under the Soviet Union, considers religion a private matter, the younger generation is divided between those who are strongly committed to secularism and those who are committed to Islam and who call for a greater role for that religion in society.

The religious makeup of the Central Asian republics after perestroika has been significantly influenced by a wave of emigration of the Slavic (Russian, Ukrainian and Belorussian) and German inhabitants. At the present time, the Russian Orthodox Church still continues to be the second largest religious group in Central Asia. However, between 1991 and 2007 almost three-quarters of the Slavic population left Tajikistan and Turkmenistan, and nearly half left Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan and to a lesser degree Kazakhstan. 4 As the majority of Slavs traditionally belong to the Russian Orthodox Church, Abazov assumes that if this trend continues, many of the remaining Orthodox churches will close within the next 20 to 30 years. Likewise, many of the Germans, who constituted the majority of the Protestants (Lutherans, Baptists and Mennonites) in Central Asia, emigrated to Germany.

1 See respective countries at www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009; (accessed 8/1/10).
4 Abazov, 76.
The Protestant Church Before Perestroika

Protestant churches appeared in Central Asia in the second part of the 18th century, in small numbers, mostly consisting of Lutherans – German migrants, who were invited to settle in the Empire by the edict of Russian Empress Catherine II in 1763. Between 1890 and 1917 the numbers of Protestants grew significantly in Kazakhstan, which was colonized by a large number of non-conformist (Baptist, Mennonites and Adventists) peasants migrating from Russia, fleeing from persecution of the Orthodox Church and looking for better economic conditions. By 1917, due to fervent evangelism, the Protestants grew to a significant religious entity. In some areas of Kazakhstan they were up to 8% of the population.

During the Soviet times, the church was severely persecuted; large number of leaders were imprisoned, killed, or exiled. In 1944, the Council of the Affairs of Religious Cults, which was instituted by the Soviet government to deal with all non-Orthodox religious groups, encouraged the formal union of Evangelical Christians and Baptists into one organization. Thus, the Union of Evangelical Christians and Baptists – the biggest Protestant denomination in the USSR – was created. Virtually no theological training was allowed until the fall of the empire.

Rise and Fall of Theological Education after the Perestroika

A period of dramatic growth of the Protestant church occurred after the fall of the Soviet Union. Following the events of 1990, Protestant evangelicals have become the fastest growing religious minority in Central Asia. During a brief period of religious freedom, dozens of Protestant mission agencies and hundreds of missionaries came into the region and engaged in intense evangelistic and church-planting activities. Before 1990, Protestant churches in the region were overwhelmingly Slavic or German. During the 1990s, many indigenous Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Uzbek, Turkmen, Tajik and Tatar churches were established in the region. According to the recent report by a working research group of Kazakh Partnership “EP: 2007 Project Overview,” which collected data from 887 Protestant churches, in 2007 Kazakhstan alone had 30,703 Protestant adherents. By 2009 it had 1,018 of registered Protestant organizations, with 543 places of worship. Similar growth occurred in Kyrgyzstan, and to a lesser extent, in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

With such growth came a need for pastoral training. As a result, new theological colleges offering all sorts of programmes began mushrooming in the region. Mark Elliott, in his reports on Protestant theological education in the former Soviet Union, describes the unprecedented growth of such colleges from none in 1986 to over 100 in 1999; in fact he ranks it “as one of the more dramatic developments in leadership training in the history of Protestantism”. In the short span of time, dozens of theological institutions appeared in Central Asia. The majority of mission agencies, due to a rapid church growth in the 1990s, saw it as one of their primary objectives to establish training of leaders. All kinds of theological programmes in different training formats were established – extension courses, evening classes, modular courses, and full-time 3-4 years Bible schools and seminaries educating students on Bachelor’s and even Master’s levels. Even as the author of this article conducted his doctoral research in the region in the early

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6 Andretsov, 163.
7 This figure for Protestants may be considered conservative because only about 50 percent of their churches submitted information for the above study, and it also omits unregistered and house churches.
Theological Education in Asia

Part II: Regional Surveys of Developments in Theological Education Since 1910

2007, most of the main Protestant denominations had their own theological institutions freely operating in Bishkek and Almaty.\(^{10}\)

Unfortunately, religious freedom did not last long. All five countries of Central Asia in recent years faced increasing government control and pressure in various forms from discrimination to outright persecution. As Peyrouse\(^{11}\) shows, the structure of the Soviet state control of religion that disappeared for a while following perestroika, was in various degrees later reintroduced in Central Asian countries. Most of them resurrected the infamous Committee for Religious Affairs – a Soviet-style institution, in essence, a manifestation of a government’s ambition to dominate and regulate religion. They still maintain a Soviet-style classification of religions, dividing them into “traditional religions” – that is, Islam designated the Turkic-speaking population, the Orthodox church for Russians, the Lutheran Church for Germans, etc; and “sects” such as the evangelical churches and other non-traditional religious minorities. While the “traditional” religious groups are considered to be more or less socially “safe,” the “sects” – particularly those aided by the foreign mission organizations that appeared after perestroika – are viewed as foreign movements that “would threaten social stability and challenge the independence of the republic”.\(^{12}\) Peyrouse rightly points out that such a classification does not rest on any sociological study, but simply “allows authorities to marginalize any community that seeks to extirpate itself from the imposed structure of control”.\(^{13}\)

Turkmenistan, of all Central Asian republics, has received the hardest blows to personal and religious freedoms. During the dictatorial rule of Saparmurat Niyazov, all missionary activity was prohibited, most churches were closed down and no theological education was allowed. The situation did not change substantially after the death of Niyazov in 2006 and the election of a new president. Today no known Protestant theological institutions exist in Turkmenistan. Only a few leaders of existing underground churches obtained some form of theological education outside of the country.

Uzbekistan operates with a severely restrictive religious law of 1998 that prohibits any proselytism, disseminating religious literature and offering private religious instruction. Missionary activity is banned. Several denominational theological schools that were established and operated for several years after the perestroika, are now shut down by the government. Existing churches wishing to educate their leaders have to cross the border to attend theological schools in other CIS countries.

Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, that until very recently enjoyed religious freedom, have introduced major restrictions on the church and religious education. The government of Kazakhstan in the spring of 2008 required all religious institutions to operate with a license from the Ministry of Education, which is virtually impossible to obtain in practice. Therefore, in 2008-2009, the majority of Protestant theological institutions were officially closed. Some existing schools continue offering short courses, but are legally banned from issuing diplomas. Others continue unofficially offering training in the form of extension courses. The same happened in Kyrgyzstan. In June 2008, a Western missionary, who served as a principal of an interdenominational Kyrgyz theological college, was expelled from the country because he refused to open confidential student files for the national secret police. Later, Kyrgyzstan passed a highly restrictive religious law that came into force in January 2009, which resulted in the closure of most other theological institutions.

Tajikistan today is the only country of Central Asia where several theological colleges still operate legitimately, although the situation remains fragile. These institutions offer their students modular intensive training theological programmes.

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\(^{10}\) Due to a sensitive political situation in the region, the institutions and the individuals are not named in this article.

\(^{11}\) Peyrouse 2007, 104.

\(^{12}\) Idem 2007, 114.

\(^{13}\) Idem.
There are two schools outside of Central Asia that specialize in the contextual theological training of Central Asian Christian leaders. The College in Kishinev (Moldova) offers a Bachelor’s level full-time academic programme. The college in Kazan (Tatarstan, Russia) offers an innovative one-year residential programme that integrates classroom instruction with practical church-planting training and a strong mentoring component. After one year of training, the graduates return to their ministry in Central Asia and continue their education in Kazan in a modular Bachelor’s level programme, while being supported by their mentors.

Other Challenges for Theological Education

No one can predict whether existing theological schools will survive current pressures. Most of them officially stopped functioning by 2009. However, below are underlined some of the challenges which theological schools were facing just before the political crackdown. Some of the challenges were external, such as political pressure, growing materialism and indifference to Christianity, stagnation of the church growth, and the corruption of the society. Other challenges came from the inside.

Stagnation of church growth and declining enrolment

In 2007, the author of this article conducted a qualitative in-depth interviewing of 40 graduates of four major theological schools in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. The schools represented in the study were Baptist, Pentecostal, independent evangelical, and an interdenominational one. All of these Colleges were offering theological programmes designed to train pastors of local churches. The ministers – graduates of these colleges – reported a general decline in society’s interest in Christian spirituality over the last few years. Interestingly, they connected and related this not so much to the government’s restrictions, but to the rapid economic growth and dramatic increase in the cost of living that took place in both countries, especially in Kazakhstan with its rich oil resources. The result was significantly increased business, rocketing prices, and rampant materialism, with unprecedented opportunities to reach a decent standard of living. As one pastor expressed it, a new god, “I Have No Time,” has appeared.

Because of Central Asia’s dramatic societal, economic, and political changes, the general stagnation of church growth, emigration, the poor financial prospects for pastors and the low value of a theological diploma in the secular job market, the pool of new students was quickly exhausted. As a result, at the beginning of the 21st century, most theological institutions in Central Asia were already struggling with declining enrolment. Another reason for declining enrolment was the bias of some ultra-conservative church leaders against theological education. Even before the restrictive laws were passed in Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan, some institutions closed down completely, while others had to restructure their format from a full-time to a modular format which is more attractive for pastors as this was allowing the students to receive instruction without having to leave their ministry.

A classroom-ministry disconnection

Interviewed graduates generally shared a positive view of their training: they felt that it had provided them with helpful biblical knowledge, with certain ministry skills, with skills for continued learning, and that it had positively influenced their character formation. Strikingly, however, most graduates could not articulate links between the training they had received and their ability to deal with the problems they were currently facing in their ministry. In many cases training failed to equip students to integrate classroom studies with practical ministry, and placed a disproportionate emphasis upon subjects that had only few obvious links to the practice of faith.


Handbook of Theological Education in World Christianity
As to be expected from very young theological institutions in Central Asia, in most cases they adopted a classical Western theological curriculum with minimal contextual adaptation. However, one of the most surprising findings of this study was that only a quarter of the interviewed graduates pointed to cross-cultural issues as bearing any significance for effective learning. Rather, the majority of the graduates were more concerned with the practical application of what their teachers taught, which in turn they linked not to their teachers’ cultural background, but primarily to their practical experience, personal spiritual maturity and teaching expertise. Although graduates did praise a few talented and experienced national teachers, many pointed out that it was better to have experienced, seasoned foreign teachers than young, inexperienced national ones.

It was not surprising, that the graduates who felt they received the most benefit from their training for their later practice were the ones who were either actively involved in a local church ministry or who actively participated in student mission activities during their training. The theory-practice gap was minimal for them, as they were able to quickly transfer the learning that they needed, and to rapidly contextualize the knowledge that they needed for immediate use. At the same time, the majority of the criticisms from graduates were directed not at culturally un-contextualized theological training, but at the larger issue of the theory-practice divide, which is relevant not only to Central Asia, but to theological education everywhere.15

Lack of mentoring and spiritual formation
Although the four studied Central Asian institutions were relatively successful in the spiritual formation of their students, it seemed to be the incidental outcome of the personal influence of their teachers, rather than the actual intention of their training. Instructors who are experienced and spiritually mature practitioners served as 1) models, 2) mentors, and 3) sources of authoritative practical knowledge for students. The importance of modelling and mentoring for the training of ministers was confirmed by another finding: about a third of the pastors found mentoring support essential for their further professional and personal development after graduation.

The importance of mentoring for the development of novice professionals is widely discussed in the literature on professional training, and in many cases is accepted as an integral part of professional development. Unfortunately, this is not the case in theological education, where mentoring is often viewed as a “nice thing on the side,” but not as an essential part of training for ministry. As the findings of this study show, theological institutions in Central Asia are not an exception to the general rule. Of the schools studied, one of the Kazakh colleges made the most effort in mentoring through its “curator” (spiritual supervisor) of students. Nevertheless, most of the modelling and mentoring that occurred at the colleges happened in an informal way and was virtually a by-product of the training experience.

In short, theological education in Central Asia seemed to have inherited the common flaws of theological education elsewhere. The major concerns were the applicability of theological knowledge, the lack of practical ministry, and the need for spiritual formation.

Lack of interdenominational cooperation
Lack of coordination between Protestant denominations and a minimal level of cooperation resulted in oversupply, unhealthy competition and poor standards of various training courses. Several graduates considered the sheer number of theological institutions detrimental to the quality of ministry training. It seems, that mission agencies which were operating in the area after the fall of the Soviet Union, had little

awareness of each other’s efforts, each agency started their own training and because the churches did not grow as rapidly as they hoped, the supply of training opportunities has quickly outgrown the demand. Because most of these institutions did not charge a fee for training, church leaders often choose schools for their ministerial candidates on this basis. This created a problem through negative competition: institutions with higher admission standards were losing applicants because of free, Western-funded training courses.

Conclusion

No one can predict the future of Protestant theological education in Central Asia. Severely restricted by the government, it is likely that distance learning and Web-based learning will play a more prominent role in the region. However, theological education is more than a transfer of knowledge, and the need for practical and spiritual formation that is best done face-to-face, cannot be over-emphasized. Apart from the financial support, it seems that the best help the Western church has offered Central Asia so far was not by establishing yet another training institution, but by sending in low-profile, wise and experienced practitioners who were willing to come alongside local Christian leaders, encourage, mentor and train them on the job. That is a significant role many of the tent-maker missionaries can still play even in the situation of government opposition.

For the local Christians several options are possible. First, pastors of existing churches may want to unofficially train young ministers ‘on-the-job’ as apprentices. They may complement such training of young ministers by using theological resources on the Web. Second, some of the colleges might want to completely restructure their programmes and provide young Christians with a high quality general higher education, similar to the education provided by Christian liberal arts colleges in the United States, which may allow their institutions to be recognized by the authorities. Thirdly, some students may still want to receive training abroad – not necessarily in the West, but in nearby Russia, Tatarstan and Moldova. Finally, some schools will continue to function underground. During a phone interview in late 2008, one principal in anticipation of a closure of his College, calmly told the author of this article that his College will continue training pastors with or without the government’s permission – when last he checked, he said, Christ’s mandate to make disciples was still in power.

Bibliography

THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION IN THE PACIFIC AND AUSTRALIA

THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION IN OCEANIA

Winston Halapua

When pioneering missionaries first arrived in this part of the world, the region had already been named the Pacific by people from Europe. Like many of situations in the South, major developments in theological education in the Pacific had roots in Europe. This chapter will endeavour not only to identify broadly key developments, but also to critically examine their roots in the West. When most Pacific states became independent in the 1970s, the way of doing theological education began to gradually change. At the end of the twentieth century, leading Pacific theologians, with the influence of Pacific anthropologists and sociologists, were questioning critically the notion of Pacific as an authentic identity. The Western view of the Pacific and its people was a foreign and limited understanding of the immense ocean with scattered islands. The name Pacific given by outsiders came to imply smallness, helplessness, isolation, scatteredness, and underdevelopment, and even encouraged unhelpful romantic notions. This broad survey explores a shifting paradigm in doing theological education in the region. Theological educators in the Pacific have reclaimed their ancient identity which our ancestors gifted to generations to come. Moana (ocean) is the ancient name for this region. The ocean is always home, identity, and destination. It is immense, dynamic, serene, wild, and full of resources, hospitality, and gifts to celebrate and to be shared. The paradigm shift and challenge presented in this chapter reveals how theological education in this region has developed from a Pacific context to an Oceanic rhythm which reflects the reality of the immense love of God which is rich, dynamic, alive, and ever-flowing in Oceania, our home and place for theological education.

From National to Regional Theological Education

In the mid-1960s, church leaders in the Pacific gathered to find a way forward in working together. In order to strategise and plan a roadmap for mission, and to encourage prophetic leadership in the changing church of the Pacific, a regional centre for theological education became a paramount objective. The Pacific Theological College was established in Suva, Fiji, in 1966. The purpose was to equip Pacific leaders to meet the new challenges of the changing and diverse contexts in the region. The college also would offer higher degrees than those then available in various national theological colleges. Malua Theological College (Congregational Christian Church), Piula (Methodist) Samoa, Sia’atoutai Theological College (Free Wesleyan) Tonga, Davuilevu Theological College (Methodist) Fiji, Ecole Pastorale d’Hermon, Takanoa Theological College and Talu’a Theological College could send students for further studies and qualifications.

The first Principal of the Pacific Theological College was Professor George Knight. He was given the pioneering task of putting in place the first degree programme through the Pacific Theological College. Students flocked to the college from Papua New Guinea in the West, French Polynesia in the East, the Cook Islands in the South, and Tuvalu in the North. The Rev. Dr. Amanaki Havea was seconded by the Conference of the Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga to be the first Pacific Principal, and he brought with him a Pacific perspective of theological education. As a church leader, and one of the Pacific pioneers of
the Pacific Conference of Churches and theological education, he imparted his knowledge and wisdom to many future Pacific theological educators. Both Dr. Knight, the first Principal, and Dr. Havea, the first Pacific Principal of the college, along with their successors and able teaching faculty over the formative years, pioneered not only higher theological education in the second part of the 20th century, but also developed and communicated new Pacific ways of doing theological education. Dr. Havea developed Coconut Theology, and this gained wider recognition. It was an example of leadership in theological thinking from the Pacific. The motivation of coming together in the region and the formation of the Pacific Theological College energised the vision of a regional association of theological schools in the Pacific.

The establishment of the Pacific Regional Seminary for the training of seminarians in the Pacific context brought Roman Catholic students together from far and wide in the Pacific. The close proximity of the Pacific Theological College and the Pacific Regional Seminary in Suva, Fiji, the exchange of resources and working in partnership in teaching, and the opportunities for joint worship and fellowship and sport, have been a tower of strength for ecumenism and the common witness in theological education and mission in Oceania. The ecumenical working together of the two institutions is prophetic on our ecumenical journey. In Oceania, many church leaders in the mainline churches have known one another from their student days in either of the two institutions. In terms of development of their theological education in their diverse contexts, the partnerships gained from working together in Fiji have become pearls for doing mission in Oceania.

South Pacific Association of Theological Schools

The South Pacific Association of Theological Schools (SPATS) naturally came into being as an extension of the impact of the Pacific Theological College and the Pacific Conferences in the region. A counterpart was organised in a similar way in the formation of the Melanesian Association of Theological Schools (MATS), specifically to cater for the theological needs of the churches in Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu. The main emphasis and contribution of MATS to the region and wider world lies in its gift of theological education through the Melanesian worldview.

In the mid-1970s, five theological colleges were in SPATS. By the end of the 20th century, almost twenty theological schools were registered, including the United Theological College in Australia, and the College of St John the Evangelist in New Zealand.

Pacific Theological Journal

As the waves of Oceania reach out and flow together with waves of other oceans in the world, so do the stories of theological education. The Pacific Journal of Theology is on the shelves of many theological libraries in the world. Stories unique to the experience of God’s engagement in Oceania are told. Pacific people thrive on oral stories. Writing down stories and doing theology in written form is foreign, and yet Pacific theologians contributed to the revival of the journal. Bruce Deverall, Lydia Johnson, Kerry Prendeville, Andrew Thornley, and Carrie Walker-Jones are to be applauded for this initiative. The work of the current chair, Tessa Mackenzie, who has undertaken this challenging task for many years, is to be commended. The work demands a person with divine patience and includes friendly and continual reminding of Pacific contributors about datelines for the submission of contributions for publication.

Weavers

Feminist contributions in theological education began to find a voice in the region in the last part of the 1970s. Through the leadership of Loreni Tevi, the first woman General Secretary of the Pacific Conference
of Churches, SPATS conferences started debates on the issues of women’s theological education. In the second part of the 1980s, Weavers, the women’s arm of SPATS, came into being. Lisa Meo, a theologian, was the first Pacific woman co-ordinator. When Weavers came into being, there was hardly a woman lecturer in theological disciplines in any of the theological schools in the region. Today, the co-ordinator of Weavers, the Rev. Amy Chambers, is also Principal of St John’s College (Anglican) in Suva. Weavers spearhead new curricula on HIV/AIDS and Violence against Women. SPATS is ahead of many parts of the world in the way they have pioneered and devised curricula to address two urgent social needs in Oceania – the problem of HIV/AIDS and violence against the powerless.

Accreditation

Accreditation has become an important function of SPATS. The initial work of accreditation was carried out by individual scholars. When the Rev. Dr. David Esterline became the Chair of Accreditation, many schools were accredited at the Diploma level and the mainline theological colleges were accredited at the Bachelor level. His skilful leadership motivated other schools to ask for accreditation. He was followed by the Rev. Dr. Kafoa Solomone. SPATS accreditation moved to another level to accredit Masters degrees.

Costs and Financing of Theological Education in our Pacific Region

Good theological education is a result of many efforts, including dependable financing. Traditionally, this most important component of theological education in our region has been the responsibility of founding churches. In our case, theological schools were founded by local denominations or regional church organisations. Until recently, the funding of these schools has been the responsibility of our churches. Some schools have found that their various plans for development have often failed to reach their targets because of weak or decreasing funding allocations from their respective churches. Beyond local funding sources, some schools have had financial aid packages from overseas donor partners in Australia, New Zealand, the USA, and Europe.

Overall, however, local as well as overseas funding has declined as a result of across-the-board deep cuts or total shutdown caused by the current global economic down-turn. Nonetheless, every such downturn is an opportunity for an up-turn vision which beckons re-thinking, re-focusing, and re-commitment.

Looking up for help is truly the act of looking deeper at our own selves as primary resources for financing our efforts in theological education in our Pacific region. Almost all our home churches are land-rich as well as rich in other natural resources such as timber and fishing. So the question, for us now, is to realise this and to turn our rich potentialities into practical mission-theological actualities. We, the theological schools in the Pacific region, can and should turn our economic potentialities into the actual financing of the resources for our regional theological education.

We can till the land, raise cattle, pigs, and poultry, fish the ocean, or sell gasoline like Sia’atoutai Theological College¹ (which does all of these except fishing), and study and do theology. Over the past years, SPATS has asked sponsoring churches and member schools to include a SPATS allocation in their annual budgets. Sia’atoutai responded to this SPATS initiative and hopefully others will follow.² Doing the

¹ Sia’atoutai Theological College is 80 percent self-financed by its own cattle farm, crops, motor pool, tyre-repair shops, block-making outlets, mini-supermarket, restaurant, and three gas stations. The college is employing sixty of its graduates to do and care for these income generating projects. As a result the college is able to do more of its own development without outside financing. The college grants full scholarships and lodging to a minister and his family from the Solomon Islands, and another minister and his family from Kiribati. They are both candidates in the Bachelor of Divinity Program.

² An initial allocation of TOP $1000 was made to SPATS to assist the secretariat.
hard work of earning income to pay for our own theological education is truly theos-logos in actus. It provides an integrated do-and-learn-and-do approach to overall theological education. Dependency has often crept in and caused more co-dependencies which can play havoc with all our well-intentioned programmes. As Pacificans, we are able navigators, like our ancestors of old, who charted the unknown seas of the earth long before outsiders came into our waters. With a bit more support and encouragement from among ourselves and from our local denominations, we shall be able to ride this new global economic tsunami. A further step in this financing matter is a SPATS-sponsored conference on the self-financing of theological education in our region.

**South Pacific Hermeneutics (SPH)**

There are sufficient resources and personnel now available in the region to call for a structured effort at this SPH Project. Theological hermeneutics as a particular means of a disciplined interpretation of a text is, of course, for us a common stock-in-trade. However, some aspects may be more readily presentable than others. For instance, worship and liturgy as the practice of a particular theological/biblical interpretation is a good curtain raiser. Others may easily follow.

SPATS’ main business is theological education in Oceania, to put it so simply and yet so fundamentally. Theological education in Oceania, or anywhere else for that matter, has to do with basic logistics and infrastructures such as the development of programme contents, student enrolment, personnel, administration, supporting services, networking, funding, objectives, and over-arching goals. Essentially however, quality requirements demand an even stronger and deeper spirituality (vision as theos actus) as receptor of the unseen yet present ethos which creates and transforms the external shell of socius and ecclesia into practical expressions of the Spirit of God working in us. It is here, at this juncture, that we come face to face with the very heart of theological education, theos-logos, learning from God our teacher. Thus, in this personal encounter, our theological education is centred between tangible temporary existence on one hand and the intangible eternal essence on the other. Theos-logos, however, is the making known of the unseen essence within the presence of existence.

Beatific vision as sola gratia sola fide is neither a wishful dream nor a nebulous theorising, since following Christ is never a quid pro quo, but rather a determined giving up of the whole self. It is, therefore, necessary to give up the whole self for Christ’s sake in order to be given life abundantly in this life, and eternally in that which is to come. Our theological education is about following Christ.

**Living Simply and Loving Deeply: Funding Theological Education in Oceania**

Praxis is the transformer of theoria. For instance, if we decide that theological education in Oceania must be theos-logos and holistically relevant to the needs of our churches, it is then imperative for us to respond immediately and substantially in order for the Spirit of God to work through us in translating essence into existence. We, as theological educators, are called by God to be bold and intelligent in our response. Both the present and future of theological education in Oceania have been placed squarely on us by our divine telos. Recognising the rather negative condition of our current world economy, the question now is not where do we get the money to finance our theological education, but rather, what do we do with the wealth of spirit, mind, and body with which God has so richly blessed our lives with, and how do we do it? Oceania is the home of the brave, so we learnt from our ancestors who had made their home in the single largest surface mass of our planet Earth. From where had they come? From the langi, the sky dwellings of Pacifica people.

As divinely descended people, we are, therefore, children of Tangaloa, the sky god with whom our earthly mother ‘Ilaheva sealed the covenant between the divine and human (not a bad move within the
perimeters of *incarnatio Deus*!) It is here in the wisdom of funding of theological education in Oceania that the keel of our *kalia* meets the *moana* (deep waters) of our *aqua* continent. We must not do theological education in such a manner that we become dependent on other people to finance it. We ourselves are fully and divinely capable of funding our own theological education. Sharing via giving to God is the secret of funding in our region. Give everything to God and God gives the cheerful giver everything. This sounds elementary, but all of us know and understand this *laumalie 'o e foaki* (spirit of giving), since we all grow up eating and breathing *foaki*, giving, in Oceania.

**Dynamic Diaspora**

The second part of this chapter contributes insights mainly about the outflow of people from the Pacific Island States to New Zealand and Australia after World War II. The whole movement of people from the Pacific to different parts of the world is argued by social scientists as being determined by a socio-economic and political rationale. The ongoing movement of people is integral to the Oceanic rhythm of life. The whole rhythm of Oceania lies in the movement and the flowing of the currents and the waves from one ocean to the other. The rich legacy of Oceanic people is a free-flowing movement, as their ancestors migrated in the past. A distinct feature of the dynamic diaspora of people in Oceania is the movement of a mass of people across the water. This chapter attempts to reflect on the dynamic power of the *Missio Dei* in the immense liquid world of Oceania.

After World War II, Pacific people started to move to New Zealand and Australia. As they moved, they took with them their Christian faith. Late in the 1940s, according to the Rev. Feiloaiga Taule‘ale‘asumai, the Pacific Islands Congregational Church was established in Auckland, and spread to different parts of New Zealand to carry out pastoral care for all the Pacific Islanders. After World War II, Pacific people started to move to New Zealand and Australia. As they moved, they took with them their Christian faith. Late in the 1940s, according to the Rev. Feiloaiga Taule‘ale‘asumai, the Pacific Islands Congregational Church was established in Auckland, and spread to different parts of New Zealand to carry out pastoral care for all the Pacific Islanders. As migration increased, division within worshippers erupted, and two main branches developed. One branch was associated with the Pacific Island Presbyterian Church. The main cultures of the Pacific Islanders in New Zealand were retained and celebrated within the Presbyterian Church.

Another branch was organised on an ethnic rationale and constituted as the first Samoan Congregational Christian Church in New Zealand, made up mostly of Samoans under the pioneering leadership of the Rev. Ieriko Ieriko. Their contribution in celebrating and maintaining the Samoan language in their worship in New Zealand was a prophetic move on their part. The use of the indigenous language contributed to the fast growth of this church among the Samoans. By the 1990s, there were over fifty Samoan Congregational Christian Churches in different parts of New Zealand.

A prominent leader, who for years contributed to the shaping of the early formation and future of many Pacific people and of the whole church in New Zealand, was the Rev. Leuatea Sio. His major contribution to his own Pacific Island Presbyterian Church was his vision and dynamic leadership, which led to the establishment of the Pacific Island Synod in 1998. He engaged publicly to address the unjust immigration policy of the day, fighting for the rights of the Pacific people. Sio took the mission of the church to the wider community by bringing justice issues to the public arena and the Government. He, and the pioneering leaders of the different churches, contributed significantly to the Pacific people who found themselves in a new home, searching for new ways of expressing their spirituality and mission. The contribution of these leaders laid the foundation for the second phase of migration from the Pacific in the 1970s.

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4 Ibid.
In the 1970s, cheap labour was in demand, and the immigration policies of both Australia and New Zealand were relaxed to allow for the periodical recruitment of Pacific Islanders in order to meet the needs of the market. When the contracted agreements expired, most labourers returned. Some remained illegally. Others extended their contracts. Inter-marriage became a new phenomenon and there was a new generation of New Zealand and Australian-born Pacific people. This was followed by a second and a third generation. Today, there are more Pacific Islanders outside Tonga, Samoa, Niue, Tuvalu, Tokelau, and the Cook Islands than in the home Island states.

The Tongan Methodist Church in New Zealand started with the leadership of Kilifi Heimuli and Keidip Clifford in the 1970s. The Tongan worshipping community was constituted by casual workers at a fishing company in Auckland. From the small groups of ordinary and casual workers, the church developed substantially, so that there are now nearly 40 worshipping Tongan communities throughout New Zealand. The Tongan mainline churches include the Roman Catholics, Methodists, and Anglicans, and many others spread throughout the country. The fast growth of the Tongan section led to the arrival of the first Minister, sent by the church in Tonga.

Two main centres, Dunedin and Auckland, emerged as critical locations for developing Pacific contributions to theological education. For over two decades, pioneering Presbyterian scholars taught at the College of St John the Evangelist, which in the 1990s became a constituent college of the School of Theology at the University of Auckland. They paved the way for Pacific Islanders to follow. The Rev. Dr. Allan Davidson is a prominent historian and specialist in Pacific history and the Rev. Dr. Keith Carley is a scholar in the area of Biblical studies. The College of St John the Evangelist is an Anglican theological college and is an ecumenical partnership with Trinity Methodist Theological College. The consortium, in partnership with the School of Theology at the University of Auckland, originally consisted of colleges of the Anglican, Methodist, Baptist, and Roman Catholic churches. Through these rich resources of ecumenical partnership in theological education, Davidson and Carley have influenced many Pacific people within the college and without.

Oceania Churches Have Emerged from Within

Central to the Missio Dei in Oceania are new Pacific churches that have emerged in major cities in Australia and New Zealand. Between the 1980s and 1990s, Pacific churches, especially in New Zealand, were among the fastest growing in the world. Statistics in the 1990s showed how the new churches have increased numerically five times compared to numbers indicated in the 1970s. A unique dimension of the planting of mainline Pacific churches in Australia and New Zealand, and in Hawaii and North America, is the witness and commitment of the whole “baptised people” of God. The baptised have become the bearers of the gospel and missionaries themselves. The Pacific Islanders have reversed the traditional methodology of doing mission. Church planting was the role of missionaries sent by mission departments in the mainline churches. However, the baptised people of God have now taken responsibility for making mission a reality. There was no waiting around for a special commission from the church hierarchy. They organised themselves wherever they were employed as a source of cheap labour, and hardships were transformed in creating gatherings for worship, fellowship, and mutual help. The building of new churches ensued. In the 1990s, wherever Pacific people spread in the urban and rural areas, new Pacific churches emerged. Fundamental missiological questions are: why are Oceanic people with meagre economic means motivated and energised to plant new churches? Do they have contributions to make to the wider development of mission in the 21st century? Missing in this chapter is the story of the growth of Pacific churches in North America. Time has not allowed the authors of this paper to record this story. It would be appropriate for scholars from North America to take up this challenge and fill this important gap.
Association of Oceania Women Theologians, Manahine Pasefika

Manahine Pasefika was born in New Zealand. In 2006, Dr. Lydia Johnson, who has been a leading theologian in pioneering women doing theology in the Pacific, became the editor for a new Association of Oceanian Women Theologians, Manahine Pasefika. She has spent many years teaching at the Pacific Theological College, was editor for a period of the Pacific Journal of Theology, and was a founding member of the Weavers, the women’s section of the South Pacific Association of Theological Schools. Lydia has been, until recently, a lecturer at the School of Ministry in Dunedin, New Zealand. For many years in the Pacific and New Zealand, she has been supported by Global Ministries in the United States. With the financial support of Global Ministries, the headquarters of the AOWTMP was established in Dunedin, in the South Island, before it moved to Auckland. Lydia and Dr. Joan Alleluia Filemoni-Tofaeno were founding members of Manahine Pasefika, a dynamic association in New Zealand and Australia. Joan was the co-ordinator of Weavers in Suva for a term. The Manahine Pasefika association has a strong voice and provides a prophetic leadership among women, especially among Australian and New Zealand-born Pacific people. In the Talanoa Oceania Conference of 2009, held in Auckland, New Zealand, the voices of young Pacific New Zealand and Australian-born theologians were wonderfully heard. The able leadership of Lydia, Joan, Seforosa, and Dr. Katalina Tahaafe-Williams, all contributed to pioneering a new way of doing theology in Oceania: at Charles Sturt University, Australia; and the University of Auckland and Otago University, New Zealand. The solidarity of members of Mahine has now brought together women leaders and theologians of the indigenous people of Australia and New Zealand with the new wave of Pacific women. A distinct dimension of Mahine is that the majority of the women are from the younger generation.

Oceania Community

In mid-1996, Archdeacon Winston Halapua, who had been the non-stipendiary General Secretary for the South Pacific Association of Theological Schools for seven years, moved to Auckland to be Principal of the College of the Diocese of Polynesia, a constituent college of the College of St. John the Evangelist affiliated to the University of Auckland. He quickly became aware of the need of Pacific students at the University and St. John’s College for fellowship and sharing. The Rev. Dr. Ilaitia Tuwere joined the St. John’s faculty and the University of Auckland in 2000 and became a tower of strength for members of Oceania. Dr. Tuwere had been Principal of the Pacific Theological College and member of the Executive Committee of the World Council of Churches. He was, and continues to be, a respected theologian and leader in the region and the world. An Oceania community of people involved with theology and other disciplines was formed with the encouragement and support of Archdeacon Halapua and Dr. Tuwere. Pacific students from the three Anglican theological colleges and Trinity Methodist Theological College on the Meadowbank site in Auckland constitute the majority of the Oceania community. The Pacific students at the University of Auckland have joined it.

The Oceania community formed by students and staff has contributed to the growth in the numbers of Masters and Ph.D. students in the last ten years. Students empower and encourage one another. They gather for meals together, play sport, and care for those who are bereaved and they help one another in their studies. Indeed, it is doing theology in the dynamic Oceanic way. The fellowship and solidarity is a vital part of living and doing theology together in an Oceanic way.

Oceania Academia

Through the merging of the consortium colleges – Carey College (Baptist), the College of St. John the Evangelist (Anglican), Trinity (Methodist), and the Catholic Institute of Theology – the University of
Auckland enabled a new way of partnership in theological education into the 21st century. This partnership is a powerful witness to the wider community. Doing theology is alongside and in dialogue with the secular world, which the university represents. Future leaders of the community and church are being formed in a context which is open to reflection on current issues in society and in the wider world. It is important that in their formation, church leaders converse with other potential leaders in different disciplines.

It was the partnership between the University of Auckland and the consortium colleges that enabled the recruitment of Dr. Halapua from Fiji to pioneer and teach at the University of Auckland. As a founding member of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Colleges and the University in the formation of the School of Theology, Halapua was able to put forward the name “Oceania” to replace “Pacific” in the context of the School of Theology at the University of Auckland. Courses in theological education envisioned, devised, and energised by Oceanic waves of insights and values are in place and available to all. The following courses are now offered at the School of Theology, University of Auckland: Moana Leadership (Prophetic Leadership within a Militarism context); Theology of Place, (Land became an important issue in the Pacific at the dawn of the 1980s); Oceania Hermeneutics (see No. 1.2); Theology and Social Ecology (Climate Change with a focus on the Moana context).

_Talanoa (an ancient Polynesian word for open/ongoing conversation) Oceania_

Through the leadership of the Rev. Dr. Jione Havea, with leading scholars from Australia and New Zealand, Talanoa Oceania came into being in 2008. The prophetic move for Oceanic theologians, young and old, to gather and dialogue (Talanoa), and feast in fellowship, was indeed a true Oceanic way of doing theology. Financial support from the Synod of the Uniting Church in Australia and the Research Centre of Charles Sturt University enabled Talanoa Oceania to be realised. In 2009, the Talanoa Oceania consultation was not only for the Pacific theologians but also all scholars in their chosen fields. It was powerful. It was financed by the University of Auckland and Trinity Methodist College. The Rev. Dr. Nasili Vakauta spearheaded this venture. Pacific scholars from many disciplines joined.

_Waves of Moana Theology_

In mid-2009, five Oceania theologians gathered together and constituted “Waves of Moana Theology”. The members are: the Rev. Dr. Ilaitia Tuwere, the Rev. Dr. Nasili Vakauta, the Rev. Dr. Ama’amalele Tofaeono, the Rev. Dr. Frank Smith, and the Rt. Rev. Dr. Winston Halapua. They are responsible for all the courses taught at the University of Auckland, Trinity Methodist College, and College of St. John the Evangelist. The next consultation for this vision and undertaking will be in 2010. The rigour and dynamics of Oceania scholars coming together in doing theological education paved the way for the consultation at Auckland University in 2009.

_Conclusion_

Theological education started in the region, in various Pacific Island states. When the islanders moved to other cosmopolitan nations in the 1970s a new phenomenon took place as the peculiar Oceania theology was exported with the diaspora. The Oceania descendants in these countries now extend to the third and fourth generations. But theology is not only happening in the diaspora: the impact of globalisation in Oceania and the aspirations of Pacific Island people in their own fast-changing island states also provided opportunities for doing theological education in a new way.
Theological Education in the Pacific and Australia

**Bibliography**

Publications


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*Theological Education in the Pacific*. Consultation at Dudley House High School, Suva, Fiji May 7-13, 1961. Published by Theological Education Fund Committee of the International Missionary Council.


*Part II: Regional Surveys of Developments in Theological Education Since 1910*
Theological education in Australia bears similarities to that undertaken elsewhere in western cultural settings, yet is distinct in its relationship to wider society. Until the 1970s, a first degree in theology could not legally be offered, and none was: theological institutions lived in parallel to the universities, to the detriment of both church and higher learning. Furthermore, until the 1980s almost all theological students were ordinands, or preparing for some form of Christian ministry. These patterns have changed in the time since, rapidly so in the last decade.

This paper seeks to offer an overview of the above story, and give some account of Australian theological education sector as the third Christian millennium opens. It draws in particular on work done for the Uncovering Theology project 2008-9, which was funded by the Australian Learning & Teaching Council.¹

Mid-19th To Mid-20th Century: Separate Development

Theological education in Australia commenced in the mid-1800s, some half a century after the formation of each state colony. The first Roman Catholic seminary opened in 1834, Church of England (now Anglican) in 1853, Presbyterian in 1866 for example. It was around this time that universities were founded, ‘divinity’ being excluded in each case, given the prevailing secular rationalism in academic life, and sectarian competition among the churches: Sydney (1850), Melbourne (1853), Adelaide (1874).

Church-sponsored residential colleges allowed students to ‘read’ theology with a tutor, following Oxbridge practice – Trinity (1872 in Melbourne) and St Andrew’s (1867 in Sydney). But ‘Divinity’ continued to be excluded. The Church of England established the Australian College of Theology (ACTh) in 1891, as a ‘national’ body to provide examinations for undergraduate, graduate and research awards.² By 1900 there were Seventh-day Adventist, Baptist, Lutheran and Salvation Army colleges, and Roman Catholic training institutions for religious orders. The 1910 Melbourne College of Divinity (MCD) Act of Parliament setting up the MCD was in large part a response to this situation.³ By 1914 some 30 theological institutions enrolled a thousand students; the six universities had a total enrolment of 3,300.

Theological education thus operated in Australia for over a century apart from the universities, in distinct streams:
- Roman Catholic seminaries educated priests.
- Roman Catholic training institutions prepared religious order novices, especially for teaching in their schools.

² The ACTh continues to be based on a Canon of the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Australia, as an incorporated body encompassing 19 affiliated members, including Anglican, Baptist, Presbyterian, Reformed, Christian Brethren and Bible colleges in each mainland state: see www.actheology.org.au.
³ The MCD originally had the Baptist Union, the Church of England, the Methodist and Presbyterian churches appointing College members, with one co-opted from the Churches of Christ. As of 2010 the MCD Council includes representatives of the Anglican, Baptist, Churches of Christ, Roman Catholic and Uniting churches, with Salvation Army and Lutheran colleges engaged in its teaching operations.
Protestant churches sponsored colleges to prepare men for authorized ministry, including pastoral formation and academic examination. Anglicans used ACTh examinations; other Protestants used MCD ones.

A network of Bible colleges emerged after World War 1, linked to missionary and evangelical agencies, teaching internal awards and preparing academically-oriented students (both men and women) for MCD awards.

The long-standing sectarian divisions between Australia’s churches, as well as the ‘tyranny of distance’ which separated the capital cities, as well as country from city, saw colleges operating largely in isolation. Each had few faculty members, curricula were shaped by ordination requirements and assessed by external examinations, and there was limited research activity.

1960 – 1990: Co-Operation, Accreditation and Consortia

Change began in the 1960s, following the Federal government’s 1964 Martin Report on Higher Education, which included a recommendation that it open up to include theology. Soon afterwards, state governments (which in Australia regulate tertiary education) began to legislate to permit degrees to be awarded by non-university bodies. The theological colleges may have operated in general isolation, but the ACTh and MCD sustained friendly relations. In 1965 an MCD-organized conference, which included ACTh Delegates, saw moves begin towards seeking approval for a first degree in theology. Some of the outcomes of this growing spirit of co-operation can be seen in the formation of the Australian & New Zealand Association of Theological Schools (ANZATS) in 1968, and the South Pacific Association of Bible Colleges (SPABC) in 1969.

After protracted negotiations, the MCD Act was revised by the Parliament of Victoria in 1972 to provide for a taught Bachelor of Theology, and allow Roman Catholic participation; the ACTh was similarly authorized by the NSW Minister of Education to offer a B.Theol. from 1975. State-based ecumenical consortia, some with links to the newer universities, emerged alongside the ACTh and MCD, though much smaller in size:

- The Adelaide College of Divinity (1979). The ACD includes the Anglican, Roman Catholic and Uniting Church colleges in South Australia, teaching from distinct facilities on a common campus. The Theology degrees taught by ACD are awarded by Flinders University; its Ministry degrees are awarded by the ACD.
- The Brisbane College of Theology (1983 – 2009) The BCT included the Anglican, Roman Catholic and Uniting Church colleges in Queensland, and was linked with Griffith University for some years. It decided not to apply for re-accreditation from 2010, from which time the Roman Catholic and Uniting Church colleges are teaching the Theology degrees of the Australian Catholic University while St Francis’ (Anglicans) has joined St Mark’s Canberra as part of Charles Sturt University (see below).
- The Sydney College of Divinity (1983) has had Member Institutions from the Australian Christian Churches (formerly Assemblies of God), Brethren, Churches of Christ, Greek Orthodox, Nazarene, Roman Catholic, Salvation Army and Uniting colleges at various times. Unlike the other consortia, it operates as a federation of colleges rather than as a church-sponsored body.
- Murdoch University opened a Theology Programme with the Perth College of Divinity in 1985, teaching on the Murdoch campus. Originally including the Anglican, Baptist and Roman Catholic and Uniting Churches of Western Australia, the Baptist College (now Vose Seminary) later transferred to the ACTh, while the formation of the University of Notre Dame at Fremantle saw Roman Catholic students taught there.

Charles Sturt University (CSU) began to offer Theology from 1997 at St Mark’s National Theological Centre (Anglican, Canberra), and has developed a strong research base since. From 2007 the United...
Theological College (UCA) in Sydney became a CSU campus. As noted above, from 2010 St Francis’ College (Anglican, Brisbane) is becoming a partner with St Mark’s.

Alongside these developments, new Colleges of Advanced Education were established in the late 1960s, and university fees were removed in the 1970s, as the Federal government, which largely funds higher education, sought to expand it. Such moves saw a rapid growth in adult higher education, which spilled over into theological education, especially with undergraduate degrees in theology available (though not government funded). By the end of the 1980s less than a quarter of theological students were studying towards professional ministry, and students ranged in age from 18 to 80, with women and men in roughly equal numbers.


New theology-oriented colleges opened from 1990, with new relationships and distinctive educational goals. By far the largest change was the formation of Australian Catholic University in 1991, Australia’s first multi-state public university. ACU brought together long-standing teacher and nursing colleges in Queensland, New South Wales, the Australian Capital Territory, and soon began to offer theology degrees as well as theology for other courses (‘service teaching’). As noted above, from 2010, Roman Catholic ordinands in Queensland will use ACU degrees as part of their preparation for ordained ministry, a significant development.

Several networks of Pentecostal / charismatic colleges have emerged. These are entrepreneurial in outlook – between them teaching at some twenty campuses – and emphasize training for contemporary ministry, including counselling, visual arts and media. All the colleges listed below have been accredited by state government bodies to offer their own degrees.

Harvest Bible College was founded from a Pentecostal congregation in Melbourne in 1985; it now has a partner college in Western Australia – both continue in the style of a Bible college.

Tabor Adelaide commenced as a Bible College in South Australia in 1979, and later spawned colleges in NSW, Victoria, Tasmania and Western Australia, each of which is now independent. While retaining a charismatic ethos, Tabor Adelaide today looks to be ‘a multi-denominational Christian Education Centre offering government-accredited courses at tertiary level’. With degrees in Counselling, Education and Humanities as well as Theology, Tabor Adelaide operates more as a ‘Christian tertiary institution’, along the lines of a US liberal arts college than as a theological or Bible college.

Alphacrucis, formerly known as Southern Cross Bible College, represents the coming together in 1993 of earlier colleges, and now has campuses in NSW, Queensland and Auckland (New Zealand). It is a Member Institute of the Sydney College of Divinity, and teaches an SCD BTheol in Korean as well as English, though also awarding its own degree in Contemporary Christian Ministry. It is also moving towards the ‘Christian tertiary institution’ model.

This ‘tertiary Christian education’ model also typifies other theology HEPs. Avondale College is a Seventh Day Adventist institution, founded in 1897. The largest church-owned Australian college, with around 1,300 EFTSL, the vast majority of Avondale students study degrees in education, nursing and business, alongside 100 theological students, mostly pastoral ministry candidates. Each Avondale student includes core units in theology (‘service teaching’), as do students at the University of Notre Dame, with campuses in Western Australia and NSW. Commencing in 1990, and of Roman Catholic foundation, Notre

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4 ‘Service teaching’ = teaching of a theology unit (at first year level) to students doing non-theology degrees (whether or not they have any interest in Christian faith).

5 HEP = Higher Education Provider (recognised / accredited as such by state and federal Australian government).
Dame is one of two ‘private universities’ in Australia. With around 7,000 EFTSL (of whom some 90 do a theology degree), each taking a theology ‘core’, Notre Dame has the most theology EFTSL in Australia. Some other theological colleges function as ‘stand-alone’ institutions as regards accreditation of their awards. The oldest and most significant is Moore Theological College, founded 1856 as the official college of the Anglican Diocese of Sydney. Affiliated with the ACTh for many years, it now has independent accreditation, and includes the largest research theological library in the southern hemisphere. The Australian Lutheran College (Adelaide) represents the coming together of earlier Lutheran colleges, and prepares students both for pastoral and teaching ministries: it is looking towards joining the MCD from 2010. The teacher-training and business-oriented Christian Heritage College commenced in 1985 from a Pentecostal congregation in Queensland. The Wesley Institute (associated with the Wesley Mission of the Uniting Church, Sydney) specializes in performing and visual arts as well as pastoral ministry.

Australian theological education in 2007 embraced some 14,000 students enrolled in 6,200 EFTSL:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Level: Institution:</th>
<th>Undergraduate</th>
<th>PG C’work</th>
<th>Ministry Studies</th>
<th>HDR</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>%age</th>
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<td>711.7</td>
<td>471.6</td>
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<td>2.0</td>
<td>38.0</td>
<td>671.8</td>
<td>10.8</td>
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<tr>
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<td>42.5</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>603.3</td>
<td>9.7</td>
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<td>Other Universities: Theology (CSU, Flinders, Murdoch, Newcastle)</td>
<td>196.6</td>
<td>64.3</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>57.0</td>
<td>336.6</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tabor (SA, Vic NSW, WA, Tas)</td>
<td>307.4</td>
<td>57.8</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>368.9</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Moore Theological College</td>
<td>321.0</td>
<td>21.0</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>342.5</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Other Theology HEPs</td>
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<td>14.5</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>785.9</td>
<td>12.7</td>
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<td>1,488.0</td>
<td>65.5</td>
<td>220.0</td>
<td>6,209.9</td>
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</table>

On the university front, the Theology Programme at the University of Newcastle, commenced in 2007, represents the first time that a public university has taken such a step, though the local Anglican diocese is funding the inaugural Professor for five years. The Broken Bay Institute, a Roman Catholic distance-mode

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6 EFTSL = Equivalent Full Time Student Load (in the humanities, usually 8 classes over an academic year, of 35-40 face2face hours in lectures / seminars / tutorials).

7 Small Higher Education accredited stand-alone colleges are the Adelaide College of Ministries (run out of a local Baptist congregation in Adelaide); Perth Bible College (Western Australia); and Worldview College (Tasmania, training cross-cultural workers for WEC International). Campion College (Roman Catholic, founded 2006) offers a ‘liberal arts’ BA to Sydney school-leavers, requiring core units in history, literature, philosophy and theology. There are a large number of Vocational Education Training (VET) colleges, as well as VET course offered by HE Providers, but these are excluded from this survey.
college of a diocese close to Newcastle, has chosen to work through Newcastle from 2010; it has thus far been a Member Institute of the SCD.

As regards Higher Degrees by Research (HDRs), the public university sector plays a larger, though still small, part in theological study, as the following table shows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HEP:</th>
<th>Degree:</th>
<th>Doctorate</th>
<th>Master’s</th>
<th>Total HDR</th>
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<tr>
<td>Private sector (Theology):</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACT</td>
<td></td>
<td>27</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>36</td>
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<tr>
<td>MCD</td>
<td></td>
<td>51</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCD</td>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other theology HEPs</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td></td>
<td>91</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public sector (Theology):</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACU</td>
<td></td>
<td>33</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSU [St Mark’s, UTC]</td>
<td></td>
<td>19</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flinders [ACD link]</td>
<td></td>
<td>21</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murdoch [PCD link]</td>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td></td>
<td>86</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL – Theology</td>
<td></td>
<td>177</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other public universities (Religious Studies)</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>77</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL: 2007 HDRs</td>
<td></td>
<td>241</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>328</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Developing Government Relations

State accreditation is now universal across the Australian tertiary theology sector, but national recognition is recent, since the main Federal government role is funding, which has thus far been unavailable to non-public HEPs. Theology at public universities attracts Commonwealth Supported Places, but covers just 5% of the sector. The MCD was listed in a federal funding Schedule in 2000, and so has received federal research funding from 2002, fostering a strong research culture across its colleges. The MCD was then listed in Table B of the *Higher Education Support Act* (2003), giving it a unique position in Australian theological education. The formation of what is now the *Council of Deans of Theology* in the mid-90s

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8 Table A contains the 38 public universities; Table B contains the two private universities – Notre Dame and Bond (which offers an MBA) – as well as the MCD; Table C is for overseas universities authorised to offer degrees in Australia (currently one, Carnegie-Mellon). Other HEPs are termed ‘Non-Self-Accrediting Institutions’ (NSAIs), including the ACTh, SCD, and all stand-alone colleges in the theology sector. One consequence of the MCD being in Table B is that the MCD Dean has a standing from a government perspective.
provided a base for theological institutions to relate to government at both state and federal levels. From 2009 this body has opened itself to all theology HEPs, and to university theology departments.

The greatest change for theology in relation to the Australian Government, however, was the introduction of the FEE-HELP scheme from 2005. This enables a student to have their tuition fees paid to their HEP by the federal government, these being repaid through the taxation system when the student’s income reaches a certain level (around AUD $40,000 currently, a reasonably generous mark, beyond typical clergy stipends). Apart from the indirect funding support this has given to theological colleges (some $30 million was loaned in 2007), nor last the elimination of bad debts, wider relationships are affected:

1. The National Protocols set in place by the Australian Government as a condition for taking part if FEE-HELP (or other funding) have brought significant changes in governance and academic structures, especially for the consortia: while initially onerous, these have been widely welcomed;

2. A further requirement of FEE-HELP is that a HEP is audited by the Australian University Quality Agency (AUQA). Five theology HEPs, including the three major consortia, have now been through this process: these audits, which are not about accreditation but quality control, have occasioned a much higher awareness in the theology sector of the importance of continuous quality management.

3. The administration FEE-HELP reporting mechanisms have significantly improved colleges’ enrolment and recording procedures, and college administrators and DEEWR staff members have come to know one another.

4. The commencement of FEE-HELP has shifted the perception of theology in higher education. Courses which were previously ineligible for funding are commonly regarded as ‘not proper’ by students, university staff and government personnel. Even though only indirect funding is involved, a FEE-HELP-eligible course is now seen as ‘normal’.

Other changes have included federal subsidies for state school chaplains, leading several colleges to offer training for candidates. In addition, Avondale, Notre Dame, Tabor Adelaide and Tabor Victoria have gained direct funding for students doing degree in the ‘national priority areas’ of teaching and nursing.

In sum, today the Australian theology sector is theologically, educationally and structurally diverse, with much better relationship with state and federal Departments and the public universities. Student bodies are less dominated by the education requirements for professional ministry, and the latter have benefitted from the wider range of students and better positioning within the framework of Australian higher education. Research is deepening, with bodies of doctoral students emerging in the capital cities. Yet the Christian churches remain the most significant sponsors of theological education (its ‘industry partners’ in current parlance).

Qualitative Dimensions in the Australian Theology Sector

Australian theological education across the board sees its qualitative character as a crucial element. The requirement of being audited by AUQA has brought distinctive dimensions of theological education into the open, especially concern to educate the whole person, taking into account a student’s beliefs, worldview and assumptions. As Christian institutions, theological colleges aim for a learning experience in which classroom, refectory, chapel, placements and common room function as diverse contexts for communally-oriented learning. This highlights the emphasis on formative learning, one which integrates its academic, applied and experiential dimensions, at both personal and communal levels.
Universities share many of these values, yet perceptions of theology in the Australian public universities are largely negative: in particular, academic freedom is seen as impossible in theological study. Every discipline approaches learning through particular commitments: academic freedom makes sense only within an explicit framework of ‘givens’, yet prejudice and ideology can play their part in any education, including theology. Theological study goes to the heart of personal and communal identity, worldview and lifestyle: matters that seem trivial to a scholar can cause serious stress for a student. Conversely, students are better placed to reflect critically on new ideas when they feel themselves to be free from identity pressures, and both supported and challenged as persons of reasoned faith. Learning is best fostered when trust, co-operation and mutuality typify the learning community, one where it can be acknowledged when generally-held opinion has become taken-for-granted ideology.

Theological faculty are usually familiar with the ‘hair-trigger’ issues in the tradition concerned, and seek to teach students in such a way that personal, academic and ecclesial integrity are maintained. A professional obligation rests on them to ensure that students are equipped to face issues with minds open to development and change, and that at the same time they are supported in the risky process of theological reflection, learning in an environment free from ‘spiritual harassment’ (a category recognized in some college grievance policies).

These observations point to factors to be taken into account in auditing a theology HEP, especially since few panel members, thus far, have had significant exposure to the sector.

**Explore the effect of theological commitments on learning**

Assessing how a doctrinal basis, church confession or – more problematic – an unstated but presumed stance interacts with learning is an important dimension of an audit. As a HEP, the institution has been authorized to teach at tertiary level, and living out that recognition reflects on its integrity. Faculty and students should be asked to explore how they experience the correlations between a theological stance and the learning process. Do students find themselves encouraged to consider wider perspectives, and believe that they can do so without sanctions? Are other viewpoints or faith-systems portrayed as ‘aunt Sally’s’, or respectfully engaged? Do faculty think that unreasonable ‘peer pressure’ exists in the student body to conform to a particular viewpoint – and how do they respond if they find this is true? How unknown, liberating, problematic or ignored is the college’s official theological stance?

The interaction between enrolment procedures and theological stance is also involved. Any HEP is within its rights to exclude an applicant academically unqualified to enter, or who rejects its approach to learning. The temptation can arise, however, to adopt procedures whose effect is to screen out students who do not already agree in detail with a particular theological stance.

Where such issues need to be addressed, auditors must be prepared to explore them with college leaders and sponsors. Misunderstandings can be corrected in such discussions: where concerns remain, leaders can be alerted to likely Recommendations in the Audit Report so that they do not come as a bolt from the blue, which fosters resistance rather than response.

**Take the heritage seriously, but test ideals**

It takes time to appreciate the particular theological, church and academic heritage in which a theology HEP stands. Theological colleges see themselves as representing a tradition of learning that is communal, flexible and person-centred, but such high ideals must be tested, for example by triangulation between students, faculty and leaders. On the other hand, good practice in such an environment may lie outside auditors’ experience: thus a low incidence of plagiarism could be misread as due to less than rigorous procedures, rather than reflecting the nature of theology as encouraging integrity in learning.

Conversely, high ideals may mean that a college is overly-idealistic, resulting in ineffective administration, unreality about finances, and fragile links between learning and governance. What
congruity is there between external stakeholders (e.g. bishops, synods, local churches) and college leaders or between intended and typical graduate outcomes? If such scrutiny to have an impact, however, a sound grasp of a college’s heritage and relationships is needed.

Enquire about relationships (and their absence)
Whatever its origins, the diversity within the Australian theology sector has resulted in a fragmentation of resources. For consortia, how diverse colleges co-operate in a common learning process is a familiar dimension of their existence, and the MCD and ACTh were commended by AUQA for their effective work here. Such co-operation also needs to be explored for stand-alone institutions: what level of resource sharing is there between it and other colleges (whatever their affiliations or theological stance)? The dialogue generated may allow issues to be opened up which are internally ‘undiscussable’. A college’s perception of irreconcilable theological difference preventing educational co-operation can be greater than is the case.

Investigate research activity
The nexus between teaching and research is widely affirmed and long practiced in the theology sector. Yet multiple demands are made on faculty, typically including formation time and church involvements alongside teaching and academic administration. Faculty research can be pushed to the margins, and/or research and supervision go unseen in faculty workloads. Competition for scarce resources when it comes to long-term library development can also undermine research objectives, as may a lack of research training for students.

Examine the community context of learning
How does the overall curriculum integrate learning – the interactions between classroom, placements, library, chapel and spiritual practices, residential life etc.? Theological students expect their learning to display these characteristics: such expectations should be tested, both with them, with faculty and with support staff (mentors, administrators, chaplains etc.).

Similarly, many faculty members teach from a church-tested sense of a God-given calling to teach. This can tempt lecturers to form ‘disciples’ supporting one’s particular beliefs, and/or to teach too many subjects as way of extending theological influence. Self-made overload can mean that lectures are unrevised, little review is made of outcomes, assessment methods or the use of technology and the like – and learning suffers.

Conclusion
Over the last half-century, church and society in Australia, never tightly inter-woven, have drifted further apart. How Australian theological education will develop and change over the next decade or more is thus a more open question than in earlier generations. Within the churches, considerable changes have taken place – the Second Vatican Council, major reforms in public worship, the rise of Pentecostal movements, and the growing presence of non-Christian faiths in Australia, for example. Even so, the churches continue to look to theological education institutions for the education of clergy and other professional ministers, and will continue to be the main sources of colleges’ human, physical and financial resources.

The Uncovering Theology project reveals a picture of Australian theological education as a long-established, academically robust and distinctive dimension of higher education. It retains, and is intentional about, its ongoing commitment to exploring the purposes of God, as revealed in Jesus Christ, not only for the sake of the churches, but for humankind in all its diversities, and the whole created cosmos.
The Growth and Challenges of Theological Education in Latin America: Notes from the Pilgrimage

Jose Duque

Introduction

Theological education has shown important growth and development rates in the region, both quantitatively and qualitatively. While it is true that the first educational endeavour was part of the colonial project, in its pilgrimage throughout the history of the region it became transformed into a project that took on the context; it was embodied in the context to the point that it became a liberating option. However, we have to accept the fact that we are not able to speak about theological education in the singular. The multitude of churches, spiritualities, theologies, and doctrines necessarily reproduce a wide range of offers for the educational undertaking.

At any rate, if we follow the journey of ecumenical theological education, without suggesting that this has been homogenous, in general, we can verify its continual growth as an alternative proposal. This is the picture we want to sketch in this brief outline. To accomplish this, we will follow the following route: we begin with the required contextual approach based on the 1910 Edinburgh Congress. Later, we will observe aspects of theological education in Latin America, for which we will consult the Parable of the Sower (Mt. 13:1-9); I will emphasize three elements: “sower,” “seed” and “field-soil.” I will end with what I call the Challenges and Opportunities of Theological Education.

Contextual Approach

Although this is a very schematic presentation, the following are some aspects of the context in which the Edinburgh Conference 1910 was held. These will help us to understand not only the scant participation of Latin America, but also the possible motivations that this event proposed in relation to our region.

What should be emphasized is that this was a conference called by the North-Atlantic mission agencies, where England and the United States contributed almost 75 percent of the delegates. We are talking about white, Anglo-Saxon mission agencies and, as observed in a contextual introduction presented by WOCATI,1 the natives of the South were taken there only as “specimens”.

The prominence of England and the United States at this Congress had to do with the preponderance of the neo-colonial project of those two countries, which disputed the imperial hegemony of the world at that time.

On the other hand, the 19th century was the century of colonial independence in Latin America. The old European colonial scheme was forced to make way for modernization. For liberalism, this modernism represented its idea of progress and other ideals solidified in the French Revolution.

The old colonial scheme imposed on Latin America, with its extant feudalism, was linked to Roman Catholicism. Protestantism, on the contrary, embarked on a liberal project that was, supposedly,

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modernizing. However, it is also true that the modernization camouflaged the powerful neo-colonial system, which, when all is said and done, reduced the region to a dependent periphery, an object of pillage, and with no possibility of getting out of its under-developed state. This was due, among other reasons, to an alliance of powerful national capitalist interests with multinational companies that took over the modernization project, not to humanize the world but to expand, plunder, exploit it and to make a profit at any cost.

However, the modern project began to show serious break-downs, contradictions, and frustrations by the middle of the 20th century. The Second World War constituted the most irrefutable demonstration of the serious crisis of the modern-capitalist scheme. Because of that, we remember the 20th century as a century of holocausts: Germany, Armenia, Vietnam, the Ukraine, Bosnia, and Latin America. In Latin America, the evidence of the failure of the modernizing liberal discourse was verified by the continual growth of poverty, as well as by the military repression set up by the Doctrine of National Security, which imposed military dictatorships throughout the length and breadth of the central and southern regions of the continent.2 It is sufficient to illustrate with statistics from just three countries that were victims of this dreadful doctrine, at its height in the 1960s, which left a shameful memory of crimes against humanity. In the 36 years of conflict in Guatemala, it is estimated that there were 200,000 deaths and 60,000 disappeared persons. In El Salvador, 75,000 deaths were registered, including that of martyred Monsignor Oscar Romero; the dictatorship of the Somoza dynasty in Nicaragua was responsible for the assassination of 100,000 people.3 The 20th century has been catalogued, rightfully, as the modern century, but it was also the century of the holocaust, the century without human rights for the South.

Of course, this crisis was simultaneously reflected in Protestant missionary work. The modernizing missionary project, that which in principle came from Edinburgh 1910, brought an underlying message that was belatedly revealed not as a liberating message, but as a message pre-established in “Manifest Destiny”. Thus, evangelization focused on an anti-Catholic undertaking, while it praised the imperial centres. This praise meant that the destiny of the South only and solely had a future connected to the power centres of the North.4 So, evangelization seemed to be, more than anything else, a neo-colonization.

Returning to the context of Edinburgh 1910, we cannot leave out the fact that this conference coincided with the birth of the fundamentalist movement in the United States. While in Edinburgh, people were asking if Latin America was a land for missions, as fundamentalism, with its exclusive tendency, had already penetrated nearly all of the denominations and their missionary agencies with civil religion.5 The divine command appeared for only one religion, one God, and one meaning for a world united from the systemic centre of power.

Another fact that must be underlined is the birth of the Pentecostal movement which took place also at the beginning of the 20th century. In the end, the Pentecostal explosion made evident the crisis of liberal churches as well as the crisis of evangelical churches. These churches had not completely achieved incarnation in the local culture and, with few exceptions, were finally reduced to a ghetto, suspiciously watching the growth of Pentecostalism at the margin of the dominant culture.

When we say Pentecostalism, we are talking about an explosive movement that emerged from poor and marginalized people. In its beginning, there was a lack of interest in theological education, based on the

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2 Consult the article “L’ideologie de la Sécurité National, in the DIAL Bulletin (April 1976, No. 298, Paris) to learn about everything related to the National Security Doctrine.


4 Consult: Cardoso, Fernando E. and Eduardo Faletto, Dependencia y Subdesarrollo en América Latina (Siglo XXI: Mexico, 1970) regarding the Dependency Theory and Underdevelopment.

biblical principle: “The written law brings death, but the Spirit gives life” (II Cor. 3:6b). Recently, maybe in the last three decades, there emerged a special new interest in theological education. In my experience as ETE Consultant (2000-2009) in the region, it was clear that there was a growing tendency for different Pentecostal churches and schools to seek options and answers to the contextual challenges. For quite a while, some Pentecostal theological schools have been demonstrating their lack of conformity with the models, pedagogies, and contents of traditional theological education. The basic concern is expressed more or less as: “The world has changed, today’s reality is not what it was in the last century”, which presents new problems, needs, and challenges to churches and theological education. The conventional Pentecostal education does not respond to this new reality. As an ETE consultant, I had several opportunities to teach courses about ecumenical theological education in Pentecostal institutions in the Dominican Republic, Mexico, Nicaragua, Ecuador, Peru, and Chile. The professor Jairo Roa, a Mennonite, had a very important experience in Colombia with the Assemblies of God Seminary. That Pentecostal seminary has more than 5000 students and 200 professors. It is not an ecumenical seminary, but Jairo Roa is a very well known ecumenical theologian.\(^6\)

Influential sectors of Roman Catholicism experienced internal pressure because, in the South, social inconformity was created by the frustration of never-arriving progress for the masses, by the increasing pain of injustice and inequality, and with a continuing colonial spirituality, which unleashed a process of reform from the interior of the church, through the Second Vatican Council. In Latin America this “reform” responded to the cry of the masses and, therefore, flowed from ecclesiastical foundations and gave place to spirituality from the position of the poor and little ones in the Kingdom.\(^7\)

In synthesis, the 19\(^{th}\) century was the century of Latin American independence from the old colonial order, while the 20\(^{th}\) century saw consolidation with the modernization of capitalistic neo-colonialism.\(^8\) In this historical context, Protestantism from the North proclaimed a gospel that was weakly oriented by the Protestant Principle (Tillich); therefore, this responsibility was claimed by some sectors of the ecumenical movement within the churches and Latin American theological education, which I will outline below.

**Theological Education in Latin America**

Only in Brazil, Argentina, and Mexico were Protestant theological schools existent in the 19\(^{th}\) century. These were sponsored by churches that depended on North Atlantic mission agencies or were directly created by those missionary societies. During the first half of the 20\(^{th}\) century, only a few other seminaries appeared, such as the well-known Latin American Biblical Seminary (1923) in San José, Costa Rica. The explosion of theological education in the region took place in the second half of the 20\(^{th}\) century. Today, there are thousands of institutions, including Bible institutes, seminaries, and theology faculties that offer a variety of programmes – correspondence, at a distance, extension, and residential – and recently virtual programmes have been added. There is a broad educational menu on offer and one can find open education, popular and academic models, some of which offer undergraduate and graduate courses, specializations, and postgraduate courses.

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\(^7\) Regarding the process and contextual emergence of Liberation Theology, cf. Gibellini, Rosino, *La Teología del Siglo XX* (Spain: Sal Térrea, 1998), especially chapters 12 to 16. In terms of theological education, the Roman Catholic Church in Latin America and the Caribbean has many important and prestigious faculties and universities. Some of them accept Protestant students. But, as far as I know, the Roman Catholic theological schools do not accept Protestant professors as teaching staff. There is an exceptional case in Costa Rica, where we have the only theology faculty of a public university (National University) in Latin America, which is called the Ecumenical School of Religion Science, and where we have both Protestant and Catholic students and Protestant and Catholic professors. But, it is worth underlining that we are talking about a National Public University.


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I would not venture to present statistics in this short outline that show the breadth of the reality represented today by theological education in the region. This task would require extensive field work; due to our space limitations, we can only point out some general observations that serve as a reference to the context that we were outlining previously. For this, we will turn to the Parable of the Sower (Mt. 13:1-9).

We will emphasize three important elements in this parable – the “sower,” seeds, and field-earth – as they relate to Protestant theological education, about which we will now comment:

**The “Sower” of theological education.**

The first question we ask ourselves is: who was and is the sower of theological education in Latin America? Theological education in our region did not fall from heaven, already prepared. It was brought and “sown” by Christian institutions. What were these institutions? Due to space limitations, we will refer to only three “agriculturalists”, among others, that came and planted the educational seeds in our nascent Latin American churches. These have been North Atlantic mission agencies, the ecumenical movement, and the liberating ecclesiastical movements.

(a) Mission agencies. We must recognize that the Edinburgh 1910 mission conference was a pioneer activity, and it placed great importance on the educational task. At least, in principle, it was agreed to educate the missionaries that would travel to the South.\(^9\)

Even though the recommendations of Edinburgh took a long time to implement and it was a slow beginning, little by little they became a reality. (After the Edinburgh Congress, the Panama Congress was held in 1916, which took up some of the ideas of Edinburgh and re-oriented mission for the region. However, the two World Wars were a major stumbling block that required postponing the implementation of the ideas of the Edinburgh Conference.)

It was the churches and missionary societies that began to create theological schools in our region. Lutherans, Presbyterians, Baptists, Methodists, and Episcopalians were the first to create theological schools in Brazil. In the rest of Latin America, I can mention only a few, like the Latin American Biblical Seminary, which was created directly by the Latin America Mission; the Evangelical Seminary of Theology in Matanzas, Cuba, established by Methodist, Presbyterian, and Episcopal-Anglican churches; the Theological Community of Mexico, an interdenominational experiment among Lutherans, Methodists, Episcopalians, Presbyterians, and Baptists. ISEDET, in Buenos Aires, also was an interdenominational effort that began at the end of the 19th century, before the Edinburgh Conference, and has become a university institute. Likewise, the Theological Community of Chile was created using the same model of joining forces together in creating interdenominational schools.

The common denominator of all the institutions mentioned was that they were originally interdenominational cooperation efforts, even though they were created and financed by churches and North-Atlantic mission agencies. Even though they could have had an ecumenical spirit, the main motivation was interdenominational cooperation. Also, there were many denominations that unilaterally formed their own theological schools, some of which continue today.

(b) The ecumenical movement was likewise a pioneer as a “sower” of the seed of theological education in the Latin American region.

At the initiative of the International Mission Council (IMC), during the Conference in Accra, Ghana in 1958, the Theological Education Fund (TEF) was launched.\(^10\) This event, which took place exactly one year after Ghana gained its independence from the British Empire, is known as the beginning of ecumenical theological education. That is why John Pobee says that everything began in Accra; that is

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where the seed was sown that would bear much fruit for theological education.\footnote{Cf. Pobee, John, Ibid., 148-150.} For this reason, Accra is remembered and recognized as the strategic founding place of ecumenical theological education.

But what began in Accra, at the request of the IMC, became a process taken on in 1977 by the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches (WCC), when it established the Program of Theological Education (PTE).\footnote{Cf. Nairobi to Vancouver, 1975-1983, Report of Central Committee to the Sixth Assembly of World Council of Churches. 194-195.} Since then, the ecumenical movement has assumed this responsibility, supported by the cooperation of many churches and mission agencies, and of development agencies. From that point on, a series of events took place centered on theological education that finally transformed the PTE into what is now ETE (Ecumenical Theological Education).\footnote{Cf. Pobee, John, “Traveling Through Memory Lane: Theological Education in the World Council of Churches,” 149.}

However, Latin America entered the ecumenical scene in force only at the beginning of the 1970s.\footnote{In February of 1980, the Special Fund for ETE in Latin America (FEPETEAL), cf. Amilcar Ulloa, “Origins of Ecumenical Theological Education in Latin America and the Caribbean,” will appear in the Global Handbook on Theological Education, Chapter 20, Historical and Major Goals of Regional Association, 2.} Until then, cooperation for theological education in the region mainly came from the bilateral funds of mission agencies. The Methodists financed the Methodists, the Lutherans the Lutherans, the Presbyterians the Presbyterians, etc., since the majority of the theological schools were denominational at that time. But with WCC cooperation in our region, theological education was transformed in some institutions into an ecumenical effort, promoting unity and cooperation between churches in favour of theological education and ministerial formation. For that, we gratefully recognize that the ecumenical movement has been, and is, a “sower” of theological education in Latin America and the Caribbean.

(c) Churches and Liberating Ecclesiastical Movements. After the decolonization process, some national churches began to create their own programmes for education and training. During the 1960s and 1970s, a movement emerged among several national churches and educational institutions which wanted autonomy in relation to their ties to the first world. A well-known case, because of the repercussions it produced, was the autonomy of what we know today as the Latin American Biblical University (UBL).

The UBL was created and sustained from 1923 to 1970 by the Latin America Mission. But the process of decolonization, Latin Americanization, and financial, theological, pedagogical, and socio-political liberation that was being experienced in the regional context during that time, made the processes of autonomy possible. The cooperation of the ecumenical movement played a fundamental role in these processes, as was true in the case of the UBL.

The same process of change in the Latin American context that began in the 1970s, produced conditions that permitted changes within the churches. Thus, what we call the period of alternative or liberating “ecclesiastical movements” emerged. These were groups of believers from different churches that were creating theology schools independent from the churches. This novelty made it possible to bring together these small experiences in what is called the “Brotherhood of Theological Institutions”, some of which, in general, are clustered around the UBL.\footnote{Cf., Duque, José, “Latin American Biblical University” in Ross Kinsler, Diversified Theological Education: Equipping All God’s People (Pasadena, CA: William Carey International University Press, 2008), 147-171.}

We do not have space to expand on this subject, but the “sowers” of theological education in the Latin American region have been many, represented in mission societies, ecumenical movements, churches, and ecclesiastical movements that have taken on this task as a priority. The next question we are trying to clarify is: what seed has been sown?

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The seeds of theological education

The “seeds” are the objectives and goals of theological education. This has to do with that intention, explicit or not, that the educational task proposes to accomplish. In our case, the seeds, or the objectives, have varied according to the educational processes. For lack of space, we will mention only some of the seeds that have been sown in the region.

In the case of the Edinburgh Conference and in accordance with the context that we presented above, there is a general opinion that the objective that motivated this event was the Westernization of the mission: to take Christian missions to third world countries, according to the definition of the Western North-Atlantic nations. “Christianizing” meant to civilize, based on the ideas of modernization. The North had the mission of civilizing the South. This idea was correlated to neo-colonial expansionism. These two were part of the same project, the neo-colonial project. Mission expansionism took place by proselytism, which made Latin America the spearhead for numerical growth and the conquest of nominal Catholic Christians.

The Westernization of the mission also converted theological education into a reproducer of the North-Atlantic culture. The mission transferred the “superior culture” of the missionary, to be reproduced in the countries of the South – the objects of colonization. However, it is also true that the objective of the transference of culture, the civilizing Westernization and modernization, was not the only proposal of the liberal missions. The post-millennial proposal, which did not accept reason or progress as missionary work, also came into play. Because of the dualism, a supernatural intervention and the salvation of souls was preached. This trend came to us, mainly from the U.S. – a current that was not interested in theological education, but in exclusivist indoctrination.

In addition, the seeds of individualism, dualism, and of an interior experience without social responsibility came to these lands of the South. Likewise, seeds were brought that developed out of fundamentalism. Sowing these seeds produced church-centred ecclesiastical models and pastor-centred ministries that were authoritarian and moralistic.

But these are not the only “seeds” planted in our region, thanks to the ecumenical movement that was incorporated in the South not only as a receiver, but as an architect of its own way. Since that time, the diversification of seeds has greatly enriched theological education. At the Accra Conference, seeds such as freedom, independence, and the dignity of African identity began to emerge from that context, as well as the demand for the training of churches in the South to be able to teach from their own context. From that moment, we began to talk about the contextualization and incarnation of theological education. Due to that environment, a moratorium was proclaimed in Africa, which was a cry of freedom and an act of dignity for emancipation from the colonial project.

In the same way, a great diversification of theological education “seeds” began in Latin America, on one hand, thanks to ecumenical cooperation and, on the other hand, because of the historical context and the perspectives of change that began to germinate throughout the continent during the “Cold War”. The Latin American historical reality, where movements of change were being born, did not only resist, but dared to

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18 Ibid., 19-20.
21 Thanks to the cooperation of the PTE the Special Fund for Ecumenical Theological Education in Latin America and the Caribbean was created in the region in 1980 (FEPETEAL). Cf. Amilcar Ulloa, “Orígenes de la educación teológica ecuménica en América Latina y el Caribe,” 3.
change its unjust neo-colonial dependency. This was supported also by intellectual discourses from many areas: pedagogy (Paulo Freire); philosophy (Leopoldo Sea, Enrique Dussel); economy, with the theory of dependence; sociology (Orlando Fals Borda); and, of course, the emergence of the well-known Latin American Theology of Liberation. In this way, reality was being transformed into a process that did not only change concepts, but the epistemological proposal itself. For example, concepts such as “indigenous” made way for Latin Americanization, liberation, and contextualization, which finally came to be seeds that fell on good soil.

This meant that many good seeds also appeared in the ecumenical movement, seeds that began to reproduce in the theological schools here. The diversification of the seeds continues, and they are no longer imported from the centres of power, but are reproduced from the Creole cultures for enriching the church’s mission, for theological discourse, for strengthening the work of evangelization, and for announcing the kingdom of God and his justice.

The field where the sower plants the seed

This region contains every possible climate, from Amazon tropical to the far extreme of the hemisphere known as the Antarctic. This means that we have an extraordinary diversity of climate, ethnicity, language, and culture.

In this field, the seed fell along the sides of the path; others fell on places where there were thorns and weeds, while others fell on good soil, on fertile land. Thus, the colonizers found a vast land, which they would come to conquer, plunder, and exploit together with the native peoples. At the same time, they contaminated the land. Since that time, these people have shared in the under-development and dependency, and, therefore, the poverty. Today, according to the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), in this region, beginning at the south of Rio Bravo (Grande), there are 125 million citizens who live on less than US $2 a day. In addition, 300 million people, or 70% of the population of Latin America and the Caribbean, live on less than US $300 a month.

This fertile land includes the vast Amazon River basin, called the “lungs of the planet”; however, because of irrational exploitation, mainly encouraged by the profit margins of multinational corporations, an accelerated process of destruction is taking place. Its water, air, and wonderful land are being irrationally polluted. Scientists report that in the space of only 30 years (1960-1990), 20 percent of all the tropical forests in the world were destroyed. The same scientists estimate that 60 percent of the forests in Central America have been cut down in order to cultivate pasture land to produce beef for export to make hamburgers in the U.S. This is a land of inequity, injustice, war and violence, of impunity and racial, ethnic, and gender discrimination.

However, this land has an incalculable potential for hope, dreams, innovation, and creativity for its survival. That is why theological education has found fertile ground where unique and original processes are being cultivated. Because it is a receptive and fertile land, today we have, among other things, four theological education associations that have established cooperation with ETE-WCC. As a group, these bring together about 130 theological education institutions where open and traditional classrooms train thousands and thousands of students. The associations have become spaces for analysis, interpretation, and discernment of the signs of the times in the region. The concerns, challenges, and possibilities of a pastoral,

22 Baéz, Fernando, El Saqueo Cultural de América Latina, 37-40.
25 It has been reported that the countries of Latin America spent US$51,100 million in 2008; Brazil and Colombia have the highest military expenses. Tensions have risen recently because of Colombia’s decision to allow seven U.S. military bases to be set up on its territory. This has set off an arms build-up involving other countries in the region. Guevara, Jacqueline, “América Latina se Arma” in Poder, No. 79/29, agosto, 2009.
theological, missional, didactic, and pedagogical order, which everyone faces in their educational ministry, are shared in common in the associations.

In the same way, teaching, research, and editorial production are being cultivated and are growing.\textsuperscript{26} This has been creating, little by little, a transformational educational culture where contextual pedagogies are developed with an ecumenical spirit to propose to the churches a diversification of ministries, because their realities are very complex and the needs diverse. This new educational culture that has been maturing in some classrooms seeks to overcome the gap between theory and practice. In the schools that have been able to make progress from mere doctrinal transfer to critical and transforming reflection, it has been necessary to raise again the topics of gender equality, not only in the classrooms, but also in the churches as well as in society. In many of our classrooms, where the context is appropriate for hearing the voice of indigenous and African-American peoples, it has been imperative to treat the subject of discrimination and exclusion that sowed and reproduced the colonial perspectives.

We can safely say that there is still enough fertile soil available to continue sowing the seeds for building a new church, a new humanity, in the perspective of God’s kingdom and his justice. This vision of theological education, far from any kind of triumphant vanity, but with humility, should be recognized as still being deficient and facing enormous challenges in this changing context. New questions emerge from the dynamic context of the churches, society, and the natural environment. For that reason, we say that the educational task has travelled a great distance in the region, but there is still a long road yet, given that its context, its field, continues to be fertile for planting. The seeds must be carefully chosen because some are contaminated, others were poorly planted, the land was rocky, and the seeds were sown among weeds. We will now look at some of the tasks or challenges for theological education that are pending in our region.

\textit{Challenges and opportunities}

We could say that every new opportunity that arises for educational processes immediately becomes a challenge. This is almost a rule for theological education. For example, the emergence of ecumenism in our region produced many new opportunities in terms of content, pedagogical method, views, and perspectives. Ecumenism brought about excellent opportunities for progress in the development of new educational proposals. This, however, immediately posed enormous challenges, because it obliged the schools to make efforts to be innovative in the development of other educational models; to diversify the formation of the teaching staff; to expand, renew, and diversify their libraries; to modify and update curriculum offerings; and to assess the academic rigour to ensure transformation of not only the forms, but also the fundamentals.

Those schools in our region that remained as simple repeaters and reproducers of “recipes” from their head offices in the North-Atlantic did not have, nor do they now have, any challenges, except to remain faithful to the dogmas and doctrines they learned from the beginning. These are repeated exactly; in other words, they teach exactly what is already known, what they call “sound doctrine.” They are schools that do not accept either the opportunity or the challenge of the historic context.

Ecumenical theological education transforms itself into a “nursery,” an enormous seedbed, a transforming laboratory.\textsuperscript{27} If the theological education school does not present itself as a space for and a witness of transformation, how can it announce the transforming changes, opportunities, and challenges to the churches?

This means that ecumenical theological education, that which is already a transforming “nursery”, has an enormous task “to make the road by walking”, which means, to permanently re-invent itself, because the church, social, and cultural contexts are very dynamic. What is important is to be attentive to the

\textsuperscript{26} These are some of the most innovative texts on pedagogy: Assmann, Hugo, \textit{Reencantar a Educação} (Petrópolis, Vozes, 1999; Preiswek, Matthias (editor), “Manifesto of Quality Theological Education in Latin America,” in Ministerial Formation, No. 111, November 2008.

opportunities-challenges that God reveals to us in the “signs of the times”, to discern them and recognize them as the theological “place” and stage where we must minister as theological schools.

Next, I want to specify some of the strategic challenges, or pending tasks, for regional theological education. I do not intend to make a long list, because there would not be enough space here, and besides, Dietrich Werner has already provided an excellent synthesis as preparatory material for this project in the Global Handbook.28 The questions that I want to propose for debate about these challenges are as follows.

The diversification of ministries, a challenge of context
The opportunities we have for service and for ministry are innumerable. Poverty, violence, discrimination, exclusion, injustice, disillusionment with life, abandonment of children and senior citizens – these are all challenges and opportunities for service. They are also opportunities for hope, expectations, dreams and aspirations that are raised in the social and religious struggles of the people.

However, churches focus, almost exclusively, on pastoral ministry, that is, by the pastor. Mission and evangelization, with few exceptions, are limited to the church buildings and to individual contacts. We could say that we practice a mono-ministry, that which is done by the ordained minister and usually in the worship service. The members, the believers, become simple recipients that only learn to feed themselves in the worship services and with that, they fulfil the required ritual.

This pastor-centred and church-centred tradition is a waste of opportunities for diakonia, and it is isolated from the social scene. This is, then, an enormous challenge for theological education because it has the opportunity to cultivate diversified educational programmes that are oriented to diversifying the tasks of the mission. Beginning with the Pauline recommendations (I Cor. 12), seminaries and theological institutions should create diversified curricula to attend to the needs of children, adolescents, immigrants, those who face unemployment, people with disabilities, victims of many forms of violence, the defence of human rights, and many other needs and social problems that challenge our mission.

The diversification of ministries requires pedagogical and programme diversification in theological schools. But the diversification of ministries in our churches means leaving the church building, discovering the context of the parish, becoming a part of the historical and cultural context. The school has to anticipate events, to leave the formal classrooms, and to discern the enormous opportunities and challenges that will always exist in the parish.

A coherent praxis in theological education
This comes from the wisdom that has to do with recognizing that the development of intelligence and knowledge, for which theological academies exercise great care, is only one of the aspects of the total educational programme. In other words, although it is true that the cultivation of intelligence and knowledge represents one of the essential aspects of education, this is specific or partial and is not the entire educational process.

To fulfil the transforming pedagogical and mission objectives that unleash an effective process of achieving freedom, human dignity, and solidarity, the educational project is not limited to accumulating knowledge or developing intelligence. The efficacy of the educational project involves coherence between theory and practice, or what we call praxis.

We refer to the praxis of the theological school, of the academic staff, of the students, and that praxis of the educational community as a whole. We refer to the way we live together, the coherence that is shown in daily relations within the theological school. It is precisely in this daily living together in the classroom, the

cafeteria, the library, in liturgical celebrations, where the truth that is proclaimed in the theoretical discourse is verified.

Articulation of the discourse in the classroom as a logical, rigorous intellectual exercise, in order to be effective, must be inevitably confirmed in the coherence of daily life. It is there where the coherence of the academic discourse is verified. The academic discourse is not addressed only to the students or to third parties; the teacher addresses himself or herself in the first place.

In Latin America, we have refined excellent theories about discrimination, gender, solidarity, peaceful co-existence, spirituality, and more, but there still seems to be incoherence in living together on the school campus, and the uncomfortable witnesses of this are our students.

Self-management and viability of educational projects
Latin American and Caribbean theological education has been dependent since its origins in the region. In my wide experience as an ETE consultant in the region, it became evident that financial dependence constitutes one of the unresolved problems.

I believe that for the health of a theological education that is contextual and transforming, it is urgent to find sustainable structures that give viability and autonomy to the educational projects in the near future. This means shaking off financial dependence and simultaneously making an effort to recreate self-managed theological institutions.

This challenge must rethink pedagogical models, teaching models, and administrative models. The self-management viability also has to do with the diversification of ministries, given that there is a temptation to consider clerical ministries as an exclusive professional employment. Likewise, the academic staff should cultivate bi-vocational work.

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THE ORIGINS OF ECUMENICAL THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

Amílcar Ulloa

Introduction

Before ecumenical theological education was recognized as such in the Latin American and Caribbean Ecumenical Theological Education Community (CETELA: Comunidad de Educacion Teologica Latinoamericana y Caribe), it went through a stage of testing and definition in what was called the Special Fund for Ecumenical Theological Education in Latin America (FEPETEAL). This Special Fund (SF) arose as a necessary connection to provide financial support to the theological education institutions in the region. Towards the end of the 1970s, the region experienced a situation of economic instability due to a change of economic models and the corrupt politics of the military regimes. This situation impacted on ecumenical theological institutions to the point of compromising their stability and continuity. The SF filled a needed role during this moment in history.

The SF was developed within the framework of the Latin American Commission for Theological Education (CLAET), which brought together the theological education associations in the region. CLAET encompassed Latin America and the Caribbean and was created under the auspices of the Program on Ecumenical Theological Education (PTE) of the World Council of Churches. We are interested here in exploring the interaction of SF in the midst of CLAET, as well as the horizons that determined its ecumenical perspective.

FEPETEAL did not limit its action to the sphere of economics. From its origins, the founders were clear that the exchanges that took place within FEPETEAL were an indication of the need to transform SF into a community of ecumenical theological education. This vision would be energized by the theological dynamic that was taking place in the region, in which the role of people as theological subjects was emphasized. But these are not subjects tied to the socio-political perspective of the original task of Latin American theology, since glimmers of female subjectivity were already being perceived, for example, and others that had barely begun to appear and would be the lungs that would swell with the new air of the recently created CETELA. However, due to the limits of this paper, we will deal only with FEPETEAL.

The historical and theological sources for this work are found primarily in the archives of CETELA. This synthesis is part of a broader investigation, which the author has undertaken as his Master’s thesis in the Instituto Ecumênico de Pós Graduação em Ciências da Religião of the Methodist University of São Paulo, Brazil.

Latin America and the Culture of Despair

To understand what was happening in the region and its economic impact on the institutions of ecumenical theological education, it is necessary to consider the weight exerted by the foreign debt in the region. In 1982, the so-called “debt crisis” began and because of the structural adjustment programmes imposed by the International Monetary Fund, Latin American economies were managed in their function of paying off foreign debt. Thus, even though Latin America showed high rates of surplus in its trade balance, which

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1 Regarding the matter of the foreign debt, we follow the thinking of Franz Hinkelammert in his article, “Is there a way out of the problem of the foreign debt?” In Hinkelammert, Franc (compilation), El huracán de la globalización (The Hurricane of Globalization) (San José: DEI, 1999), 105-130.
reached nearly US $20 billion (almost 20 percent of total exports) between 1983 and 1985, this surplus mostly serviced the interest on the foreign debt. Thus, during this period, the countries in the region transferred approximately US $120 billion. In other words, Latin America became a net exporter of capital.

As a consequence of this situation, two things occurred: on one hand, a radical reduction of the economic and social functions of the state, which led to extreme poverty in the population due to high taxes, unemployment, and the high cost of basic public services. On the other hand, the inflationary spiral ran wild. For example, in Argentina, inflation rose from 160% in 1982 to nearly 400% in 1983; after the Austral Decree was enacted in July 1985, monthly prices rose by nearly 800%. In Brazil, between 1981 and 1983, the annual inflation ranged around 100%; after a large devaluation in 1983 it increased by nearly 200%. When the Cruzado Decree was enacted, the monthly inflation rates were at 15%, the highest in the history of Brazil.

Because of the economic difficulties experienced in the region during this period, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) named this period of economic stagnation the “lost decade.” Going beyond the economic analysis, Franz Hinkelammert interpreted it as the “culture of despair”. The consideration of the neo-liberal model is based on the denial of any other option for hope; societies are stabilized through despair: the more profound the despair, the less the opposition, because opposition does not make sense. No new proposals emerge from a culture of despair because no one creates them. So, by destroying hope, the result is political stability, concludes Hinkelammert.

Creation of the Special Fund: A Response in the Face of the Economic Crisis

The inflationary situation that was unleashed directly affected theological education institutions and created an economic crisis within them. Several institutions were threatened not only by economic instability, but the prospects of closure. During a meeting called by the Program for Theological Education (PTE) and the National Council of Churches (NCC) of the United States, in which some ecumenical seminaries participated, it was decided to create a special fund for ecumenical theological education. This meeting was held between January 31st and February 3rd, 1979, at the Instituto Superior Evangélico de Estudios Teológicos (ISEDET) in Buenos Aires, Argentina. The document produced at that meeting states that, “in some countries [Latin American] economic strategies that have exacerbated inflation and

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2 According to Xavier Gorostiaga, the net transfers from the South to the North during the decade of 1980 were equivalent to ten Marshall Plans. Quoting the Latin American Economic System (SELA), just the service on the debt was 80% more than the foreign investment rates. Cf. Xavier Gorostiaga, “Ya comenzó el siglo XXI: el Norte contra el Sur” (“The 21st Century has Begun: the North against the South,” in Ross Kinsler and Ismael Campo (eds.), Educación Teológica en situaciones de sobreviviencia: una consulta latinoamericana (Costa Rica: PET/SBL), 84. According to Franz Hinkelammert, the Marshall Plan for Eastern Europe was equivalent to US$14 billion (in The Hurricane, 113).


6 According to Raúl Cardoso: “The instability of the economies in Latin American countries where there were various ecumencial seminaries for education and theological research, and repeated requests for assistance when faced with emergency situations in which they were enveloped for many years, made officials of ecclesiastical organizations and seminaries think about constituting a subsidy fund for needs caused by emergency situations … which were only possible to counteract by appealing for outside resources.” In “From FEPETEAL to CETELA: History of an Encounter,” on file in CETELA: Memories, financial reports, minutes, executive committee reports for 1985-1989, 1988, 1.

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maintained an unrealistically low exchange rate for foreign currency created an unprecedented financial crisis in many of the ecclesiastical institutions that receive contributions from sister churches. Theological education was not exempt from this crisis.”

The same document affirms, as its starting point, the search for unity among churches and ecumenical theological education institutions at this critical time in Latin America. On the other hand, it questioned the inadequate situation existing between the cooperating agencies of the First World and the Latin American theological education institutions. It was proposed that unity be based on the reciprocity inspired in Christ. In addition, it proposed that the pattern for financial investment be defined by institutions committed to the “theological task”, and not by those focused on “theological funding”.

Subsequently, at a meeting held in the Baptist Theological Seminary in Cali, Colombia on February 6th-7th, 1980, FEPETEAL was created. This meeting was held at the request of the consultation held by CLAET in the same place. The following is a list of participants who created the SF.

Table One. Participants in the meeting in Cali, Colombia, January, 1980. Creation of FEPETEAL.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>ORGANIZATION</th>
<th>COUNTRY/REGION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jaci Maraschin</td>
<td>ASTE</td>
<td>Brazil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pablo A. Deiros</td>
<td>ASIT</td>
<td>Southern Cone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrique Guang Tapia</td>
<td>ALET/Nazarene Seminary</td>
<td>Central America and northern South America</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Felipe Adolf</td>
<td>CLAI (in formation)</td>
<td>Latin America</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Néstor Míguez</td>
<td>ULAJE</td>
<td>Argentina/Latin America</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carmelo Álvarez</td>
<td>SBL-CELADEC</td>
<td>Costa Rica/Latin America</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daniel Rodríguez</td>
<td>CTM</td>
<td>Mexico</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raúl Cardoso</td>
<td>ISEDET</td>
<td>Argentina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helmut Gnadt</td>
<td>CTECh</td>
<td>Chile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aharón Sapsezián</td>
<td>PTE</td>
<td>Switzerland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Osvaldo L. Motessi</td>
<td>PTE</td>
<td>Argentina/Latin America</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lothar Engel</td>
<td>EMW</td>
<td>Germany</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joel Gajardo</td>
<td>NCC</td>
<td>United States of America</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luis Fidel Mercado</td>
<td>SEPR</td>
<td>Puerto Rico</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jaime Ortiz</td>
<td>SBC</td>
<td>Colombia</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: CETELA files. FEPETEAL, 1979-1986. See list of abbreviations at the end of the article.

Just a glance at the previous list of participants allows one to observe the heterogeneous spectrum representing Latin American diversity that came together in CLAET, about which we will talk a little later. There were representatives of theological education associations (ASTE, ALIET and ASIT), ecumenical seminaries (SBL, CTM, ISEDET, CTECh, DEPR), of the ecumenical movement (CLAI, ULAJE, CELADEC), cooperative agencies from the North (PTE, NCC), and even conservative theological institutions like the Biblical Seminary of Colombia (SBC). Although all of these organizations were part

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8 During the CLAET meeting in Cali, before the meeting in which FEPETEAL was founded, other theological institutions in Colombia participated, such as: The International Baptist Theological Seminary and the Alliance Biblical Seminary, as well as other professors from SBC. The latter, in particular, stands out in Colombia because of adopting a very critical attitude about the ecumenical movement and of liberation theology; it is a paradox that it was a
of the SF, only the ecumenical seminaries had access to economic contributions, as well as a voice and a vote.

The SF was formed with contributions by EMW, Zending, the Basilea Mission, the NCC, and the Methodist Church of the United Kingdom. The total contributed for SF was US $873,000. It was called a special fund, because, in the judgment of its founders, it constituted a different fund than the normal contributions from churches in the United States and Europe. From the beginning, there was talk about setting up an investment fund and only using the profit from investments. However, this proposal did not prosper because, from the beginning, the requests for support that were approved were greater than the profits earned.

The seven theological education institutions that formed the SF benefitted from its contributions. The total of resources transferred was US $595,000. Due to space limitations, we are going to briefly look at only one case that demonstrates the purpose of the SF – the case of ISEDET in Argentina. This institution was created in 1971 as a result of the merger of the Evangelical Faculty of Theology (created in 1942) and the Lutheran Evangelical Faculty. The latter institution was experiencing economic instability because of the economic crisis in the country, which affected the depreciation of the German Mark against the U.S. Dollar, hyperinflation that reached 687, 95% in 1984, and political instability due to the lack of clarity regarding the policies of the military government. Because of the latter, the institution lost its investment fund. In the middle of this crisis, the institution made two requests for support: first in 1982 and secondly in 1985, to the amount of US $200,000, which were approved. The institution gratefully recognized this help; the other cooperative agencies were able to ward off the crisis that threatened their future.

The Influence of FET and PET on the Creation of Latin American Associations

We do not have precise information about when CLAET was created. According to Aaron Sapsezián, the first meeting of Latin American Associations of Theological Education was held in 1971. What seems to founding member of FEPETEAL. However, in November 1982, the SBC decided to withdraw from the SF, declaring that it did not share the decidedly ecumenical orientation. For more information about this institution, see, Ulloa, Jorge Amilcar, Cuando pases por las aguas, ¡yo estaré contigo!, History of the Inter-American Evangelical Church of Colombia, 1943-1982. History Thesis, University of Antioquia, 2007, particularly 53-58 and 246-248.

9 To the five ecumenical seminaries included in Table 1 are added the Evangelical Theological Seminary of Cuba (SET) and the Instituto Ecumênico de Pós Graduação em Ciências da Religião (CEPGCR) of São Paulo, Brazil.

10 To see the specific distribution of these funds, see the Table of Distributions in Jorge Amilcar Ulloa, “Incidência das teologias de Abya-Yala em CETELA (provisional title). Master’s dissertation in process. Methodist University of São Paulo, 2009, 50.


12 The military dictatorship imposed an economic plan that froze the exchange rate of the Argentine currency, while there was galloping inflation in the economy. This meant that resources were frozen for all the institutions that depended on international financial cooperation, while their operating costs rapidly increased, placing them on the border of bankruptcy.


14 Argentina was under a military regime between March 1976 and December 1983.

15 This was recognized by Dr. Lee Brummel, rector of ISEDET, in a thank-you letter that was addressed to FEPETEAL in January 1984. Cf. “Actas FEPETEAL-CETELA, 1983-1985.”


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be clear is that CLAET was created under the influence of the Theological Education Fund (TEF) and policies of the International Mission Council (IMC).

The Theological Education Fund was created in Ghana in 1958 by the International Mission Council, and three years later became a part of the IMC. Sapsezian recognizes that the creation of theological education associations in Latin America was promoted by the TEF. The idea was to promote cooperation between the seminaries of different Protestant denominations. This initiative emerged from the “Scopes Report”. This report was named for Wilfred Scopes, one of the members of the commission created by the IMC. Sapsezian, who was a pastor of the Armênia Church of Brazil at that time, while also a professor of the Methodist Seminary of São Bernardo do Campo, was part of this commission. The purpose of the commission was to visit churches in Latin America and the Caribbean in order to learn about the situation of theological education, or of Christian ministry, as it was called at that time. Its work was carried out between February and May of 1961. Brazil was the privileged field for the commission’s research, and because of this the creation of the Association of Evangelical Theological Seminaries (ASTE) was the direct fruit of one of the commission’s recommendations.17

So, ASTE was created in 1961. The Association of Theological Seminaries and Institutions (ASIT) for the Southern Cone was created in 1963. Subsequently, in 1965, the Latin American Association of Theological Education Institutions (ALIET), oriented to the Northern region of South America (Peru, Ecuador, Venezuela and Colombia), Central America and the Hispanic Caribbean, was founded.18

During what was called the third mandate of TEF (1970-1977), Sapsezian reports that this organization experienced changes in its policies and priorities, in part motivated by the rapid cultural and social transformations that were taking place in the Third World. This motivated a search for new models of theological education, seeking to make it more pertinent, both in form and in content. The new TEF policies were defined in July, 1972 during a meeting held in London. A document, “Lines of action for fulfilling the third mandate of the Theological Education Fund”, was produced at that time.19 The document’s central lines of action clearly perceived that the situation of theological education demanded profound, even radical, changes in its objectives and structures. It states that in the area of missiology, the forms inherited might have hindered the blossoming of the power of the gospel as a message of liberation for the poor and oppressed, and the liberation of both the wealthy and the poor from the chains of domination that imprisoned the oppressors as well as the oppressed. It proposes that this change is concentrated in contextualization, understood as the capacity to respond in a coherent way to the gospel within the foreseen strategy for each specific situation. Consequently, importance should be given to issues of justice, liberation, dialogue with other beliefs and ideologies, and with economic power. Longuini Netos believes that contextualization became a key concept in theological understanding and in the evolution of the idea of indigenization so that, even though each theological education association was not required to accept TEF policies, to be ignorant of them implied not having access to financial support.20

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18 Nevertheless, ALIT was created under the name Latin American Association of Theological Schools (ALET). In Central America there was another association that emerged through the urging of theological education by extension that began in Guatemala in 1963. To learn a little about the origins of this movement, see R. Kinsler, “Educación teológica popular: perspective histórica,” in *Pastoralia*, No. 16 (July 1986), 17. The name of the this movement’s association was the Latin American Association of Extension Institutions and Seminaries (ALISTE). According to Sapsezian, in 1980, ALET and ALISTE held simultaneous assemblies in Alajuela, Costa Rica, during which each assembly decided to dissolve its organization to create just one association that was named ALIET. Cf. *Diccionario de historia de la iglesia*, 1989, 97. And, Pablo A. Deiros, *Historia del cristianismo en América Latina* (Buenos Aires: FTL, 1992), 813.
19 This document was translated into Portuguese by ASTE in *Simpósio* magazine, No. 9, December 1972.

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In 1977, the TEF came to an end and in its place the Theological Education Program (PTE) was created within the World Council of Churches, with the idea of working for theological renewal on every continent.\(^{21}\) That renewal would seek a genuine catholicity and freedom in theological education, taking on the following topics: confessional isolation, class struggle, racism, sexism, cultural domination, and economic-ideological imperialism.\(^{22}\) We can conclude that the presence of PTE representatives in the CLAET meetings responded to policies outlined by TEF and continued by PTE. According to José Míguez Bonino, Executive Secretary of ASIT for several years, the creation of CLAET responded to the policy of cooperation between the associations of theological education in the region.\(^{23}\)

**The Diversified Theological Environment of CLAET**

The SF was created within CLAET. There was an organizational relationship; the SF was part of the CLAET General Assembly. Neither should we forget that the SF was a new body that was added to CLAET, also following the same policies of cooperation and contextualization outlined by the PTE. However, we can’t forget that there were suspicions in relation to the creation of the SF.

When we talked about the organizations that participated in CLAET, which originated the SF, we alluded to their diversified environment. Thus, although it sounds like a truism to mention this, the by-laws of ASTE, ASIT and ALIET declare themselves to be spaces for encounter and exchange, with an evangelical identity and open to diverse theological tendencies.\(^{24}\) On the other hand, it was the SF and ecumenical organizations that openly declared themselves to be spaces with an ecumenical option. We will look at the historical and theological nuances of this later.

Nevertheless, this spectrum of diversity should not be idealized. The SF’s historiographical information allows us to perceive that the presence of the associations’ representatives in CLAET remained more or less stable. Among other things, this means that those who attended the meetings as representatives of the associations (ASTE, ASIT and ALIET), who did not belong to an ecumenical seminary, were people who, although theologically conservative, maintained an attitude that was open to dialogue.\(^{25}\) So, we are talking about a diversified environment in which there was a kind of respectful theological consensus, which does not mean that there were no tensions.

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\(^{21}\) Sapsezián Aarón. “Fondo de Educación Teológica.” *Diccionario de historia de la iglesia*, 1989, 449-450. Sapsezián was the first director of PTE.


\(^{23}\) Cf. Bonino, José Miguez. “Educación teológica (Protestante) en el mundo hispano-lusitano” in *Diccionario de historia de la iglesia*, 376.


\(^{25}\) Such is the case of people like Pablo A. Deiros, Osvaldo Mottesi, and Enrique Guang Tapia. At that time, Deiros, a theologian, historian and philosopher, while being an ASIT representative was also a professor at the International Baptist Theological Seminary in Buenos Aires; today he is introduced as “evangelical” and “Baptist,” a member of the pastoral team at the Renewed Baptist Evangelical Church in the center of Buenos Aires – a renewed Baptist church. Cf. Pablo Alberto Deiros and Carlos Miranda, *Latinoamérica en llamas. Historia y creencias del movimiento religioso más impresionante de todos los tiempos* (Nashville: Caribe, 1994), 4-6. During that time, Mottesi was a professor of religion and society at Northern Baptist Seminary in Chicago, Illinois, and was the PTE Latin American representative. Cf. Carmelo Álvarez and Pablo Leggett (eds.) *Lectura teológica del tiempo latinoamericano. Ensayos en honor del Dr. Wilton M. Nelson* (San José: SEBILÁ, 1979), 7. And, Enrique Guang was Vice-rector of distance studies at the Nazarene Seminary in San José, Costa Rica at that time. Cf. *Diccionario de historia de la iglesia*, 1989, XVII. Even the expositions of these theologians in the CLAET consultation in 1980 reflected theological positions that were critical and open to committed thought about what was happening in Latin America; cf. Jorge Amílcar Ulloa, “Incidência de teologias de Abya-Yala em CETELA,” a dissertation in process, 2009, 19-20. However, the institutions that were frankly conservative, such as the SBC in Colombia, possibly entered CLAET and the SF with economic interests but, as was already said, they had a short life in the SF because of its ecumenical option.
The theological agenda of the CLAET conference held in February, 1980 in Cali, Colombia, reveals a concern about contextual theological education. This was clear in the final document signed by the participants, the “Cali Declaration”. It recognizes that, given the situation of Latin America at that time, one of the basic projects of Christian ministry should be human rights, understood as the full realization of human beings; given by God in Christ, who dignifies human rights and invites the common people to be actors in the history and future of all humanity. This project is hindered by the dominant system that subjects people to different forms of exclusion and exploitation, many times resorting to genocide, torture, and death. On the other hand, it recognizes that theological education institutions have committed the sin of a kind of elitism which is reflected in forms of clericalism and academic demands, ignoring the universal vocation of the faithful. Also, the full participation of students has been denied, transforming them into mere receptors of information. Lastly, the document looks with hope at the emergence of experiences that are overcoming previous limitations, underlining that the true ecumenical expression of the church becomes the foreshadowing of the kingdom of God when it assumes the biblical option for the poor. The document concludes: “Therefore, theological education must be expressed in the pastoral action of the church as presence in the world, which accepts this option that wants to give full participation to women, so often excluded from the theological task, and whose participation is indispensable for giving full meaning to this task.”

This is a surprising document. It would not appear to have come from such a heterogeneous group. And, it is paradoxical that in the list of participants there is not one woman. Even so, it reflects a constant fact of the period, such as the total absence of women in these conferences, including those of the SF. On the other hand, there was a search for new theological horizons. The lack of women in the SF would change only as that experience was ending, and they would have a pronounced participation with its transformation into CETELA.

The Ecumenical Horizons of FEPETEAL

Clearly, the SF was founded as an ecumenical organization. However, the perception of what was “ecumenical” during its existence was not always precise or homogenous. Let us look at which perspectives influenced its understanding and how it evolved.

Intra-Protestant ecumenicalism

From their origins, ecumenical seminaries were defined on the basis of a structure that took into consideration the participation of different churches (Protestants, of course). Thus, they were defined as “those in which, by their organization and consequently by the content of their programs, a clear ecumenical option was expressed”. It is not difficult to detect the general, vague character of this definition.

Subsequently, during the assembly in São Paulo in March, 1981, progress was made regarding the scope of the meaning of ecumenical. It was there that, in addition to the intra-ecclesial unity of Protestants, the socio-political dimension was incorporated upon talking about the unity of the church in the framework of “solidarity with the oppressed peoples of Latin America”. Later, in January 1982, a new element was approved that was inserted into the exchanges between CLAET and FEPETEAL. This talked about the vocation of CLAT and FEPETEAL to achieve and promote a relationship between ecumenical seminaries and others in Latin America, in order that the latter acquire an ecumenical vision and commitment. It was made clear that the fact that the majority of the theological seminaries in Latin America were

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denominational is not incompatible with the ecumenical conscience or action. These last words confirm the political will of PTE to have influence on other associations through FEPETEAL. These two viewpoints of unity, one with a socio-political perspective and the other ecclesiastical, would be represented in the SF by-laws until its closure and subsequent transformation into a theological education community.

It is interesting to ask why the SF did not incorporate the ecumenical vision shared by Professor Lee Brummel during the CLAET consultation in January, 1982, which was held before the SF assembly. Brummel presented a paper there, entitled “Toward a common strategy for ecumenical theological education in Latin America”. The author questions the ecumenical vision being limited to different confessional institutions; he proposes that its horizons be broadened in dialogue with the “inhabited world”. According to him, men and the inhabited world should appear in the foreground. On the other hand, the idea of place in Latin American theological formation becomes problematical. For Brummel, specific situations in the formation process must be kept in mind; therefore, he asks, what is the significance of theological education in a classroom of students who come from ten or more countries with radically different socio-political and even ecclesiastical realities? He states: “The situation between the Bolivian high plateau and the city of Caracas suggests a problem for theological education that we have not studied sufficiently.”

We must look for the roots of this kind of ecumenism in the development of the policy of co-operation among Protestant churches promoted by the Cooperation Committee in Latin America (CCLA). According to Arturo Piedra, this committee has a very clear objective: “… struggle with the topic of Protestant work in Latin America and particularly with the subject of co-operation, and to report to the mission boards.” The matter of cooperation was not accidental; it was a geopolitical necessity due to the phenomenon of divisions among Protestants and the hegemonic pretensions of the Roman Catholic Church in the region. For Sabanes Plou, “Its work [the CCLA] offered an opportunity for evangelical Latin American church leaders to meet together to establish their own strategy for ecumenical development, which was of singular importance”. Co-operation was not just limited to the expansion of Protestantism in terms of proselytism; its agenda also included an ecumenical perspective of theological education. As a result of these efforts, several theological education institutions were created that were influenced by this ecumenical inclination, such as the cooperation between various Protestant churches. This was the case of the Evangelical Seminary in Puerto Rico, created in 1919; of ISEDET, which was already mentioned; and of the Latin American Biblical Seminary (reorganized in 1973 with an ecumenical perspective).

Role of the ecumenical movements
As previously stated, several ecumenical movements (CLAI, CELADEC, ULAJE) participated in CLAET and, as such, became part of FEPETEAL. The role of these movements in CLAET was made very clear when Luis Reinoso, Secretary General of CELADEC at the time, stated during the CELADEC consultation in São Paulo in March, 1981 that, “The ecumenical movements participate as a gesture of solidarity for a

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30 According to Jürgen Prien, the main motivation for cooperation promoted by CCLA came from the experience of the mission agencies in regard to the exportation of denominational differences that emerged historically and were an obstacle to the success of missionary work. In Hans Jürgen Prien, La historia del cristianismo en América Latina (Salamanca: Sigueme, 1985), 881.
31 Sabans Plou, Caminhos de unidade, 44.
32 Cases mentioned by Sabanes Plou, Ibid., 69-71.
truly ecumenical theological education” within CLAET. This attitude, which seemed pretentious, was justified because of the commitment made by those ecumenical organizations to the transformation of Latin American society, beginning with their commitment to the poorest sectors of the population, with an ecumenical practice that went beyond the Protestant frontiers to carrying out joint work with sectors of the Catholic Church.

According to Arturo Piedra, the social commitment of the ecumenical movements came from the theological reading by the CCLA in Latin America regarding the social gospel in the United States. It appears that the first to appropriate this “heresy” was ULAJE. Beginning with the evangelical congress in Havana held in 1929, evangelical young people decided to create their own evangelization organization, without putting aside their concern for social transformation. It was first called the “Latin American Union of Evangelical Youth”; subsequently, in the Montevideo Assembly in 1970, the word “evangelical” was changed to “ecumenical,” because of the integration of Catholic youth groups in the organization. The commitment of this organization led to the formation of another ecumenical movement, known by the name of Church and Society in Latin America (ISAL), which had an extremely important impact in the origins of liberation theology, from the Protestant perspective.

About CELADEC’s role, we can briefly call attention to the transformation that began in 1974 during its fifth annual meeting in Bogota, Colombia. On one hand, it decided to opt for popular education – understood as an awakening or awareness of oppression – and to provide a scientific element for interpreting the social conflicts and unleash experiences in which the people discover and accept the role of authoring possible changes. Consequently, working groups were created that gave priority to some of the popular actors, such as: rural and urban workers, peasants, indigenous people, professors, students, and church-based communities. On the other hand, CELADEC decided to increase its membership. Until that time, only ecclesiastical organizations could be a part of CELADEC. After that, non-ecclesiastical organizations that worked in the area of education could become a part of the organization. Therefore, its ecumenicity was broadened to all those who worked for the transformation of society, through education and with an ecumenical option.

About CLAI, it is enough to say that it was a founding member of FEPETEAL, when this was still in formation (1978-1982). CLAI accompanied the entire experience of SF, from its creation in 1980 to its transformation into CETELA in October 1988, during the annual meeting in Indaiatuba, Brazil. The second general assembly of CLAI was held there at the Itaici Retreat Center, immediately after the FEPETEAL-CETELA assembly. The assembly of this new organization sent a letter of greeting to the CLAI assembly, which was written by the last president of the SF, Professor Plutarco Bonilla, and addressed to Bishop Federico Pagura, president of CLAI. The fact that the majority of the institutions in CETELA would stay to participate in the CLAI assembly was outstanding; it was a “…concrete expression that we share the same commitment”. A commitment that, according to the CLAI objectives for that period, had to do with the participation of Christians in the defence of human rights, creating a favourable atmosphere for a prophetic ministry by the churches and organized members, promoting solidarity actions, and strengthening the process of theological reflection about these matters.

34 Arturo Piedra, Evangelización protestante en América Latina, 211.
35 Sabans Plou, Caminhos de unidades, 112.
36 Sabanes Plou, Caminhos de unidade, 137-138.
38 Sabanes Plou, Caminhos de unidade, 165.
In synthesis, we can say that the role of ecumenical movements in the SF dealt with a search for theological formation that was involved in the Latin American reality, with an ecumenical vision that went beyond Protestant borders. This does not mean that this was a mechanical exercise; there was permanent interaction because of the militancy of teachers and students in theological education institutions within ecumenical movements and vice versa. What does seem strange is that the presence of ecumenical movements, both in CLAET and in FEPETEAL, came to an end during the 1984 assembly in Costa Rica. The reasons for this are not clear in the documentation. It could have been because of the close collaboration of some of the ecumenical movements with leftist political groups and the close collaboration with sectors of the Catholic Church.39

Closure of FEPETEAL and Birth of CETELA

FEPETEAL was transformed into the Latin American and Caribbean Community of Ecumenical Theological Education (CETELA) in October, 1988. It is interesting to note that although the period of SF was marked by economic preoccupations, from its origins it was always conscious of the need to transcend that area and become an ecumenical community of theological education. This idea spanned the life of SF. It was talked about for the first time at the 1982 annual meeting in Puerto Rico. In that same meeting, a commission formed by Aarón Sapsezián (PTE), Fidel Mercado (SEPR), and Raúl Cardoso (ISEDET) was named to prepare a concrete proposal for the implementation of this idea. They produced the document, “Towards an ecumenical community for theological education in Latin America.”

The draft proposal was sent to all the affiliate institutions for study. The plan included an evaluation of each institution with regard to sharing resources in several areas of theological education. At the consultation, it became clear that a new structure should not be created, and that the SF would become part of the new community. With respect to the ecumenical perspective, it was decided that the community should be open to confessional seminaries, but with a broader vision. Attention is drawn to the fact that among the recommendations was a request to include the topics of women, Pentecostalism and indigeneity in the curriculum. Subsequently, Plutaraco Bonilla was asked to write a proposal, taking into account the entire SF experience and the contributions that were made in the recent consultation.

Bonilla rigorously carried out the work. He began the proposal by assessing the road travelled. He then reported that the SF was not able to obtain the projected funding and that the operational nature of the SF had been called into question. He justified the need to transform SF into a community of theological education, saying: “Even though there regional associations dedicated to theological education already existing in Latin America, as does a continental organization (CLAET), and despite the participation of institutions affiliated to FEPETEAL in these organizations, there is a perceived absence of what we could call a specific forum in which specific topics are discussed that affect the development of ecumenical theological education as such”.40

That proposal legitimized the need to create a space for reflection and theological education from an ecumenical perspective. This need was confirmed within CLAET itself. Despite the pluralized atmosphere, the open attitude, and the respectful consensus that had been experienced, a certain amount of tension and ambiguity persisted.

On the other hand, it should be remembered that this tension was a product of the dynamic being experienced in theological work in the region at that time. Bonilla synthesized that brilliantly at the

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39 At least, this is clear in the case of CELADEC. The relations between this organization and evangelical churches were very tense between 1980 and 1986, for the reasons mentioned. Cf. Wilton M. Nelson, *Diccionario de historia de la iglesia*, 258.

presentation of some of the texts produced by the conference held in Antigua, Guatemala, in May, 1986, which was convened by ALIET and supported by PTE, when he said: “What we are eagerly looking for today is to learn how to do theology, which necessarily happens through learning to theologize or think theologically.”

Basically, what was hoped for with the creation of CETELA was to have a space for theological reflection from a clearly ecumenical perspective.

However, this journey was not completely initiated until after CETELA’s first theological conference was held in July, 1991 in Managua. At that conference, new theologians from sectors that had been historically excluded, such as women, the indigenous people of Latin America, African descendants, and Pentecostals, produced a kind of “Pentecost” with an impact that yielded a transformation in CETELA, which introduced new views that were truly ecumenical for theological education in Abya-Yala.

In Conclusion

We have tried throughout this text to chart the emergence of ecumenical theological education in Latin America and the Caribbean. This journey shows a clear evolution from the financial area to the exchange of academic resources and emergence of new theological intuitions. Likewise, a process of transformation was achieved which moved from intra-Protestant institutional ecumenism, to a vision in which there are the beginnings of solidarity with oppressed peoples. We saw that this process did not take place in isolation, but in the interior diversity of CLAET. It was there that the SF was able to test the ecumenical commitment, even at times exercising undue pressure based on their economic resources. It was also there that they became aware that the limits of a diverse space in shaping an ecumenical theological reflection.

However, this theological vision would not develop satisfactorily within FEPETEAL, perhaps because of its own entanglements of economic management that needed to be handled. But, after all, they knew how to maintain the sensitivity and presence of the new theologians, to whom their kairós would arrive in 1991, and which would give meaning to the new association that was named CETELA. Therefore, Raúl Cardoso was right when he said that “possibly FEPETEAL’s greater merit was having led the way to a Community of Latin American Ecumenical Theological Education”.

41 *Pastoralia*, No. 16, July 1986, San José, 10. The emphasis is Bonilla’s. The theme of the conference in Antigua was popular theological education. The texts published in this magazine are very interesting; they reflect the process being experienced in Latin America and the Caribbean, by which the people of God should be the subjects of theological reflection; this includes specific expressions such as is the case of women. Some of these conferences were translated into English and can be consulted in Ministerial Formation, No. 37, Geneva, March 1987. That dynamic was not private property of just one movement, but it traversed different churches, educational spaces and theological reflection, such as ASIT (cf. Encuentro y diálogo, No. 4, Buenos Aires, 1985. Several conferences by Daniel Schipani were published there, in which he insisted on the epistemological privilege of the poor and shared some of the implications for theological education). Also, see Norberto Saracco’s article “La búsqueda de nuevos modelos de educación teológica,” in René Padilla (ed.) Nuevas alternativas de educación teológica (Buenos Aires: Nueva Creación, 1986), 29. Saracco poses the emergence of people as theological subjects, which he says represents a qualitative jump in the theology produced in the Third World. Padilla’s book collects the conferences presented in an August 1985 meeting in Ecuador regarding new alternatives for theological education.

42 Abya-Yala is a Word of the Kuna Indians of Panama that means “mature earth” or “earth in fully maturity.” It is used by the Indigenous peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean to refer to the American Continent.

43 Raúl Cardoso, “Del FEPETEAL a la CETELA”, 8.
Acronym List

ALIET  Latin American Association of Theological Education Institutions
ASTE  Association of Evangelical Theological Seminaries
ASIT  Association of Theological Seminaries and Institutions
CELADEC  Latin American Evangelical Commission of Christian Education
CETELA  Latin American & Caribbean Community of Ecumenical Theological Education
CLAET  Latin American Commission of Theological Education
CLAI  Latin American Council of Churches
CMI/WCC  World Council of Churches
CTECH  Evangelical Theological Community of Chile
CTM  Theological Community of Mexico
CEPGCR  Post-Graduate Ecumenical Course in Religious Science
EMW  Evangelisches Missionswerk in Deutschland
FEPETEAL  Special Fund for Ecumenical Theological Education in Latin America
FET  Theological Education Fund
ISEDET  Superior Evangelical Theological Studies Institute
NCC  National Council of Churches
PTE/WCC  Theological Education Program of the World Council of Churches
SBC  Biblical Seminary of Colombia
SBL  Latin American Biblical Seminary
SEPR  Evangelical Seminary of Puerto Rico
SET  Evangelical Theological Seminary
ULAJE  Latin American Evangelical/Ecumenical Youth Union

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TOWARD A UNIFIED AND CONTEXTUAL PROGRAM IN THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION IN THE CARIBBEAN

Noel Titus

Formal theological education was originally an enterprise restricted to those persons whose goal was to serve as ordained ministers of various churches in the region. This enterprise began at a time when there was no formal process for ordination, and when aspirants to ordination served with some priest or other minister on the basis of guided reading and instruction. For Anglicans, it then entailed a hazardous voyage to England to seek ordination from a bishop, before returning to the West Indies to assume duties in a parish. The process also witnessed the establishment of a variety of institutions over time, beginning with Codrington College in 1745. Although the college’s first graduate was ordained in 1759, it did not attain its exclusively theological status until it was restructured in 1830. For more than a decade after that, the college had to resist strong challenges to its mission, on the part of those who saw it as a college for the sons of the gentry, and eventually accommodated itself to a dual purpose – offering theology alongside classics and other areas of study.

Other institutions were started by churches in Jamaica and Trinidad, as well as in Antigua for a short while. Among those started were York Castle (1870s) and later Caenwood (1928) for the Methodists, one for the Moravians in the Virgin Islands in 1885, Calabar for the Baptists in 1843, in St. Andrew’s, Jamaica in 1877, and much later for the Roman Catholics St. Michael’s in Jamaica and the Seminary of St. John Vianney and the Uganda martyrs in Trinidad in 1943. The last was started as a diocesan college, becoming a regional seminary in 1970. While each did much good in catering to the needs of its own denomination, none could be said to be either fully viable or to have the necessary resources for a satisfactory execution of its tasks. All of these institutions in their turn would have appreciated the challenge of preparing persons for the ordained ministry in a context of limited human and financial resources. This limitation would prove to be the most intractable problem for the churches throughout the history of this enterprise.

The middle of the twentieth century would witness the beginning of change. It was a period of unprecedented development at the political and other levels of society. A sense of nationalism gripped the people of the English-speaking Caribbean, who were once considered, and who considered themselves, subjects of the British Empire. This was facilitated by the emergence of strong leaders in the various islands, following the beginning of a vibrant labour movement. People began to think of themselves as Barbadians, Jamaicans, Trinidadians, and so on, rather than as subjects of Britain. Gradually, this led to the desire for independence of the colonial suzerainty, and to look forward to national independence. On the part of some leaders, there was the added dimension of a desire to remove barriers which once divided, and to see their identity as belonging to the Caribbean rather than in the "empire". It was a slow process, which has not yet reached its zenith. The churches could not stand aloof from such influences, and not surprisingly there began to be muted voices expressing a desire for churches to come together whenever and wherever this was possible. This saw the gradual growth of co-operative activity among the churches, the formation of Christian Councils in various territories, and eventually the formation of the Caribbean Conference of Churches in 1983.

Playing major roles in the process of regional identity were two institutions, whose functions bore not the slightest resemblance to each other. One of these was West Indian cricket, whose team had begun to show itself a force to be reckoned with in that sport. The exploits of the three W’s, and the spin twins of Ramadhin and Valentine in test cricket, imparted a sense of pride, which laid the foundation for West Indian identity and unity in the late 1970s and much later. At least for a time, the labels of insularity could
be put aside as the region took pride in the exploits of their sons. The second institution to play a role in this identity was the University College (later the University) of the West Indies, founded in 1948 as an extension of the University of London. The production of graduates trained in the region, and having a less limited understanding of the Caribbeans, helped to ensure a sense of regional pride that only fell short of rivalling the exploits of the West Indies cricket team. One could receive “at home” an education that measured up to that received overseas.

The Caribbean is in every sense a region of immigrants and immigration. European exploitation denuded the region of all but a few of its indigenous population. When the remnants became too few to facilitate the commercial exploitation of the region’s produce, Africans were brought in as stronger and more durable workers. In due course, the abolition of the slave trade and slavery only served to arouse the hunger for cheap labour and great profit. Rather than pay wages to the existing labour force, East Indian immigration was resorted to. By the end of the nineteenth century, the Caribbean reflected a mixture of Europeans, Africans, and East Indians, compounded by miscegenation to a greater or lesser extent. Christianity, which had multiple representations in the region, found itself having to contend with African religions, as well as with Hinduism and Islam. Other religious groups, such as the Bahais, Christian Scientists, and Afro-Caribbean groups such as the Spiritual Baptists, Shango devotees, and the Rastafarians, also contributed to the mixture of religions which forms the context of theological education in this region. Adjustments in the nature of the programme have been the result of this reality, with the course on Comparative Study of Religions taking cognizance of religious phenomena in the region.

In the context of such developments, and perhaps that of the short-lived Federation, must also be seen the beginning of conscious efforts towards ecumenical cooperation. The Caribbean was a region in which Christianity was originally presented by competing groups, each wishing to take advantage of a truly captive audience. Between the late 15th and early 20th centuries, the Caribbean was exposed to Roman Catholicism, Anglicanism, Quakerism, Moravianism, Methodism, Presbyterianism, Congregationalism, and Pentecostalism, contributing thereby to a strong sense of rivalry and division. It has, therefore, been no easy task to try to reverse the centuries-old pattern of not only division but divisiveness, imparted by European forms of Christianity. The process towards ecumenical cooperation in theological education might have started towards the end of the 19th century, when Codrington College opened its doors to coloured Moravian aspirants to ordination, who could not be accommodated at their own seminary at Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. Today, every institution has a mixed student body from a wide range of denominations, thus providing a service which many persons would not otherwise have had.

A notable indication of the changes taking place was the transformation of various denominational colleges into the United Theological College of the West Indies (UTCWI) in 1966. This new development followed an earlier one involving five churches and Union Theological Seminary, sharing scarce human and other resources. The formation of the UTCWI was apparently inspired by a position taken by the Theological Fund of the World Council of Churches, to the effect that theological education should be developmental and that it should be a co-operative enterprise. The positive response of Jamaican churches resulted in the construction of the new facility with considerable funding provided by the TEF. The Anglican Diocese of Jamaica participated in this enterprise from its inception; but its sister institution, Codrington College, could not enter in a co-operative arrangement. A court ruling made quite clear that the terms of the testator’s will had to be observed. The Roman Catholics could not enter into a co-operative arrangement. St. Michael’s stood alone, though on a campus contiguous to that of the UTCWI; while there was no institution in Trinidad to which the Seminary of St. John Vianney could relate in that way. In any case, the Roman Catholic authorities in the region could not make such a radical move without the approval of Rome.

Another index of change was the affiliation of four theological colleges to the University of the West Indies. The first to enter this arrangement were the UTCWI and Codrington College in 1965, followed
some years later by the Seminary of St. John Vianney and St. Michael’s Seminary. Codrington College had been affiliated to the University of Durham, England, while St. Peter’s College (Anglican) had some arrangement with London University. This affiliation had a number of benefits for the colleges: firstly, it enabled the graduates of these colleges to be awarded a degree of the University of the West Indies. This made good sense, since the colleges themselves did not have the legal right to confer degrees. Secondly, it allowed co-operating colleges to take an active part in the design of their own curriculum, without abandoning denominational commitments. A third benefit entailed the recognition of the staff of the colleges as staff of the University. This gave the university the opportunity to participate in the appointment of the staff, as well as to review the staff as might be necessary from time to time. A fourth benefit followed. Because of the need to keep their programmes under constant review, the colleges found it useful to form an association to facilitate working together, where denominational obligations might have proved to be a deterrent. Thus was borne the Caribbean Associations of Theological Schools (CATS), comprising those institutions which were affiliated to the University. This association became one of the founding members of WOCATI (the World Organization of Associations of Theological Institutions), when that body was established in 1989, the Chair of CATS at that time becoming one of the members of the first executive. Other representatives of CATS have served on that body from 1992 to the present.

A further index of change in theological studies was the expansion of the programme to include participation by members of the laity. As indicated earlier, the theology degree was restricted to those persons who were being prepared for the ordained ministry in the various churches. In responding to the needs of the region and of the churches, the thirst for knowledge saw two developments take place: on the one hand, the colleges started introductory programmes for members of the laity, leading to a diploma granted by the particular institution; on the other hand, members of the laity soon began to request entry into the degree programme. Thus, what was exclusively the preserve of the prospective minister, soon became the concern of the lay person as well. The result has been that the degree programmes in some institutions came increasingly to cater to more members of the laity than of those preparing for ordination. This naturally meant examining the structure of the programme, since not all the laity would have wished to do the type of pastoral programme as prospective ministers.

Expansion of theological education quite naturally involved women, who constituted a significant element of the extension programmes as well as the number of aspirants to the ordained ministry. With various churches in the mid to late 20th centuries giving approval to the ordination of women, these persons had to be catered to. In due course, it became necessary to develop courses that catered to the concerns of women. Two approaches were used in the colleges, in some cases simultaneously. One was to devise a variety of courses relating specifically to the concerns of women; the other was to ensure that the concerns of women were given consideration in courses that could not easily be changed. This latter category of courses included biblical and doctrinal courses. This work is still on-going, as the colleges continue to make adjustments to social and ecclesiastical imperatives.

“Caribbeanising” the Programme

The model of the theological programme followed by the colleges was that in use by them when they were first started, and was based largely on the B.D. degree of the University of London. As time passed, and as the staff of the colleges became increasingly West Indian, the need for a change in orientation became urgent. Beginning in the 1980s, the colleges embarked on a concerted effort to bring a Caribbean perspective to the theological enterprise. This approach would affect in particular such courses as the following:

- Caribbean Church History, which was still in a nascent stage at that time.
Comparative Religion (a) to focus on those groups which were unique to the Caribbean region; (b) to examine ways in which religions such as Hinduism and Islam may have changed in the new milieu, and (c) to interpret the phenomena from the perspective of Caribbean persons, rather than merely to repeat perceptions of extra-regional writers.

Pastoral Care and Counselling and related courses, to which a Caribbean perspective was imparted.

In other ways the programme was challenged by a Caribbean spirituality and a reality, which required that interpretations of the Christian faith and life paying respect to the region in which the training for ministry was taking place.

**Post-Graduate Studies**

A major shift in the process of expansion was the introduction of post-graduate studies at Codrington College and the UTCWI. In part, this development recognised that any degree programme offered by the colleges needed the support of on-going research to impart freshness and to facilitate the process of “Caribbeanising”. In part also, this development was intended to provide material which could be of great use to the churches in the development of their mission and ministry. While encouragement must be given to local students in the practical areas, such as the popular pastoral area, there is a real danger in not having a sufficient cadre of persons in the biblical, historical, and systematic areas. This in turn will have serious implications for the recruitment of staff in these areas, at the risk of making the institutions continually dependent. This is a problem which the churches must wrestle with, but it is not one the colleges can ignore.

It is not only research for higher degrees that is of concern here; there is a further problem of on-going research and publication undertaken by members of staff. Material on the West Indies is contextually restricted, and is, therefore, not easily “sold” to international publishers. In a discipline that is new at this level, the churches in the region also lack the research and financial resources to sustain a viable journal; and theology is not the most popular subject. Providing funding has been a challenge to enable staff to gain access to large and high quality libraries. Yet this would facilitate greater research activity. There is a great need for churches to encourage their appointees in this activity; but there is also an understandable demand for their services in pastoral responsibilities in various congregations, which leaves staff very little time for research and publication. Thus shortage of personnel sometimes serves as a restriction on the kind of work staff may be able to do.

**Accreditation**

Theological colleges, in this setting, are not merely church institutions; they are also educational entities. If they are to offer degree programs, they will inevitably become subject to the evaluation process to which tertiary institutions are exposed as a matter of course. Thus, theological programmes for degrees of the University of the West Indies have to meet the quality assurance processes put in place within the university, and must establish such processes as their resources would enable them to do. This was the most significant change which the colleges faced in 2001, when the first formal quality assessment was carried out under the auspices of the University of the West Indies. The process was useful in many respects in:

- Helping the institutions to eliminate duplicate courses and those no longer offered;
- Challenging the colleges to develop new courses in areas not previously considered;
- Raising questions about staff development; and
- Promoting on-going quality assurance.
Within six months of receiving these initial reports, the colleges responded with a week’s retreat at the Mona campus to reflect on those reports, and to plan the way forward. The result was a more organised programme, eliminating much of the diffuseness that was characteristic of the earlier stages of the process.

The Technological Challenge

Perhaps the greatest challenge facing the colleges at the present is that posed by information and communication technology. This exists on various levels: there is a need to facilitate the use of available technology by students and staff for study and research. This is not an optional extra, but a basic need. Students of the present cannot always expect to obtain material in hard copy, and must be prepared to do much of their study online. Similarly, available technology must be used for teaching purposes; chalk and talk is an approach of the past. The colleges have been trying to make this adjustment, and find themselves doing so in the company of other institutions with considerably greater financial resources.

In due course, efforts to work together will bear fruit as the colleges reach the stage where they can reasonably share personnel or even the technology in delivering their courses. This has been under discussion for some time, and its realisation will see not only expansion but the strengthening of the programme. The exercise is one in which the colleges need the help of those who have had longer experience in this enterprise; and it is to be hoped that discreet advice and help will be forthcoming. In the meantime, the task goes on and the workers wrestle with the task that seems to be getting even greater every day. As we go forward, we are bolstered by the thought that, in due course, we shall overcome.
Theological education has its roots in the Levant, where it experienced centuries of activity in different languages, cultures, and socio-political realities. The wide array of questions and issues that Christian thinkers have addressed and confronted in this region are recorded not only in the living witness of millions of Christian believers, but also in an immeasurable library of biblical, liturgical, historical, and dogmatic manuscripts, which have had an influence in these lands and abroad and have inspired thousands of modern studies in different theological disciplines (Kattan, 27-70).

History gives witness for theological education not only in the favourable conditions granted by different Christian governments, but also in non-Christian states. The Middle Eastern communities gave birth to outstanding theologians such as St. Athanasius the Great, St. Ephrem, St. John of Damascus, and St. Gregory of Narek, who left their legacy for the universal church (Elias, 33-49).

In modern times, the Arabic language has brought Middle Eastern Christians together and allowed them to work in an area of great importance. They have the responsibility of bearing witness to their faith and proclaiming it in a large world of more than 221 million Arabic-speaking (according to Lewis), among which it is estimated that only 14 million are Christians without considering the diasporas (calculated according to the data available in Roberson and the CIA World Factbook).

When it comes to talking about the Middle East churches, there are two possible approaches: to study them according to the countries where their presence is more perceivable, i.e., Egypt for the Copts, Lebanon for the Maronites, and Syria for the Greek and Syrian Orthodox; or according to the four great families of churches, which are the Oriental Orthodox Churches, the Eastern Orthodox Churches, the Catholic Churches, and the Evangelical Churches. In this chapter the latter classification has been adopted as it appears on the official website of the MECC (Middle East Council of Churches). Those institutions that do not belong to an MECC denomination have been included in their closest church family.

Historical Developments and Achievements

The Oriental Orthodox Churches

The Oriental Orthodox Church family comprises basically three denominations: the Coptic Orthodox Church, which counts for the highest number of church members residing in the Middle East, the Armenian Apostolic Church (Catholicosate of Cilicia), and the Syrian Orthodox Church of Antioch and all the East. The countries where theological educational centers function for these churches are Egypt, Lebanon, and Syria.

In Egypt, we find several faculties and seminaries of theology, which belong to the Coptic Church. The most important centre is the Coptic Theological Seminary in Cairo, within the area of St. Mark Cathedral. This main theological seminary has branches in Alexandria, Tanta, Shebeen, Port Said, Mahala, Luxor, and the Muharak Monastery. It has also branches outside Egypt, i.e., in the United States, Australia
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(www.coptictheology.com), England, and Germany. Some of the branches have courses for undergraduates (B.Th.) besides the courses for postgraduates. In addition to the theological seminaries, there are also the Higher Institute for Pastoral Care and Education and the Higher Institute for Coptic Studies in Cairo. His Holiness Pope Shenouda III is the head of the theological seminaries, including all branches and religious institutes. Masters and Doctoral Degrees are granted by the church, without the state’s acknowledgment, after presenting a research thesis.

The Armenian Church has a theological seminary in Bikfaya (Lebanon). It was founded in 1930 by Patriarche Sahak Khabaian as an extension of the one already existing in Cilicia. During almost 80 years of existence, the clergy of the church have received theological education at a high level by a distinguished faculty. The seminary grants the B.Th. degree. Special interest is given to Classic and Modern Armenian Language as well as History of Armenian Literature.

The Syrian Orthodox Church has its theological institution in Maarrat Sidnaya (Syria) under the name of “Saint Ephrem Faculty of Theology” (www.syrianchurch.org). This school was founded by Patriarch Ignatios Ephrem I in Lebanon in 1939. The school knew several locations in Iraq (Mousel), Lebanon (Zahle and Atchaneh), and Syria (Damascus) until it was finally established in Maarrat Sidnaya in 1996. The faculty grants the B.Th. degree, and it is known for its teaching of classic Syriac and Syriac Literature. It is worth mentioning that the Saint Ephrem Faculty is the only theological institution of university level in Syria, even though the state does not give any official acknowledgment to its degrees.

The Eastern Orthodox Churches

The Eastern Orthodox Churches are four, including the Greek Orthodox Church of Cyprus, which does not belong to the Arabic speaking world. The other three are the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Alexandria and All Africa, the Greek Orthodox Church of Antioch and All the East, and the Greek Orthodox Church of Jerusalem.

The churches of Alexandria, Jerusalem, and Cyprus entrust the education of their clergy and theologians to the theological faculties of Athens and Thessaloniki in Greece. The Patriarchate of Alexandria (www.greekorthodox-alexandria.org) has a dominant number of priests and bishops, who speak Greek, besides the important number of Greek missionaries in sub-Saharan Africa. It is worth mentioning that the Patriarchate is about to open the Patriarchal Library of Alexandria that will give access to thousands of ancient manuscripts kept by the Patriarchate throughout the centuries. In Alexandria, there is also the “Athanasius the Great” school, which offers some theology courses within a multidisciplinary programme for the preparation of missionaries.

The Orthodox Church of Antioch has its centre of theological studies at the St. John of Damascus Institute of Theology, one of the founding faculties of the University of Balamand and a daughter institution of Our Lady’s Monastery of Balamand in Lebanon. The seeds of the institute started with the clerical school at the monastery founded in 1832. Patriarch Malatius II Dumani had a special interest in the school at the turn of the 19th century. In 1962, the standards of education were improved to the level of the Lebanese Baccalaureate II. In 1970, the institute was founded by the Holy Synod of Antioch with an undergraduate programme and with the official recognition of the Lebanese Ministry of Education as an institution of higher learning. Today, the institute grants a B.Th. and a B.A. in Religious Studies as well as a M.Th. in different fields of specialization (www.balamand.edu.lb/theology). Regarding distance learning, the institute offers online courses in theology and biblical studies in Arabic and Spanish. The University of Balamand also has an Institute of History, Archaeology, and Near Eastern Heritage, and a Center for Christian-Muslim Studies, both of which focus their research on the Church of Antioch.
The Catholic Churches

The family of Catholic Churches embraces a wide array of Middle Eastern traditions: the Maronite Church of Antioch, the Greek Catholic Melchite Church of Antioch, Alexandria and Jerusalem, the Armenian Catholic Church of Cilicia, the Syrian Catholic Church of Antioch, the Coptic Catholic Church of Alexandria, the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, and the Chaldean Catholic Church of Babylon.

The centres of catholic theological education in the region are located mainly in Lebanon, Egypt, Iraq, and Palestine as well. Lebanon has its “pontifical” Faculty of Theology at the Université de Saint Esprit Kaslik (www.usek.edu.lb). The faculty is a fruit of the service for theological education provided by the LMO (Lebanese Maronite Order) since 1695. Since 1962, the school became officially a Faculty of Theology acknowledged by the Lebanese state. In 1974, the Lebanese Assembly of Catholic Patriarchs and Bishops adopted it as an official faculty for the Catholic Church in Lebanon, and, in 1993, the Congregation of Catholic Education at the Vatican appointed it as a Pontifical Faculty of Theology in perpetuum. The faculty at Kaslik gives the degrees of B.Th., M.Th. and Ph.D. in different fields of specialization. The USEK has also an Institute for Liturgical Studies and an Institute for History that are closely related to the service of the Maronite Church and the Oriental Churches.

The Melchite Church of Antioch has in Harisa the Saint Paul Institute of Philosophy and Theology, which was founded in 1936 by the Society of Pauline Fathers. For a period of 12 years the institute moved to Jerusalem and came back to Lebanon in 1967. Students are granted two degrees: a License in Philosophy and a License in Theology. Courses are given both in Arabic and French.

The Society of Jesus plays a key role in the development of theological studies among the Catholic Churches of Lebanon. Starting with the seminary in Ghazir (1846), Jesuits also founded the University of Saint Joseph (www.usj.edu.lb) in Beirut in 1875, in which a Faculty of Theology has functioned since 1881. This faculty has changed its name several times since then and now finds its continuity in four different institutions: the Faculty of Religious Sciences, the Higher Institute for Religious Sciences, the Institute for Islamo-Christian Studies, and the Center for Arab Christian Documentation and Research. Courses are given in French. These institutions grant the B.Th., M.Th. and Ph.D. degrees in different fields of specialization.

In 1990, the Antonine Order crowned its commitment for education with the foundation of the UPA (L’Université de Peres Antonines; www.upa.edu.lb) in which the Faculty of Biblical, Ecumenical and Religious Studies together with the Faculty of Theology and Pastoral Studies functions. Both faculties offer programmes leading to a Diploma of Theology, License in Theology, and an M.Th. Courses are specially oriented towards lay people and monastic orders and aim at providing theological education for catechists and pastoral agents. Courses are given in Arabic.

The Sagesse University (www.uls.edu.lb) in Beirut has a Faculty of Canon Law. This faculty is affiliated with the Pontifical Lateran University in Rome, and is the unique Catholic Canon Law Faculty in Lebanon and neighbouring countries. It delivers a canonical formation designed for clergy as well as non-religious students, in view of a juridical and jurisdictional mission within the church. Since its foundation in 1875, the Sagesse Superior Institute for law has been faithful to the mission of the Catholic Church. The modern faculty was founded at the end of the last century and offers a Bachelor Degree in Canon Law. The Sagesse University has also a Faculty of Ecclesiastical Science that confers the awards of Diploma in Theology, B.Th. and M.Th.

In Egypt there are two important Catholic institutions: the Faculty of Human and Theological Sciences (El-Maady, Cairo), and the Faculty of Religious Sciences (Sakakeny, Cairo). The Faculty at El-Maady has its beginnings as early as 1879, as a seminary for the Coptic Catholic Church. It moved from Cairo to Tanta, and then it was permanently installed in El-Maady in 1953. In 1990, the faculty was integrated into the Urbaniana University in Rome and became the “pontifical” university for the Catholics in Egypt. The faculty functions especially as a seminary for Catholic vocations and grants the degrees of B.Th. and
License. Courses are given in Arabic. The faculty at Sakakeny is a modern institution founded in 1978 and belongs to the Egyptian Assembly of Catholic Patriarchs and Bishops. The faculty targets mainly the theological education of lay people, nuns, and married priests, who belong to the different Catholic denominations in Egypt and the region, particularly Catholic Christians from Sudan. Courses are given in Arabic and students are granted either a Diploma in Religious Studies, a License in Theology, or a Diploma in Monastic Formation.

The Bethlehem University is a Catholic institution of higher learning providing religious education both in the Palestinian West Bank and in the Kingdom of Jordan. The university was founded in 1973 within the Lasallian tradition that can trace its roots back to 1893 with the foundation of several Lasallian schools in the region. Despite being closed twelve times by Israeli military imposed orders, the longest of which was for three years from October 1987 until October 1990, classes have continually been held on- and off-campus. The Department of Religious Studies was founded in 1998 within the Faculty of Arts at Bethlehem University primarily to prepare qualified catechists and to also offer quality Christian religious education to all students of the university. The department offers a degree programme of B.A. in Religious Studies (http://religiousstudies.bethlehem.edu/).

In 1991 the Synod of the Chaldean Church founded the Babel Faculty of Theology in Baghdad. The faculty is open to all churches in Iraq. Courses are given in Arabic and a degree of B.Th. is granted. Cooperation agreements with USEK Lebanon are available.

Evangelical Churches

The Evangelical Churches of the Middle East are organized in several national synods and unions. The MECC member churches are: the Evangelical Synod of the Nile, the Union of the Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East, the National Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon, the National Evangelical Union of Lebanon, the Episcopal Church in Jerusalem and the Middle East, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan, the National Evangelical Church in Kuwait, the Synod of the Evangelical Church in Iran, the Evangelical Church in Sudan, the Episcopal Church in Sudan, the Presbyterian Church in Sudan, the Protestant Church in Algeria, and the reformed Church of France in Tunis.

In Egypt, the evangelical churches have two outstanding centers of theological education, one in Cairo and another in Alexandria. The Evangelical Theological Seminary Cairo (ETSC, www.etsc.org) began as a theological school in 1863 and moved between Asiout and Cairo. In 1927, the current central building was inaugurated under the administration of the Evangelical Synod of the Nile, to which a library (1967) and a building for student lodging (1994) were added. Courses are offered at the levels of B.Th., Diploma in theological sciences, and a B.A. in Christian Education. The courses, delivered in Arabic, target both laity and candidates for the ministry who are engaged in education in the church. The faculty in Alexandria is a branch institution from the faculty in Cairo. It was founded in 1986 at the initiative of the Evangelical Synod of the Delta. A B.Th. degree is granted and courses are given in Arabic mostly by faculty members coming from Cairo.

The key centre of Evangelical Theology in Lebanon is the Near East School of Theology (NEST, www.theonest.edu.lb). NEST was founded as a result of a merger of the School of Religion in Athens (the inheritor of all the 19th-century Armenian Evangelical Seminaries in Asia Minor) and the Beirut School for Religious Workers (the inheritor of Abeih Seminary). These two merged in 1932 to form NEST as an inter-denominational Protestant theological seminary serving the Evangelical churches of the Middle East and Africa. Since 1966, the Lebanese Ministry of Education has recognized NEST as an institution of higher learning. NEST serves and is managed by the Presbyterian, Congregational, Anglican, and Lutheran churches of the Near East. The following programmes are offered: a Diploma in Theological Studies; B.Th., B.A. in Christian Education, M.Div., M.A. in Christian Education, and S.T.M. (Master of Sacred Theology). The language of instruction is English.
Besides ETSC and NEST, which represent MECC member churches, there are several institutions for theological education which belong to other evangelical denominations. One of them is the Arab Baptist Theological Seminary in Mansourieh (Lebanon). This seminary started its journey in 1960, aiming to equip Christian leaders in Lebanon and the Arab world through theological capacity building. Besides Lebanon, students come from Jordan, Egypt, Morocco, Syria, and Iraq. The seminary is under the legal ownership of the Lebanese Baptist Society. Since 1960, ABTS has made a significant contribution: 200 graduates and over 400 alumni from various Evangelical backgrounds are serving all across the Arab world and beyond: Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Sudan, Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan, Syria, Palestine, Iraq, and Arab ministries in the West. The seminary offers B.Th., Diploma in Theology, and M.Div. courses. Other Evangelical institutions in Lebanon are the Eastern Mediterranean Nazarene Bible College, the Christian Alliance Institute for Theology (CAIT), the Mediterranean Bible College (Church of God), and the Baptist Seminary in Ain Najm, which also grant several degrees of theological education.

The Jordan Evangelical Theological Seminary (JETS, www.jets.edu) is the only institute of theological higher education in the Kingdom of Jordan. It was officially founded in 1995, in Amman, and has a non-denominational affiliation. Students come from all over the Middle East. The programmes are not accredited by the Jordanian Government, but by three international accrediting agencies: the Middle East Association for Theological Education (MEATE), the European Evangelical Accrediting Association (EEAA), and the Asia Theological Association (ATA). The seminary offers a Certificate in Biblical Studies, Diploma in Biblical Studies, B.Th. in Biblical Studies, M.A. in Biblical Studies, and M.Div. The seminary’s statement of faith that claims to represent the common faith of the Arab Evangelical churches, its key goal to equip Arab leaders for the Arab world.

Furthermore, in Jordan, the Program for Theological Education by Extension (www.ptee.org) offers online courses leading to a Certificate of Theology, Diploma of Theology, and Bachelor of Theology. This inter-denominational institution has study centers in six Arabic countries as well as in Sweden and the USA.

In Palestine, the Bethlehem Bible College is an inter-denominational theological institution founded in 1979 (www.bethbc.com). The college offers a B.A. programme in Biblical Studies and Christian Education. It is accredited by the Palestinian Ministry for Higher Education and the Middle East Association of Theological Education as a four-year college.

**Modern Challenges and Trends**

After the Second World War and the foundation of the ecumenical movement in 1948, interaction between the different faculties in the region was generated. As a result of these meetings, ATENE (Association of Theological Education in the Near East) was founded in 1967. This institution evolved into ATIME (Association of Theological Institutes in the Middle East) after 1974, when the MECC was founded. ATIME continues working at different levels of studentship, faculty, and administration in order to strengthen ecumenical relationships among the member institutions and to foster a spirit of co-operation and dialogue. The association also monitors academic standards of its institutions and the publication of reading material in Arabic. ATIME is a member of WOCATI (the World Conference Association of Theological Institutions).

The contribution of several European and American faculties has been decisive in granting graduate education to local students who became the resource persons for theological education in the Middle East. Starting with the regional seminars founded in Rome for Eastern Catholics, following with the theological faculties in France, Belgium, Germany, Britain, Holland, and the U.S.A., both Roman Catholic and Protestant ones, there has been a large number of priests, pastors, and lay people who have attended these institutions to continue their studies and return with a specialization in some field of theology.
This phenomenon has often formed generations of theologians and clerics engaged in raising questions and issues outside the context where they practice. Often modern biblical criticism and even modern systematic theology as well as modern historiography have been misunderstood or seen as unrealistic for the average Middle-Eastern Christian. Therefore, more than ever before, theologians in the Middle East are called to contextualize their teachings, since they live in a region where socio-political conflicts are heavily linked to religion and theological thinking. There is a need for a theology committed to the local people, a theology conceived in these lands and for the people living in these lands. Co-existence with Muslims and Jews and ecumenical dialogue with the countless Christian denominations, are the biggest challenges for every Arab-speaking theologian.¹

Some practical and concrete aspects to be considered for future joint work and planning in the Middle East include:

- To ensure co-ordination of theological publications. This would involve the creation of research units for the different fields of theology. There is a need for theology books in Arabic such as: modern biblical commentaries, studies on compared systematic theology, inter-denominational history works, and essays on pastoral theology based on the reality of Christianity in this part of the world.

- The Middle East needs a network of libraries to facilitate research work. Each faculty of theology and university has an important but limited number of theological writings. Linking them will multiply the chances of reaching the required work by researchers, instructors, and students from across the region. Investments for new library material are restricted, and there is no institution that can offer a more or less comprehensive collection of theological treatises. Furthermore, there is a wide array of languages used by the Arabic-speaking Christians, which makes it even more difficult to deduce a regional common identity from the available theological references. For a long time the writings in Arabic have been considered limited in number and quality, thus each library has chosen the enhancement of their collections with publications in English and French. Besides, theological libraries in the Middle East have in many cases a relevant number of books in German and Italian. Furthermore, each denomination enriches their libraries with books in their traditional languages: Armenian, Coptic, Greek, Russian, and Syriac.

- There is no doubt that the future of theology in Arabic depends on research work. The big challenge for the 21st century Arabic-speaking theologians is the production of serious research of an international standard. The Arabic-speaking churches need to read their own history critically. They need to understand their archaeological sites and to study their manuscripts. Modern Arabic speaking theologians are expected to produce theological and pastoral treatises for a highly educated Arab reader with a sharp, critical mind. Therefore, it is necessary to promote ecumenical theological research cells. Moreover, a database is needed with indexes and digital texts of modern theological writings in Arabic, especially articles in books and magazines, which are mostly hard to find.

- To promote the expansion of Christian theological training centers in many Arabic-speaking countries that still lack them. New centres of theological education in the Gulf are needed, as much as distance learning programmes through the internet, especially for those countries where physical presence is very difficult.

¹ See Sabra, 70-75; Abou Mrad, 257-258.
Conclusions

The 20th century was the century for the emergence of modern high theological institutions in the Middle East. The political changes in the region and the fruitful activity of Western missions have challenged “local” churches to move towards the development of their educational centres. Almost every denomination opened their theological centres with undergraduate programmes, developing later into graduate and postgraduate programmes, particularly in the 1990s. Among the Middle Eastern countries, Lebanon has played a decisive role in the development of theological education for all denominations.

Regarding content, contextualization is the biggest challenge of the 21st century. There is a big demand for a theology that responds to the parish requests and to the daily fortunes and misfortunes of every Christian family and society. It is the responsibility of local theologians, and, therefore, of local theological institutions, to develop a creative theology that would be able to answer to the challenges and the trends of today.

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University of Balamand (UBB), Balamand: www.balamand.edu.lb
University of the Antonine Fathers (UPA), Baabda: www.upa.edu.lb
University of the Holy Spirit Kaslik (USEK), Kaslik: www.usek.edu.lb

2 Universities are mentioned when several faculties, institutes and/or centers with theological education programs are active at the same university.
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THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION IN NORTH AMERICA

Introduction

Theological education in North America reflects centuries of religious and educational history in the United States and a different but not entirely dissimilar history in Canada. Some of the earliest higher education institutions in colonial America, like Harvard University, included the education of clergy among their educational purposes. In fact, most higher education institutions founded in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries in the United States were founded by one Christian denomination or the other and provided some form of clergy education. Thus, from its earliest days, the United States had some form of clergy education offered at the highest level of education available in the nation.

Religion embodied itself in the United States in a substantively different way than it had in Europe. The Bill of Rights, the first amendments to the U.S. Constitution, forbade the federal government from establishing a church with formal government ties. While some of the states retained a formal state church (some as late as the 1820s), the separation of church and state became the constitutional norm in both national and state governments. The government was thus precluded from regulating the churches in most every way, including qualifications of clergy and religion was free to develop as a “free market” enterprise. The result was different churches regulating themselves and their clergy in different ways. New England Puritans and Presbyterians had expectations of an educated clergy, and divinity schools at Harvard and Yale, as well as some of the earliest freestanding seminaries, reflect those expectations. The Baptists in the South had varying educational conventions – from valuing formal education to actively rejecting it. The result has been the development of a wide range of institutions for the education of clergy, each one influenced by the religious constituency to which it was related.

The story of clergy education in Canada bears many similarities to the United States, but the cultural location of religion differed. While the American colonies rebelled against England, British North America (which became Canada) maintained ties with the British Crown. The Anglican Church initially had a certain established privilege, but by the mid-nineteenth century this privilege faded in the face of strong support for other Protestant denominations, which had ties to both British and American parent churches. The Roman Catholic Church, meanwhile, was the guardian of culture, religion, education, and morals in French-speaking Quebec. The religious and legal developments since World War II have distanced Canada from the British crown and legally established a multicultural, secular state. While Canada is predominantly Protestant and Catholic, it is more religiously plural than the United States and has a higher percentage of the population that claims no religious preference. In terms of both higher education practice and religious participation, Canada reflects a middle ground between England and the United States. Canada’s population is more religiously active than Great Britain’s, for example, but less religiously active than the population of the United States. Theological education has developed in Canada in a way similar to the United States, with Protestant denominations founding colleges that provided theological education that became freestanding theological colleges federating with provincially chartered universities.
This chapter looks at theological education in North America as the twentieth century began, the influences that most profoundly affected it during the twentieth century, and the characteristics of theological education as the twenty-first century begins.

Theological Education at the Turn of the Twentieth Century

By 1900 the religious population of the United States and Canada was almost exclusively Protestant or Roman Catholic. Late nineteenth century immigration brought some Jews, but their numbers were small compared to those of Protestants and Catholics. In the United States, the dominant religious presence in the largest cities was Roman Catholic, and the dominant religious presence in smaller cities and rural areas was Protestant. According to statistics published by the U.S. government, 29 percent of all Catholics lived in the largest U.S. cities while just over 7 percent of Protestants lived in those cities. In cities like Boston, New York, and Chicago, more than half of the entire religious population was Roman Catholic. By contrast, over 80 percent of all Protestants lived outside the largest population cities. Catholics and Protestants were served by separate and discrete systems of theological education.

At the turn of the century, Catholic priests were educated in the seminary system ordered by the Council of Trent. In North America, it comprised a minor seminary, which equaled high school and the first years of college, and then a major seminary, which covered the last years of college and the current years of seminary. Both minor and major seminaries provided a near monastic setting for education, which placed much emphasis on the spiritual life. Most seminaries were sponsored by dioceses and educated priests primarily for each diocese. Other Catholic seminaries had been founded for the formation of religious order priests. The seminaries tended to be completely separate from Catholic colleges and universities, unlike Protestant seminaries, which often remained part of or closely related to denominationally sponsored colleges or universities. Roman Catholic theological education was thus never as tightly connected to the broader community of higher education institutions as Protestant theological schools had tended to be, and the Tridentine conventions provided an insulated, if not insular, pattern of priestly education.

Scores of Protestant theological schools had been founded in the nineteenth century and entered the twentieth century on the heels of a strong and robust Protestant establishment. While no denomination or church could have an established status with the government, nineteenth century Protestantism in the United States had the social status of an established church, if not the legal one. Protestant theological schools were almost exclusively sponsored by a denomination and educated students only for the sponsoring denomination. If predecessor institutions are taken into account, the majority of the seminaries related to the United Methodist Church had been founded by the early twentieth century, as had all but a very few of the seminaries related to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Presbyterian Church USA, the United Church of Christ, and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). The late nineteenth century had been a period of religious expansion, and the twentieth century began with the institutions that had been spawned by that expansion. The situation was not dissimilar in Canada, especially eastern Canada where the Anglicans, Congregationalists, Presbyterians, and Methodists all had had institutions for clergy education.

Many things can be said about Protestant theological education at the turn of the century. William Rainey Harper issued a critique of theological education as he founded the University of Chicago with its divinity school at about this time:

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Part II: Regional Surveys of Developments in Theological Education Since 1910
Many intelligent laymen in the churches have the feeling that the training provided for the students in theological seminary does not meet the requirements of modern times. These men base their judgment upon what they see in connection with the work of the minister.... Ministers who, after receiving this training, have entered upon the work of the ministry, and who ought to be competent judges, are frequently those who speak most strongly against the adequacy and the adaptation of the present methods in the seminary.2

Historian Glenn Miller notes that the most important phrases in Harper’s statement are “requirement of modern times,” “the work of the ministry,” and “present methods.” The United States at the turn of the twentieth century was a world dominated by “science, technology and industry.” Protestant theological education in the late nineteenth century focused on classical languages and dogmatic theology. The world that was coming needed a different kind of theological education.

North American Theological Education during the Twentieth Century

There are more factors that have influenced theological education in North America than can be recounted in this chapter. I will address five because cumulatively, in my opinion, they have exerted the greatest influence on the character and educational practices of theological schools at the turn of the twenty-first century. These changes reflect changing practices in higher education, of which theological schools are a part; changes in church bodies and denominational practices, which affect theological schools very directly; and changes in the openness of schools to engage interactively with one another as institutions engaged in differing versions of a common task. The five influences include three in the first half of the century: the impact of progressivism on theological education, the modernist-fundamentalist struggle among Protestants in the 1920s and 1930s, and the emergence of the professional model of theological education and accreditation. The other two occur in the second half of the century: the inclusion of Roman Catholic and Evangelical Protestant schools in the Association and its work and the expansion of the educational mission of schools to include women, racial/ethnic constituents, and programs for persons not seeking ordination.

Progressivism and theological education in the early decades of the century

As the century began, Protestantism was confident about its ability to make both religion and the culture better. The American religious journal, Christian Century, was first published at this time and its title conveyed the optimism that social problems could be overcome by diligent application of Christian effort and principles. Christians crusaded to make beverage alcohol illegal, to address the housing problems and homelessness of the urban poor, and to improve religious institutions and missionary work. It was a time when Protestants in the United States called for Christian America, and Protestants in Canada called for Christian Canada. William Rainey Harper embodied the progressive spirit when he called for the reform of theological education better to equip ministers for work in the modern era. Protestant seminaries began to offer courses like “Church Efficiency” and “Sunday School Pedagogy” for the first time, and the curriculum was influenced by other efforts to embody the effort to prepare ministers and the church for ministry in the modern era. In many ways, the social energy of progressivism took root in American Protestantism. The era also brought increasing interest in a concern for the unity of the Christian churches, and two organizations were founded in the first decade of the century to advance that concern, the Federal Council of Churches and the International Council of Religious Education.

The optimism of the era came to a crushing end with World War I, and in its aftermath, the effort to make a better world re-emerged. In 1918, the Protestant seminaries of the United States and Canada met for the first time at Harvard University, at the invitation of Abbott Lowell, president of the university. A committee was established at that meeting to consider the formation of an ongoing organization, and at the second meeting of the schools at the University of Toronto in 1920, the Conference of Theological Seminaries was formally established. Glenn Miller observes that these first gatherings of theological seminaries did not have so much an agenda for theological education as “common questions, including some that were basic, such as what is a theological seminary, how are people (mainly men) admitted to it, how does a theological school relate to the broader world, to the academy, and the church?”

The Conference did not include all theological schools, and the excluded schools are worthy of note. After the Civil War in the United States, higher education institutions in the South did not admit African Americans who had been freed from slavery. As a result, a number of institutions were founded for the education of African Americans, and many of them, like Morehouse College, Virginia Union, and Howard University, had schools of religion or divinity. While these schools were all subsequently admitted to membership in the Association, they were not present at the initial meetings of the conference. No Roman Catholic schools were present, either. The number of Roman Catholics had grown dramatically as a result of immigration in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and the number of seminaries grew as well. These schools, however, operated in a world apart from Protestant seminaries. Race and the Catholic/Protestant divide separated theological schools early in the twentieth century. Progressivism in American religion, it seems, had its limits.

While not totally inclusive, the schools that formed the Conference of Theological Seminaries crossed a huge dividing (and sometimes battle) line in nineteenth century: denominationalism. The Conference, as well as the formation of the Federal Council of Churches and the International Council on Religious Education, gave evidence of an effort to move beyond the competitive denominationalism that had defined American and, to a lesser extent, Canadian Protestantism. Protestant schools began to interact with one another in meaningful ways. While denominationally different, there was a theological similarity that provided important glue as the schools learned to work more closely as the Conference of Theological Seminaries.

**Protestant union and separation in the 1920s**

In the 1920s, Protestant religious impulses moved in different directions in Canada and the United States. In Canada, Methodists, Congregationalists, Presbyterians, and the Union Church in Western Canada were making plans to form the United Church of Canada. Even though a minority of Presbyterians elected not to enter the new church, Methodists, Congregationalists, Union Church, and the majority of the Presbyterians forged a true church union. The United Church of Canada was formed, and Emmanuel College of Victoria University was the first theological school founded as a United Church school. Most of the theological schools relating to the founding denominations also joined the new union church. The United Church was a product of the progressive theologies and missionary movements of the turn of the century, and a widely held conviction of the church’s role in nation-building. Canada’s sparse and far-flung population contributed to the need for cooperation among denominations if they were to create and sustain a significant national Protestant presence. As the largest Protestant denomination in Canada, the United Church understands that “It was the first union of churches in the world to cross historical denominational lines and hence received international acclaim.”

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4 www.united-church.ca/history/overview/brief.
In the United States, a struggle that had been brewing for decades emerged in outright battle in the 1920s. Higher criticism as a scholarly method of biblical study was introduced in North America in the late nineteenth century. It raised many questions about prevailing commitments regarding the Bible and its teaching. In the broader culture, the new scientific method was proving so effective at advancing medicine and the understanding of the physical world that other areas of inquiry adapted its intellectual disciplines into their methods of investigation. Scientific understanding cast doubts on the miracles of the Bible. New knowledge about ancient biblical languages raised other questions, and advances in historical scholarship raised new questions about the Bible’s account of history. As these scholarly trends were introduced in theological education, conflict emerged. The conflict was most intense in the Presbyterian denomination, but the new scholarly methods caused controversy wherever they emerged.

The modernist-fundamentalists struggle had significant impact on American seminaries. Princeton Theological Seminary was in the center of the battle; the conflict present within its own faculty, two of whom eventually left Princeton to found Westminster Theological Seminary. Dallas Theological Seminary was founded during this era, although its roots were more in the dispensationalism advanced by C. I. Scofield and the Bible prophecy movement than in the Presbyterian struggle. Asbury Theological Seminary was also founded during the 1920s. While the Methodists seminaries generally embraced the results of the progressive era and the new patterns of biblical scholarship, Asbury’s founders emphasized evangelistic goals and the holiness emphasis in the Wesleyan tradition.

The modernist-fundamentalist struggles had lasting results in American churches and theological schools. Schools became either formally or informally identified with one side or the other. Progressive Protestant schools were friendly to church union efforts, open to new intellectual ways of studying the Bible and theology, ready to include the insights of new disciplines like psychology, sociology, and progressive education into the theological curriculum. Conservative Protestant schools held firm to what they understood as orthodox Christianity and developed intellectual strategies to advance biblical and theological studies in ways that honored their confessional commitments. They were less likely to support efforts at church union or collaboration among denominations. Some theological schools represented a third group. As schools, they were interested in the findings of the new scholarship and interested in pursuing its implications for their study, but these schools were related to denominations that had sided with the conservatives. The modernist-fundamentalist struggles of the 1920s were perhaps the most formative influence on Protestant theological education of the first half of the century. Glenn Miller notes, “The twenties were crucial for the evolution of American theological education. The Seminaries, faced with mounting losses, had to step back and answer the question of what they did well and what they did poorly.” As the decade ended, progressive Protestants seemed to hold the upper hand; conservative Protestants were less influential, with the exception of Baptists in the South.

Brown and May and the accreditation of Protestant theological schools

During the first quarter of the twentieth century, the American practice of accreditation became increasingly established. Regional accreditation of colleges and universities began at the end of the nineteenth century as a way to distinguish college level education from high school and to establish the schools that could participate in the new retirement program for employees that had been funded by Andrew Carnegie. The United States has never had a ministry of education that regulated education in the way that many other countries have. Thus, it was up to the institutions to self regulate, and the vehicle they established for this task was accreditation. Then as now, accreditation involved a group of schools that formed an accrediting agency. That agency adopted standards of accreditation and used peers from the schools to evaluate schools and make a recommendation to a commission, which made accrediting

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5 Miller, *Piety and Profession*, 382.
decisions regarding member schools. In addition to self regulation, accreditation was designed to support institutional improvement. The regional agencies were established to accredit a wide range of colleges and universities in their area, and by the 1920s, law schools and medical schools developed accreditation associations. Professional education was changing. An older pattern in which persons completed a few years of undergraduate education and completed their professional education as an advanced baccalaureate degree gave way to law and medical students completing a baccalaureate degree, then entering post-baccalaureate study for the law or medicine. The modern era was increasing the educational standards of higher education in general and for the professions in particular.

In the early 1930s, William Adams Brown and Mark May at the Institute for Social and Religious Research undertook a major sociological study of American ministry and included in that study a major study of seminaries and divinity schools that educated those ministers. In their analysis of ministers, Brown and May made the case that ministry should be understood as a profession and that theological education should be understood as professional education. This was a new model for both ministry and theological education. In their effort to define professional, Brown and May focused on five tasks the minister was expected to undertake: “teacher, evangelist, leader of worship, pastor, and administrator.” Professionals were understood not so much as scholars as skilled practitioners. The professional lawyer, for example, was not a scholar of the law and legal theory as much as a sophisticated practitioner of the law in service to the court and the needs of clients. If ministry is a profession, then it could be argued that ministerial education should follow the educational patterns required of other professions.

Brown and May turned their attention to the institutional resources of the seminaries, the students who attended them, and the curricula by which they were educated. Miller summarizes the findings: the schools compared favorably to other higher education institutions in terms of per student receipts, expenditures, and library holdings. Seminary students did not compare as favorably. They were less likely to have attended accredited colleges than law or medical students, came primarily from rural and small town areas, and were less likely to have an undergraduate degree prior to seminary study. The curriculum had been changing, and the greatest percentage was devoted to biblical study, followed by practical study with limited attention to sociology, missions, world religions, and ethics.

The growing use of accreditation for self regulation and institutional improvement and the Brown-May study prompted the Conference of Theological Seminaries to make a major change. In 1936, it voted to become an accrediting association, in addition to the role it had developed as a conference, and changed its name to the American Association of Theological Schools (a name that was subsequently changed in the early 1970s to the Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada [ATS]). The Association engaged its role as an accrediting agency with considerable caution. Schools did not have to be accredited to be members, and the Association still maintains a membership category (associate members) for schools that do not qualify for accreditation. Among other things, the accrediting standards made the four-three pattern of theological education (four year baccalaureate degree and a three year post-baccalaureate theological study). This pattern had been advocated by the best of the free standing schools and the university related divinity schools, but a majority of schools were initially accredited with a notation that more than 25 percent of the students were enrolled in the theological degree program without a baccalaureate degree.

The changes in this decade endured. The Association has continued to function as an accrediting agency, even as accreditation has become an increasingly important factor for theological schools; the perception and norms of theological education as professional education continued through the century;

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7 Glenn Miller, *Piety and Profession*, 481.
and the four-three model of undergraduate and graduate degrees has continued as the normative model for religious leaders educated in ATS schools.

**Roman Catholic and Evangelical Protestant theological education**

After World War II, theological schools accredited by the American Association of Theological Schools remained Protestant in the progressive tradition. That would change in the last half of the century.

Following the reforms of Vatican II, Roman Catholic schools made significant changes. They moved away from the system of minor and major seminaries and established educational practices similar to the Protestant four-three model; only the Roman Catholics have a four-year, post-baccalaureate degree for priestly formation, making the Roman Catholic system a four-four model. Roman Catholic schools sought admission to ATS in the mid 1960s. In 1964 there were no Roman Catholic Schools in the Association, and by 1974, there were 56 Roman Catholic member schools.

The addition of Roman Catholic schools changed the Association in several ways. First, it introduced a model of education that differed from the Protestant model. Roman Catholic theological education is deeply formational in its structures. It includes highly intellectual work and intense attention to priestly practice, but its goals are not limited to intellectual and practical outcomes. Ultimately, the goal of priestly Roman Catholic education is the formation of the person who will be ordained a priest. As Roman Catholic bishops in the United States have continued to refine their understanding of the educational goals of priestly formation, they have identified four pillars on which this overall formational effort rests: intellectual formation, pastoral formation, spiritual formation, and personal formation. Protestant theological education, with its understanding of theological education as professional education, focused far more on the intellectual and practical, if not exclusively on these two. The current accrediting standards of the Association have broadened to include more formational language, in part because of the influence and educational model of the Roman Catholic schools. Second, Roman Catholic theologates (schools ecclesiastically approved for the education of priests) introduced a different functional model of academic freedom from that in Protestant schools of the 1970s. The Protestant schools, influenced by the universities and colleges with which many were associated, understood academic freedom in a way similar to the broader higher education community. Roman Catholic schools, while valuing freedom of inquiry, understood that freedom in service to the teaching magisterium of the church. Because religious order priests take vows of obedience in their ordination, and diocesan priests promise to respect and obey their diocesan bishop, they are religiously constrained in a way that Protestant clergy are not. This constraint changes the functional effect of academic freedom, even if the language in a policy is similar in Catholic and Protestant schools. Third, the presence of Roman Catholic schools in the Association broadened the conversation, which, as Glenn Miller noted, has always been an important feature of the organization. Prior to 1964, the conversation among theological educators had been a Protestant conversation. After 1964, the conversation shifted, and the two dominant Christian communities in North America that had existed in isolation from one another were now in conversation, discovering both their unique practices and traditions and the common concerns of running a theological school.

The Roman Catholic schools were not the only ones that became members of ATS in large numbers in the second half of the twentieth century. During this time, Protestantism experienced a significant shift. The more progressive or mainline Protestant denominations, which had dominated the first half of the “Christian” century, began to experience a steady decline in membership and social influence. The more conservative or Evangelical Protestants – sometimes within mainline denominations, sometimes in separate denominations, and sometimes in independent congregations – became dominant. ATS membership includes more than ninety schools that can be classified in one way or another as Evangelical Protestant,

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and they reflect two different histories. Some of these schools were founded before World War II, and of these, some were related to historically conservative Protestant denominations like The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary or North Park Theological Seminary, and others were founded amid the 1920s and 1930s modernist-fundamentalist struggles, like Westminster Theological Seminary and Dallas Theological Seminary. The vast majority of Evangelical Protestant theological schools, however, have been founded since World War II. For example, Fuller Theological Seminary, which currently has the largest enrollment of any ATS member school, was founded in 1947. Evangelical Protestant schools have been founded as Evangelical Protestantism has grown into the dominant Protestant presence in the United States and a very strong presence in Canada. While Evangelical Protestant schools represent about 40 percent of the number of schools, they enroll about 60 percent of all students in ATS member schools.

Evangelical and mainline Protestant seminaries vary from each other in significant ways. If one examined the syllabi for introduction to New Testament courses at an Evangelical and a mainline Protestant school, the course outline and topics of study would likely look very similar. However, the texts used, the reading references cited, even the recommended version of the English Bible for the course, vary significantly, sometimes with minimal overlap. A 1990s ethnographic study of two theological schools – one mainline and the other Evangelical – documents the differences in ethos of the two schools studied. While they do not represent all mainline or Evangelical schools, they do reflect tendencies that can be observed in many of them. The Evangelical schools tend to have larger enrollments, on average, and they tend to be more heavily funded by revenue from student tuition and current gifts. They have influenced educational practices in theological schools in significant ways. They were the first schools to develop and promote extension education centers, where part or all of a degree could be completed at a location other than the school’s main campus. For some schools, the extension sites have become branch campuses offering a range of degree programs. Evangelical schools have been the first to offer distance education programs in which students complete some or most of their theological study in online programs of study. They have also been pioneers in developing specialized degree programs targeted to very specific needs and ministry practice.

ATS began as a conference in which conversation was a highly valued. That conversation, however, tended to be among a certain sub-set of theological education providers in North America: the Protestant schools that were the heirs of progressive era values. With the inclusion of Roman Catholic and Evangelical Protestant schools, the “conversation” of the Association at the conclusion of the century includes the full spectrum of Christian expression in North America. With everyone at the table, the conversation changes; it becomes more nuanced; it reflects a wider range of perceptions about the work of theological education; it accrues to a deeper kind of wisdom about the education of religious leaders.

The broadened constituency of theological schools in the last decades of the century: women, race, and diverse degree programs

By 1970, ATS member schools were more inclusive of the various Christian expressions in North America, but the students enrolled in those schools were overwhelmingly male, white, and studying for ordained ministry or priesthood. By the turn of the twenty-first century, the center of gravity on all of these variables would shift significantly.

At the end of the century, approximately 36 percent of students in all degree programs in ATS schools were women. They represented 31 percent of the students in the Master of Divinity (MDiv) – the program of study most typically leading toward ordination. Of all men enrolled in ATS schools, about 45 percent are enrolled in the MDiv program, and of all women enrolled in ATS schools, about 37 percent are

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enrolled in the MDiv program. More women are enrolled in the MDiv than in any other degree program. Across the past twenty-five years, the number of women enrolled in the MDiv program increased more than 200 percent, while the number of men in the MDiv decreased by 6 percent. These numbers demonstrate that all of the numeric gain in enrollment in the MDiv program across the last twenty-five years of the century was due to the increasing number of women. Women constituted the majority of students enrolled in professional master’s programs that typically do not lead to ordination.

The racial/ethnic composition of students enrolled in ATS schools has also changed during this period of time. In the fall of 1977, African-descent students comprised 3.9 percent of the total enrollment in all degree programs, which was the first year that ATS collected information about the racial identity of students. Hispanic/Latino students constituted 1.3 percent of the total enrollment, and Asian/Pacific Islander students accounted for another 1 percent of total enrollment. Together, racial/ethnic students constituted 6.2 percent of the total 1977 student enrollment. By the turn of the century, racial/ethnic enrollment was 21 percent of the total enrollment, and if students studying in ATS schools on visa were counted, the percentage would be closer to 30 percent at the turn of the twenty-first century. During these twenty-five years, the total enrollment in ATS schools has increased about 70 percent, while the racial/ethnic enrollment has grown by over 450 percent. This is dramatic change, and it means that racial/ethnic students represent a significant portion of the total increase in enrollment over this time period.

The racial/ethnic change in the student bodies of ATS schools, however, does not yet match the change occurring in the North American population, particularly in the United States. At the close of the century, African-descent students constituted about 11 percent of the enrollment in ATS schools, while African Americans constituted 13 percent of the U.S. population. Hispanic/Latino/a students were 3 percent of the enrollment in ATS schools, while Hispanics and Latino/as were 13 percent of the U.S. population. While Canada has a lower percentage of racial/ethnic citizens, the same lower proportion of racial/ethnic students in comparison to the Canadian population is evident. In contrast to these two racial/ethnic communities, the percentage of Asian-descent students in ATS schools is actually greater than the presence of Asians in the general population (8% percent of enrollment and approximately 3 percent of the U.S. population). 10

There is yet another change worthy of note. As the twentieth century ends, the range of educational degree programs in theological schools has expanded significantly, and students taking the MDiv are a minority of all students in ATS schools. When the enrollment for the advanced ministerial degrees is included, 55 percent of students are enrolled in degree programs associated with ordained leadership at the master’s or doctoral levels. However, not all students in these programs will be ordained, and the actual percentage of students in the MDiv who will be ordained is much lower. 11 The MDiv constituted 70 percent of total enrollment in ATS schools in fall 1978, 12 and thirty years later, students enrolled in the MDiv were 43 percent of the total enrollment. There are, no doubt, many contributing factors to this significant change. The nature of ministry in North America has expanded, and it needs a range of specialized skills that traditional MDiv programs do not provide. Ordination has tended to function differently in Evangelical Protestantism than in mainline Protestantism, and the increasing percentage of students who are Evangelical will affect degree programs that have historically led to ordination. The number of Roman Catholic priests in North America has continued to decline, and ever-larger Roman Catholic parishes need a variety of lay professionals to support the educational and pastoral life of the

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10 These data are drawn from the ATS institutional data base and were reported in the Fact Book on Theological Education 2002-2003 (Pittsburgh, PA: The Association of Theological Schools), www.ats.edu/Resources/Publications/Documents/FactBook/2002-03.pdf.
parish. There are other reasons for the shifting patterns of enrolment by degree program and vocational intent, but these are certainly some of them. Seminaries are no longer schools that train only pastoral leaders.

The role of gender and religious leadership remains a demarcating issue among the various streams of Christianity represented in the schools that are ATS members. Race, particularly in the United States, has been a troubling and volatile issue. The dramatic increases in women and racial/ethnic constituents have changed the character of theological education and will increasingly change the face of religious leadership in North America. The earlier educational pattern in which the vast majority of graduates sought ordination and served in pastoral settings has given way to a diversity of students, in a diversity of degree programs, pursuing education for a diversity of ministerial contexts and roles.

**North American Theological Education at the Turn of the Twenty-First Century**

Approximately two hundred and fifty theological schools are members of the Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada (ATS). All of these schools operate at the post-baccalaureate level and grant graduate professional degrees for a variety of areas of ministry practice and graduate degrees in the theological disciplines. ATS members include approximately ninety-five schools that are mainline Protestant in their theological orientation, about the same number of schools that would be classified as Evangelical Protestant, and sixty schools that are Roman Catholic or Orthodox. These schools are not the only providers of education for ministry in North America, but they include the vast majority that require some residential study and grant accredited post-baccalaureate degrees. Other schools offer theological education at the baccalaureate degree level, and a growing number of educational programs offer non-degree study for bi-vocational and alternatively credentialed clergy.

These schools reflect the accrual of the past century. Protestant schools bear in their histories and continuing commitments not only the progressive era commitment to reform the work of the church and cultivate interdenominational and interfaith engagement but also the liberal-conservative split of the modernist-fundamentalist struggles. ATS member schools continue to advance a professional model of theological education and, through the accrediting agency they invented, hold themselves accountable to good institutional and educational practices. Member schools also embody the changes that have been accruing across the past several decades: the presence of women and racial/ethnic men and women as well as the multiplication of degree programs and educational aspirations. The very composition of the schools has changed, and the conversation within the Association of Theological Schools now embraces the breadth of Christian community in North America.

Theological schools in North America are more numerous, more diverse, more complex than they were at the turn of the previous century. Their faculties are better trained, their academic standards are higher, and their resources, while always stressed, are stronger. The curriculum has matured, and the schools have learned from each other. They bring both affirmations and questions into this century.

**Affirmations**

Theological schools in North America bring a firm organizing principle into their future work. The ATS accrediting standards summarize it in this way: “the overarching goal is the development of theological understanding, that is, aptitude for theological reflection and wisdom pertaining to responsible life in faith. Comprehended in this overarching goal are others such as deepening spiritual awareness, growing in moral sensibility and character, gaining an intellectual grasp of the tradition of the faith community, and acquiring the abilities requisite to the exercise of ministry in that community.”\(^{13}\) This understanding of the

\(^{13}\) ATS/COA Institutional Accrediting Standards, 4.1.
educational goal merges formational and professional education with learning for intellectual understanding and ministerial practice. It centers learning for ministry inextricably in the life of faith. The courses may change, and the particular goals may vary, but this understanding of the overarching goal has internal strength and continuing coherence.

Theological schools have learned how to teach what students need to learn. The most important study of North American theological education in this century was conducted by researchers who examined educational practices in several schools. The authors conclude that good professors engage signature pedagogies that guide student learning. These include pedagogies of interpretation (developing the ability to interpret texts, traditions, and current circumstances), pedagogies of formation (learning dispositions, habits, knowledge, and skills), pedagogies of contextualization (“making explicit the socially situated nature of all knowledge”), and pedagogies of performance (learning the performance skills necessary for the public work of ministry). These teaching and learning practices are widespread in ATS schools, and they affirm the capacity of the schools to cultivate faith and effective religious leaders.

The schools have been working, and are continuing to work, on educating both racial/ethnic students and white students for ministry in an increasingly racially plural culture. Many countries in the world are mono-racial and mono-cultural. Not so in North America. By mid-century, Americans of European descent will comprise the racial minority in the United States, and persons of color will be the racial majority. That is a huge cultural shift, and the theological schools are demonstrating commitment and skills toward being the schools that this racially plural culture will require. On this issue, many Canadian schools are ahead of many U.S. schools.

Finally, the work of the Association the schools formed demonstrates that theological schools in North America, from their varied and divergent perspectives, have not only learned to share conversation with one another; they have also learned to work together on common problems and issues. This may be a distinguishing feature of theological education in North America. Few Associations of theological schools include the full range of Christian theological schools, and when they do, they often privilege one group over the other. The ATS schools at the beginning of this century do not share the theological similarity of the schools that formed the Conference early in the last century. In the context of various forms of diversity, the glue that sustains the conversation among the schools is consideration of good practice: how to do important work well in a variety of contexts, for a variety of constituencies.

Questions

As North American theological schools look to the decades ahead, there are questions they will need to address.

For all of the last century, North America exerted significant influence on world Christianity. However, the global shift in Christianity that began in the twentieth century is redefining many things, including leadership for the Christian movement. North America will not have the role in the twenty-first century that it had in the twentieth. Theological schools will need to learn how to be resources for leaders in other parts of the world and, more importantly, how to learn from them.

The composition of Christianity is different at the beginning of this century than the last century. Evangelical Protestants have the numbers and social influence that mainline Protestants used to have. Both groups of Protestants will need to understand how their current cultural status can serve God’s mission in the world. This will be a complex lesson to learn, and theological schools need to lead the learning for their respective ecclesial communities. Roman Catholics in North America are the dominant expression of Christianity in both the United States and Canada. Priests will become even fewer in number as the

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decades progress, and the transition to a priesthood supported by an expansive lay professional ministry will be crucial to the vitality of parish life and the work of religious institutions.

In the first decade of this century, the fastest growing religious preference in the United States is “none.” The country continues as a very religiously active Western democracy, but religion is not the culture-shaping force that it was in preceding centuries. It remains to be seen if the four-three model of ministerial education will survive this change, or if the professional model of theological education will hold.

Katarina Schuth, perhaps the most astute researcher of Roman Catholic theological education, concludes her second major study of theologates in the United States with this comment about what will guide the faculty and administrators to do what these seminaries must do over the coming decades:

Nothing less than entering the passion of Christ is called for – a passion that embraces both the suffering and burning love of God. Without suffering, burning love cannot endure and without burning love the suffering is unbearable. The faculty and staff of theologates (and I would add Protestant seminaries to Sister Schuth’s text) have stayed the course and their love and fidelity are sure to continue to yield good fruit.15

Bibliography


The history of theological education in the Russian Empire, USSR, post-soviet Russia, Ukraine and Belarus of the 20th century is extremely dramatic. Before 1917, one could only be theologically educated at church schools: theological academies, seminaries or ‘uchilishches’\(^1\). Theological faculties were absent from the universities. The Russian Orthodox Church was an established church, and a confessionally predominant institution. The Orthodox culture of the Russian Empire, being a Byzantine heritage that flourished on the soil of Slavonic and non-Slavonic pagan cultures had deep roots, not only in Greek, but also in Roman and in Syrian Semitic cultures. In a part of the population of Russia, this multiple symbiosis, this organic synthesis resulted in genuine and devoted religiousness and holiness. On the other hand, the European secularization and enlightenment in the 18th and 19th century had a considerable impact on Russian intellectuals, who while formally belonging to the church, grew cool towards religion. The beginning of the 20th century, however, was marked with a wave of a religious renaissance, as intellectuals, philosophers in particular, were increasingly identifying themselves as Orthodox believers and their influence on their educated compatriots was growing. It was not till the 20th century that the theological schools felt the need not only to search for a renovation of the system of theological education, but also for an original Russian approach to it. In the 19th century theological institutions were still subject to a strong Western influence, both on the Catholic and on the Protestant side.\(^2\) In the beginning of the 20th century the prevailing custom of family-bound study of theology at the seminaries and academies was broken, and sons from other than clerical families with university diplomas could increasingly be found among the students.

The Russian theological education of that time suffered poignant criticism from S. S. Glagolev, professor of the Moscow Theological Academy. In 1905 he wrote: “since science is meant for man, and not vice versa, taken practically, our school must train actors for the gradual re-organization of the society based on Orthodox Christian principles.”\(^3\) This and some other observations by a professor of a pre-revolutionary theological academy sound surprisingly up-to-date. A hundred years exactly passed, and the renewal of religious life in Russia still calls for a similar sober, unbiased and self-critical analysis and a strategy of theological education for the 21st century which is based on this analysis:

It somehow happened that the great objective of learning the truth and then bringing it into life fell into the background. It has been replaced by the sluggish and conceited notion that all truth has long since been learned and applied… The teaching of the creation taking place within six days … and many other teaching or simply

1 Uchilishche – a ‘pro-seminary’, usually with 3-years program. Some of them are only for psalm-readers and choir directors.
tales have been dogmatized. The routine of the church created by historical conditions has been canonized. Temporal or incidental social relationships are now looked upon as God’s world order.⁴

It is hard to disagree with the authoritative Orthodox professor who is not too shy to point out the weakness of the system of teaching theology and of education at large. An analysis of the situation in theological education at the turn of the new millennium should be in many respects compared with an examination of the situation at the beginning of the past century.

Unfortunately, the new professors that came to lecture at the Theological Academies after 1910 (Pavel Florenskii in their midst), could only start the process of reform and renovation of theological education. For almost 30 years the revolution of 1917 had banned church theological schools. It is true, however, that some interesting and essentially original forms of theological education emerged in St Petersburg (after 1924 Leningrad) and Moscow, but the atheist authorities would not let them evolve.

**History of Closing and Re-Opening of the Russian Orthodox Theological Schools (1917-1947)⁵**

Soon after the coup d’état, October 25, 1917, a decree was issued (December 11, 1917) which handed over the administration of all kinds of religious schools to the Commissariat of the People’s Education. According to the next decree of January 23, 1918 which separated the church from the state, all former church property including schools and seminaries were nationalized and state subsidies were banned. The decree also banned the teaching of religion at general education schools: “Citizens may teach and be taught religion privately”. But on August 24, 1918, an instruction followed which detailed the application of this decree. According to this instruction, all the pre-revolutionary theological seminaries and schools were closed. The church still could organize only special theological educational institutes, providing that no general subjects would be taught there. Such an interpretation of the decree helped to extend the theological education for another decade though in practice it was becoming more and more restricted. Thus, for example, in Petrograd (Leningrad since 1924) a new kind of a higher theological school was set up. This institution was intended to train priests and other church workers. It was closely connected with the university; many prominent scientists were among its lecturers. One of its aims was to draw members of the ‘intelligentsia’ to the church. Another peculiarity was that the lectures were held in the evening. Its students were both men and women, and clergymen constituted only a rather small minority among them. The institute existed only for 3 years, and not all of some 300 applicants could learn regularly, so only 26 of them received diplomas in 1923. The activity of the institute was continued by the higher theological courses which existed in Leningrad from 1925 to 1928. The Kazan Theological Academy was also reorganized into a Theological Institute and existed till 1928. The Kiev Theological Academy found itself under the authority of the Ukrainian Holy Synod. Since 1918 new courses, viz. the Ukrainian language and literature and the history of the West Russian law, were introduced into its curriculum. After the requisition of the Academy buildings it had to change its location, and known then as the Kiev Theological Institute, it existed as long as 1924. The Moscow Theological Academy in the St Trinity – St Sergius Lavra was closed at the end of 1917. But its professors, together with the bishops, were trying to introduce new patterns of theological education at parishes and monasteries. In particular, in June, 1918, an Orthodox People’s

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⁴ Ibid.
Academy was opened. It consisted of three departments: public theological courses, higher theological courses and pastoral courses for priests. In a month, there were over 200 students. The Academy existed till April, 1922. Not long before, in October, 1917, a Higher Women Theological Pedagogical Institute was also opened in Moscow. Professors of the Moscow Theological Academy and the Moscow University were among its lecturers.

In many dioceses, pastoral schools or courses were established to substitute for the seminaries; they endured several years, but the level of theological education was not comparable to the pre-revolutionary one. Publishing theological literature was stopped; professors and priests became victims of persecutions and repressions. In spring 1922, the confiscation of “church valuables” began. It gave rise to numerous trials and persecutions of the clergy and led to appearance of the Renovationists and further church schisms. This situation drastically influenced the theological educational settings. In the Petrograd Theological Institute, the rector and a few members of the corporation were arrested, several professors were exiled abroad, and a few joined the Renovationists.

As to the Renovationists’ theological education, in 1923 the Renovationists Church set up an educational committee. As early as autumn 1923, the Moscow Theological Academy was opened. It existed till 1935. The higher theological school in Kiev was opened in 1926 and existed till as late as 1928. Renovationists were organizing pastoral theological courses in Voronezh, Ufa, Samara, Kaluga, Kazan, Arkhangelsk, Rostov-on-Don, and Novgorod. There were about 20 such schools in 1923. The most interesting phenomenon in the Renovationists’ educational policy was the organization of so-called short-termed ‘mobile courses’. Their statute was legitimated by the Renovationists’ Synod in August, 1925. The need for such courses was very high: it was impossible to have theological pastoral schools in every diocese. Such courses took from a few days to two weeks. The lecturers were professors of the Moscow Theological Academy and the Leningrad Theological Institute. The Ukrainian Renovationists’ Church also organized such courses.

In April, 1929, a new law on ‘the religious associations’ was issued. This law and the following instruction of the People’s Commissariat of Internal Affairs prohibited any religious activity outside the church walls. The legislation forbade the clergy to instruct children, youth or women. Any Bible-study religious education groups were banned. Organization of theological pastoral courses became practically impossible. It seems that the Renovationists’ Moscow Academy and the Leningrad Institute were the only institutions which survived this law for a few years.

The year 1929 can well be called a landmark in the history of persecution of believers in Russia. The state brought in a six-day week, in order to have people exempt from any allusions to the Christian Resurrection. This calendar was in use till 1940. There was even an idea to coin a new era beginning with 1917, but this proposal was not put into practice. There was also a radical plan according to which all the churches, houses of prayer, synagogues and mosques were to be closed by 1933; all religious images and conceptions implanted by families or taken from literature were to be erased from the consciousness by 1934; by 1935, all the country, the young people first and foremost, were to be subject to a totalitarian anti-religious propaganda; by 1936, the last house of prayer and all the priests were expected to disappear.

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6 Renovationist Church or Renovationism was a schism in the ROC in 1922–1946. Originally begun as “grass-roots” movement among the Russian clergy for the reformation of the church, it was quickly corrupted by the support of the Soviet secret services, who had hoped to split and weaken the Russian church by instigating schismatic movements within it. The movement is considered to have ended with the death of its leader, Alexander Vvedensky, in 1946. See M. V. Shkarovsky, Obnovlencheskoe dvizhenie v Russkoi Pravoslavnoi Cerkvi XX veka [The Renovationist Movement in the Russian Orthodox Church in the 20th century] (St Petersburg, 1999), I. V. Soloviev, ed. Obnovlencheskii Raskol: Materiale dlia tserkovno-istoricheskoi i kanonicheskoi karakteristik [The Renovationist Schism: the materials for its religious, historical and canonical characterization] (MPIC 27. Moscow, 2002).

7 Sunday for the Russian is Voskresenie which means Resurrection.

8 www.atheism.ru/library/Firsov_1.phtml.
In autumn 1939, the West Ukraine and Byelorussia joined the Soviet Union. The next year the three Baltic states, Bessarabia and North Bukovina also became Soviet territories. The several theological educational institutions that had been functioning there (the Theological Institute in Riga, theological faculties in Tartu, in Kishinev and Chernovtsy, seminaries in Kremenets and Wilno, theological courses in Tallinn) – were closed down.

With the Great Patriotic war (1941 – 1945), a sort of ‘religious revival’ began in the occupied territories. Several thousands of churches were opened there. In the north-west regions of Russia the Pskov Spiritual Mission was active. It opened a theological seminary and theological pastoral courses in Wilno. Many candidates for priesthood sent by the Mission were studying there. The Theological Institute in Riga was also reopened. But policies of the German authorities towards the Orthodox were different in different regions. In Byelorussia they did not permit opening a theological seminary in Minsk, but only short-termed pastoral courses. The courses existed also in Vitebsk, in the Nowogrodok-Baranowiczy diocese, and there also were courses for psalm-readers.

In the Ukraine, adherents to the Moscow Patriarchate were united with the Ukrainian Autonomous Church. In 1943 the Autonomous Church reopened the seminary in Kremenets. The same year, it intended to open its classes in Kiev, but the city was liberated by the Soviet Army. Several pastoral courses were also opened in Poltava, Pochayev Laura. As to the Ukraine Autocephalous Church, the Germans did not permit it to open a theological academy or seminary in Kiev. Nevertheless, a few pastoral courses (in Lutsk, Kiev, the last were prohibited by the Germans) were opened. In the Romanian zone of the occupation in Bessarabia and the South West Ukraine, a seminary was opened in November, 1942, in Dubossary. Several pastoral courses also existed.

1943: A Turning Point

However paradoxically this may sound, World War II changed the situation for the better. In 1943 Stalin felt forced to open churches because the Germans were opening churches in the occupied territories. Besides, it was expected to infuse the Russians with a patriotic spirit. In June 1944, a Theological Institute and courses were opened in Moscow in the former Novodevichy Convent.

The needs of seminaries and of different courses were very high. New priests, though not so numerous, were ordained. Nevertheless, none of the theological educational institutions in the formerly occupied territories continued its activity. All the seminaries were organized anew. At a session of the Holy Synod on August 26, 1946, a committee on education was established under the aegis of the latter. On August 31, 1946, the Institute in Moscow was transformed into an academy, and courses into seminaries. There were 200 applicants enrolled to the Moscow theological schools. In 1960, there were 2 academies (Moscow-Zagorsk, Leningrad) and 8 seminaries (Moscow-Zagorsk, Leningrad, Kiew, Minsk-Zhirovecy, Odessa, Saratov, Stavropol, and Lutsk). Theological education through the whole post-war period, and practically till the 1990s, has been characterized by an unfailingly strict control over programs and every move of the theological schools on

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9 There was a significant revival of church life in those territories conquered by the Germans thanks to activities of Metropolitan Sergii (Voskresenskii).
11 Zhurnal Moskovskoi Patriarchii (Russian, 1960, No. 4, 41).
the part of the ideological structures of the communist party via the KGB organs. And yet, one should recognize the fact that even under these circumstances, the ROC could afford to sustain a quite efficient, if not healthy, system of training for future priests and theologians.

With reference to control, this was exercised as early as the stage of selecting among candidates for scholarship (well-educated candidates were to face all sorts of obstacles). It was impossible to introduce any new subject that might broaden the students’ outlook, rendering them able to discuss social or scientific problems from a Christian standpoint.

Over the first two or three post-war decades one could meet among the lecturers those graduated from pre-revolutionary theological schools. As ever before, theological education was directed toward training future clerics and the schools had no contacts with secular educational institutions (e.g. universities).

The most oppressive time for the theological schools, like for the church in general, were the last years of Nikita Khrushchov’s rule (1958 – 1964). This was the time in which church persecutions were resumed and there were many efforts of the regime to decrease the growing influence of the church. After a period of forced mass closing down of churches and monasteries, only three seminaries (in Moscow, Leningrad and Odessa) and two academies (in Moscow and Leningrad) remained active. Much attention of the communist party was applied to the goal to make priests defect from the church. About 20 priests defected, most of them became active propagandists of atheism, some of them soon achieving scholarly degrees in ‘scientific atheism’.

Metropolitan Nicodim and His Role in the Life-Saving of Theological Education

Thus at this period of a new wave of atheist persecution of the church, ideologically insinuated by Khrushchov, theological education was brought under very heavily destructive pressures by the authorities. For instance, the number of fresh students in the Leningrad seminary decreased from 37 in 1949 to 16 in 1959 and to 1 in 1961.12 The situation between 1959 and 1961 was very bad. As was mentioned above, the seminaries in Saratow, Stauropol, Kiew and Odessa were closed, and later, the seminary in Lutsk was also closed.

It was only due to the wise and subtle policy of such bishops as Metropolitan Nicodim that a few remaining theological schools were saved. These were the years when the ROC got energetically involved in ecumenical activities. International and ecumenical contacts, a new faculty for foreign students (at first for Africans) were the only excuse for their existence in the eyes of the atheist regime.

The personality of Metropolitan Nicodim (Rotov) is a key to the understanding of the religious situation in the USSR in the 60s and 70s and the situation of the theological schools under the communist regime which was part of the problem. No paper or archive document can be sufficient for properly understanding the role and true essence of the compromise of church hierarchs with the communist regime. All things depended on personalities. Metropolitan Nicodim exemplifies most vigorously the attempt to safeguard church activities. All his steps, deeds, and contacts with state and party representatives were aimed at finding opportunities for supporting and strengthening the church. He devoted particular care and attention to the training of the church’s future priests.

Theological schools were the Metropolitan’s priorities. The renewal of professors’ corporation, the increase of the number of the students, the involvement of the best students in ecumenical contacts, the sending of Orthodox students abroad for education, the personal interest in every lecturer and every student – all of this has contributed to establishing a special, creative and free, atmosphere of studies in this time in the Leningrad theological schools. His charismatic personality inspired many young people with university diplomas to put in applications at the seminary in the 1970s.

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12 Nauka i religija (Russian, Nr 2, 1962).
In one of his lectures (October 9th, 1965) Metropolitan Nicodim said: ‘Both priests and theologians who graduate from our theological academy and seminary must in every possible way develop themselves and increase their spiritual advancement so that they might be able to discern aspirations of the modern world, its needs and wants, and honorably and usefully carry out their duties in which the high ideals of Christian ecumenism and peacemaking should inspire their daily services.’

Metropolitan Nicodim frequently emphasized the need to link theology with life, “which restrains the mind from being carried off into realms of abstract speculation useless to the matter of salvation.” He recommended that they should delve ever more deeply into their study of the Word of God, taking it into their minds and hearts in order to further their spiritual creativity and growth, and to acquaint themselves thoroughly with the patristic works as these would help them to understand the Holy Scripture better, increase their spiritual experience, and enrich them with practical spiritual advice. In order to develop and maintain the students’ constant interest in the patristic heritage, Metropolitan Nicodim gave instructions for the readings in the refectory at mealtimes of not only the lives of the Saints, as had previously been the custom, but also of the works of the Holy Fathers.

It was on his initiative and with his participation that question-and-answer evenings were held and these contributed to a free and useful exchange of ideas on various subjects concerning the life of the church, ecumenical problems, and peacemaking. For the last two years of his life, Metropolitan Nicodim taught Russian Church history at the Academy, giving lectures on the post-synodal period which began with the work of the 1917-1918 Council and the restoration of the Patriarchate.

There are very interesting witnesses from the outside, such as a thorough account written in 1974 by Rev. Raymond Oppenheim, who served as Episcopalian chaplain at the American Embassy in Moscow. Still more interesting are witnesses of the students, especially foreigners as bearers of another mentality. For example, a Dutchman Theo van der Voort, who was studying at the Leningrad Theological Academy during 1974-1975, wrote a full and lively account of this period, based on his experience.

However propagandist this may sound, the following description is really true: “The entire tenor of academic life is oriented towards church life, based on prayer, labor, and the rules of Christian community life. Daily divine services (morning and evening) are celebrated with obligatory participation of students as readers, singers and assistants in the sanctuary – the best practical training for future member of the clergy.”

‘Ecclesialisation’ of all theological subjects, i.e. the preservation of the truly church trend in the Russian theology – this is what underlined the activity of theological schools of the Russian Orthodox Church in this period. It is interesting that one of the well-known dissidents (a devoted believer, but also a free-thinker) A.E. Krasnov-Levitin characterized the spirit, the atmosphere of the theological schools as being strongly church and worship oriented. He admits that he himself could not endure it for more than two weeks.

It is very difficult to find any statistics concerning numbers of theological students after the 1960s. This problem was adequately described by J. Ellis with tables made from many sources (for 1971 – 1984). The author shows a clear-cut increase in the number of both residential and correspondence students.

The Moscow and Leningrad theological schools admitted applicants from nearly all the local Orthodox Churches and Oriental Orthodox (non-Chalcedonian) Churches. There were also post-graduate students from Catholic and some Lutheran Churches (from Austria, Finland, and Germany). In turn, graduates of

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15 Vestnik Russkogo Khristianskogo Dvizheniya (Russian, No. 130, 1979, 317-324).
16 ‘The Russian Orthodox Church’, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1982, 97-98.
17 V poiskach novogo grada, Vospominanija (russ.) part III, Tel-Aviv, 1980, 305.
18 Jame Ellis, ‘Russian Orthodox Church. A Contemporary history’. Croom Helm, London & Sydney. 101 -123.
19 J. Ellis, Russian Orthodox Church... 120-121.
our theological schools continued their theological education at the Theological Faculty of Athens University, at the Pontificia Universita Gregoriana and the Orientalium Istituto in Rome, at theological schools in France and Germany, at the Ecumenical Institute in Bossey (Switzerland). The situation was quite ecumenical. It should be mentioned in this regard that the Leningrad Theological Academy in 1976-78 also invited as a visiting professor to lecture in the Orthodox Liturgy, a Jesuit theologian, Father Miguele Arranz, from Rome.

After 1988

A new chapter in the history of theological schools ROC began after 1988 – the year of the Millennium of the Baptism of Russia. In the year of jubilee, the number of theological educational institutions grew from 5 (2 academies and 3 seminaries) to 21 (7 seminaries and 14 theological schools (uchilishches)).

Still, another radical change in theological education began in 1991, after the fall of the communist regime. It must be admitted that an increase in the number of theological educational institutions was accompanied by great difficulties. The lack of competent educators and research workers and the severe shortage of good text-books and methodical aids were aggravated by a deep social and economical crisis that struck the state.

As far aback as ‘perestroika’ (1985-1990), it became obvious that the whole system of theological education was crying out for reforms. The Russian Orthodox Church found itself facing the necessity to make a choice as to the further developments of theological education and research. An essential part of the reform of the mid 90s consisted in introducing some fundamental elements of the humanities as taught at secular higher schools into theological educational programs, which was absolutely impossible under the Soviet regime. The reform resulted in significant improvements in the basic character of education at academies and seminaries. Special attention was paid to the advancement of theological and church-historical disciplines. The theological schools began to claim that they should be given the status of higher schools by the state, which would mean in fact the rehabilitation of theological education in Russia. A move in this direction was approved by the Russian ministry of education of educational standards in theology: in February 2001, it approved the standard of “theology” as general educational paradigm (Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees) and in January, 2002, approval was given to the standard of ‘theology’ as a specialty. The ministry, however, refused to accredit the academies and seminaries, alluding to their confessional specificity. As a matter of fact, under clause 19 of The Law on Freedom of Conscience and Religious Associations (1997), theological seminaries and academies are registered as religious organizations and thus the ministry denied them the right to be accredited by the secular state. Till now, graduates from academies and seminaries cannot go on with post-graduate studies (to have their Master’s or Doctor’s degree) at Russian secular institutions at a higher school because they do not have a state diploma. For the same reason, they cannot apply as research workers or lecturers at state research or educational institutions.

Of immense help for the restoration of theology and theological education in Russia, it proved to become the heritage of the Russian emigration to Europe and America. In 1925, Russian migrants founded St. Serge Theological Institute in Paris which, as was put by its first rector, Metropolitan Evlogii (Georgievskii) became the “practically only heart of living Orthodox thought in the Russian diaspora”. In accordance with the resolution adopted by the All-Russia Council of 1917–1918, lecturers of the St. Serge Institute tried to synthesize university and academic education. The result was a unique centre of the most genuine theological science and simultaneously also religious philosophy. Within this institute there worked a substantial number of former professors both from theological academies and most prominent Russian universities. After the Second World War, graduates and professors from the Institute could also be found teaching in the USA (Florovskii, Shmeman, Meyendorf and others). It can well be said that it was
just the emigration, the Russian diaspora (St. Serge Institute in Paris par excellence) that preserved the continuity of Russian Orthodox theology. This issue deserves special attention. It can be said in many respects that the missionary-minded, active and creative priests of today have been educated and based in their theology and are still now basing themselves on the attainments of the Paris St. Serge School and the St. Vladimir Seminary in New York that followed its leading role.

Archbishop Hilarion (Alfeev) says: ‘However, their books, from which the West is learning about Orthodoxy, have not yet come into use at Russian theological schools; moreover, quite a few teachers at theological schools are mistrustful of these books, seeing “non-Orthodox views” in them. The achievements of modern-day Western theology are also practically ignored at our theological schools.’

This is how Hieromonk Hilarion (now Archbishop) evaluates the situation with theological education in Russia in the late 20th century. He criticized severely the present state of the ROC theological schools and outlined the ways of their renewal, giving constructive ideas both of their curricula and methods of teaching.

**Current Situation and Perspectives of Future Development**

The above quoted Fr. Hilarion’s report was widely discussed at theological schools of the ROC, and the followed reformation was largely due to his proposals, so I need to dwell at some length on his ideas. The author suggests a new approach to certain aspects of the educational process, new educational methods, a fresh view of the rules of discipline, and a fresh concept of the relations between teachers and students.

Concerning curricula he gives special emphasis to the Holy Scriptures, Dogmatic theology, Mystical Theology, Ascetics, Patristic Studies, Comparative Theology. There has never been any special course on Mystical Theology that deals with such categories as the vision of God, the experience of the Divine Light, ‘theosis’ (deification). “A taste for reading patristic literature should be instilled in the students”, said Fr. Hilarion, – “Moreover, they should be encouraged to study the fathers in the original – in Greek, Latin and other languages… we should be able to apply what the ancient fathers said to the present day and to view present-day problems through the prism of the church fathers’ experience… And, certainly, we should learn not only to think but also to live the way the fathers of the church did. This is a global task, a task for the whole of one’s life. Initial steps in this direction, however, can be made in the period of studying at a theological school”.

Fr. Hilarion attached special importance also to studying liturgy and emphasized that in Comparative Theology students of theological schools should be educated in a spirit of tolerance and openness towards other confessions. “It should be borne in mind that many of the future clergymen of our churches will have to live in a multi-confessional society. They will have to be able not only to see the differences, but also to clearly understand that Christians belonging to most varied denominations have a single dogmatic basis, common belief in the Holy Trinity, belief in Jesus Christ as God and Savior. During lessons of comparative theology it is not enough to show the weaknesses of other confessions: close attention should be given to their strengths as well.”

Daring sounds in Fr. Hilarion’s suggestion to invite representatives of other confessions to meet with the Orthodox students. Since the author is now the Chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate Department for External Church Relations and he is now responsible for training for the doctor’s degree in Theology in the ROC, it remains to be seen when these ideas can become a true and a transformed reality.

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Theological education of today should be mission-minded. Such a development suggests ecumenical cooperation. The word ‘education’ implies not only the academic routine of communicating some knowledge, fostering some skills and training specialists for various fields of action, but also a strategic task for the whole culture. Education is the dynamics of culture. A broader understanding of the nature of ministry (lay, ordained and collective) is connected with a new understanding of the contemporary mission of the church. It is worth emphasizing that there is a common need to become aware of the fact that theological and general education should be a primary concern of the church. His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia, was elected in January 2009 with ten years of rectorship at the Leningrad Theological Academy and Seminary behind him and, therefore, was conscious of the value of theological education for the future mission of the church. Experienced in ecumenical work more than anybody else among the ROC hierarchy, he is likely to ensure adequately that the task of interchurch cooperation is taken up properly. It is no accident that the Chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate Department for External Church Relations, Archbishop Hilarion, is at the same time the person in charge of post-graduate studies.

Another pressing objective of theological education and present need is how to afford and to make available personnel for ROC related educational institutions. Theological education and religious education are not the same, but under certain circumstances and in certain contexts of argumentations, it is essentially important that their unity and their common goals are not overlooked. It is beyond doubt and quite natural to take religious education as the first step and as some sort of catechization, and then to take theological education as a higher level of ‘ecclesialisation’ (including in parish and church life) which in the first place implies vocational training. Each one of these educational steps, however, do not only presuppose gaining some information, but rather to be involved and absorbed in the mystical experience of the church, making oneself ready for the sacraments and taking part in the common practice of the church.

Thus, theological education should also be interpreted as a prerequisite of liturgical life. Besides, it is only theological education that can serve as a basis for religious education and provides the society with trained catechists. Education ranks among the key objectives of the church, and it is a common cause, a “liturgy before the Liturgy” and the beginning of the liturgy. However, this conception may include a religious constituent and dimension to be found in secular education too. That is why one of the tasks of theological education is also close cooperation with non-theological disciplines and secular educational institutions.

It remains only to be added in terms of a statistical survey that today the ROC has 87 theological schools: 5 academies, 3 Orthodox Universities, 2 Theological Institutes, 38 seminaries and 39 inter-diocesan and diocesan ‘uchilisches’ and pastoral courses. To compare this with the situation some hundred years ago, we can look into some statistical data for the year 1913 which lists for the ROC: 4 academies, 57 seminaries and 183 ‘uchilishes’. At the same time, a new phenomenon for Russia is that secular theological education is gaining in popularity. Today, there are about twenty theological chairs, departments and faculties at state institutions and non-state institutions of higher education. So we can already speak of two parallel systems of theological education in Russia. This phenomenon is very new for Russia.

A remarkable landmark in reforming theological education was a report which His Holiness Patriarch Kirill made in November 2009 (13th November) at a meeting of the rectors of theological schools of the Russian Orthodox Church: ‘Education in the Russian Orthodox Church at the present historical stage: Problems, tasks and prospects’. The Patriarch emphasized the necessity of the church educational institutions being accredited by the state as well as the traditional Russian structure of theological education, being brought in accordance with the Bologna requirements; special attention was also given to

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the needs for training future priests. “We are incessantly talking in our theological schools about obedience. The question is whether that is motivated by our latent wish to have absolutely obedient and intimidated persons unable in any circumstances to raise their voice against their superior? ... We should not bring up human slaves, nor rebels, but free and at the same time, responsible persons. Freedom does not imply dissoluteness; first and foremost, freedom must be inner: freedom in Christ.” He also touched upon some poignant issues, like the urgency of overcoming obscurantism, and also on some problems concerning some subjects in the curriculum plan, particularly the cluster of pastoral courses (missiology, Diaconia, pastoral psychology and pedagogics) which demand new attention. “Now we find ourselves living in a new situation that makes us closer to stabilization after rapid outward growth that began some twenty years ago. It was reinforced by a rise in the social status of the church and recognition of its many fields of action as meaningful by the state and the society.”

A new stage of reformation in theological education will also require resorting to other European and world-wide experiences gained by other than Orthodox confessions. Even now, one can meet among the lecturers several graduates from European universities. One must admit an essential difference that exists between West European theological education and the Russian church theological education, the latter being sheltered by the church seminaries and academies. The main feature of Russian Orthodox theological education that makes it so different from Christian education in Western Europe lies in the fact that traditionally it has been cut off from the universities. That makes the mass conscious of a discrepancy between religious and scientific worldviews. As has been said, till now the church related theological schools have not been accredited by the state.

The recently emerged ten theological faculties and chairs at provincial universities are fairly new institutions in Russia, and they were brought to life on diocesan initiatives. These educational structures do not fall under the jurisdiction of the education committee at the Holy Synod, and they were not mentioned in the above Patriarch’s report. These new practices are to be thoroughly studied and analyzed in the near future. Theological chairs, and even departments that came into being within the walls of some universities, have not yet altered the generally strained attitudes of believers and non-believers towards the sciences.

The wonderful strategic vision of Patriarch Kirill can only be converted and transformed into real life in the near future if some quite expected growing pains of the Russian church society are overcome which, having grown up as it is now, is subject to some very complex factors which are deeply rooted in the history of the Russian Orthodoxy. The past twenty years were marked by the growing opposition to ecumenism. To a large degree, this can only be explained by the misconception and lack of understanding on what ecumenism means and ignorance with regard to the role of the Edinburgh World Mission Conference of 1910, particularly the lack of comprehension of its missionary vision and trend. Furthermore, the new connotation and understanding of mission that was formed and emerged in the international debates on missiology in the 20th century has not yet come to be approved, recognized and integrated as a binding perspective in theological education. At the same time, there is a lot of fear of such concepts as aggiornamento which is felt everywhere. This is considerably due to the attitude towards the Renovationists’ movement that was manifested by the communist leaders in the 1920s and 1930s. Today, not infrequently one can hear negative references even to the Second Vatican Council, while as far back in the 1970s, its proceedings were still thoroughly studied at the theological seminaries. A lack of presence of the subject of social ethics in the theological curricula may also account for the fact that such issues and themes as democracy, liberalism, human rights, freedom of consciousness, tolerance and pluralism are misinterpreted and not properly dealt with. A new missionary orientation of theological education is urgently needed today in order to help to realize that in a situation of absence of a culture of tolerance and

pluralism, no inter-confessional Christian dialogue, no interfaith dialogue and – what matters most in 
Russia – no dialogue between believers and unbelievers is ever possible though all of the three different 
dimensions of dialogue are absolutely vital for the future of the witness of churches in Russia.

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Handbook of Theological Education in World Christianity
Theological Education in the Ukraine: 
The Case of the Master of Ecumenics Program in Lviv

Antoine Arjakovsky

Introduction

Ukraine is a strategic place for the future unity among Orthodox Churches as well as for the realization of unity among Catholic and Orthodox Christians\(^1\). If we take into consideration the fact that the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church – despite her atypical descent – represents an authentic church of the Reformation, not the least because this church appeared in the Ukraine already in the XVIth century, the rapprochement of this church and its unity with Catholic and Orthodox Churches could well present an event of paradigmatic significance for the whole Christian world.

Cardinals Kasper, Bertone and Sandri during the year 2008 have issued many statements which underline the strategic importance of the Ukraine in the general ecumenical plan. The co-celebration between Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople and Alexis of Moscow which was performed in Kyiv in the same year in the presence of state authorities has underlined this importance and is an additional argument for this. In September 2008, a historical colloquium on the Kyiv Church was held in the capital of Ukraine which brought together delegates of three Orthodox and two Catholic (Roman and Greek) Churches present in the Ukraine. Delegates of these churches agreed that the ecclesiological model of the Kyiv Church could present a way towards the reconciliation among the Christians in Ukraine and beyond.

This model of the Church of Kiev or Kyiv, to be briefly and schematically presented, consisted of the historical formation of a local church between Xth and XVIth centuries which maintained communion with churches (which themselves could no longer be in communion with each other), because the priority attention was given to its sacramental life and not to the implications of political realities of that time. This had consequences on the formation of its organization on a personal level, that is in the baptismal dimension (which was seen according to the existing experience of the death and resurrection of Christ as being primary to institutional belonging), the eucharistic dimension (which was seen as involving the communion between Christ and His body not only as anamnesis but also as epiclesis) and the pastoral dimension (which primarily was seen as affecting the personal relations between bishop and the community and only after that as affecting relations with territorial organizations).

In a more general way one can say that this ecclesiological model of the “Pomisna Tserkov” of Kyiv rejects the universalistic ecclesiology, but at the same time also does not satisfy a minimalist view with regards to the eucharistical ecclesiology of the first millennium. Baptismal, eucharistical and pastoral ecclesiology all seeks to synthesize contradictory tensions between the local and universal church combining a historical and a missionary dynamism of the churches which is based on their eschatological and mystical nature.

\(^1\) Approximately 70% of Ukrainians (approximately 30-35 millions) consider themselves to be Christians and majority of them belong to some confession. In the same time it is difficult to present exact data. The following can be as indications: Orthodox approximately 25 million believers. The number of Ukrainians which consciously attach themselves to the Orthodox Church in the same time is the most important to know. Orthodox Church of Moscow Patriarchate counts 15 millions; Orthodox Church of Kiev Patriarchate approximately 10 millions; Autocephalous Orthodox Church – less than 1 million; Catholic: a little bit more than 6 millions including more than 5 millions of catholic with eastern rite (Greek-Catholic Church) and approximately 1 million of Roman Catholic; Protestants: near 500,000; Jews: between 100,000 and 200,000; Muslims: from 300 to 400 thousands.
Cardinal Lubomyr Husar, major archbishop of Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church, has published a text, dedicated to the transfer of his see to Kyiv, which is entitled “One people of God on the land of Kyiv hills” in which he presents his eschatological view of that ecclesiological model. Specifically, he cites the Chronicle of the Ancient Times, a founding text of the XI century of a monk Nestor Litopissets, in which is told the story of Apostle Andrew coming to the border of Dnipro. According to the chronicle, the evangelist said the following words about the place which was then built to the city of Kyiv: “On those hills the Glory of God will shine”. This eschatological identification of Kyiv with Jerusalem in the memory of Ukrainians is determinative for the understanding of the particular ecclesiological model of Ukraine. It also allows capturing the comprehension of the Ukrainian’s concept of the local church, the term that is translated into Ukrainian as pomisna and has a much more precise and qualitative meaning than its French or English equivalent.2

There is, therefore, a very rich ecumenical perspective in the Ukraine. This specific context in this country with a population of some 47 million people also has some implications for the situation of theological education. The only institution which awards diplomas in ecumenism in the Ukraine is the Institute of Ecumenical Studies of Lviv (IEOE). This institute is attached to the Ukrainian Catholic University, an institution which played a deterministic role in the recognition of theology by the Ministry of Education in 2005 and has a distinct understanding of religious science which is based on a strictly secular approach and an institutional independence.3

The Master Program in Ecumenical Studies in Lviv

The Master’s Program in Ecumenical Studies (MPES) was launched in 2006 in Lviv by the Institute of Ecumenical Studies in partnership with the Ukrainian Catholic University and Lviv National University Ivan Franco. It was facilitated by the positive experience of similar programs that have existed in Western Europe since 1952, when the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey began to organize annual four-month sessions as part of a School of Ecumenical Studies for students within higher education.

Since 2000, such master’s and doctoral programs of the Institute at Bossey are conducted in cooperation with the University in Geneva. Similar programs on the master’s level also exist at the Welsh National Centre for Ecumenical Studies at Trinity College, Camarthen, and also the Irish School of Ecumenism in Dublin, which is part of Trinity College.

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2 This famous text is cited by all churches which see themselves as heirs of the one Church of Kyiv. Archimandrite Kiril Hovorun, responsible for international relations within Ukrainian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate) in 2007-2009 has precisely quoted this text of Nestor to open the dialogue forthcoming from the churches. Although for him the one legal local church in Ukraine is his church, he explains that the apostles’ vision is pushing churches to work towards “the idea of Church of Kyiv”. Supporters of Moscow, Constantinople and Rome and primarily Ukrainian Orthodox and Greek-Catholic, like the ancient Orthodox must look at Kyiv as “the second Jerusalem”, as “Sion of Rus”, as “a mother of all Rus cities” and as “the third node of Virgin Mary”. The Orthodox Churches of Kyiv Patriarchate and Autocephaly Church also consider this text of Nestor as fundamental. Metropolitan Illarion (Ohienko) of the Ukrainian Autocephaly Church in exile, in his book Ukrainian Church, quotes long passages of Laurentian text of 1377, one of the oldest sources that kept Chronic of Nestor. This text states that the apostle Andrew was bishop of Sinope on the Black Sea and finished his trip on the boards of Dnipro departing from Korsun. Against all scepticisms regarding the truth of this event, Bishop Illarion quoted a letter of the apostle Peter (1, Peter, 1, 1), who mentioned the presence of Christians in Crimea: “To God’s elect, strangers in the world, scattered throughout Pontus”.

3 The Honorary Committee of the Institute for Ecumenical Studies is composed of Msgr. Anthony Scharba, archbishop of Ukrainian Orthodox Church (Constantinople Patriarchate), Konrad Raiser, pastor of EKD and former general secretary of WCC, Msgr. Pierre d’Ornellas, Archbishop of Rennes (Catholic Church) and Cardinal Lubomyr Huzar (Major Archbishop of Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church in Kyiv).

Handbook of Theological Education in World Christianity
Every one of these programs has its own unique characteristics, but they also share certain features, which are included in our program, namely: a high academic level and a tolerant and multi-confessional approach to religious questions. Also included is academic reflection, for which appropriate space for discussion, a critical approach, and objectivity in the illumination of questions play a primary role in the achievement of a true ecumenical character for these programs. Studies, research, and conversations and dialogue with members of various confessions (instructors and students) create an atmosphere that is conducive not only for the acceptance of the differences of other communities, but also for a better understanding of one’s own tradition and identity, enriching them with new perspectives.

The uniqueness of each program depends on a number of factors: the local religious and cultural situation, the problems and needs of the region, and the purposes to be achieved through the program. In Ukraine, historically two approaches to the study of religious questions have been used:

- The religious studies approach, which is used in state universities, where religious questions are examined through neutral, historical-philosophical methods
- The confessional approach, characteristic of seminaries and other educational institutions of various churches. In this case, religious questions are put in a more or less confessional perspective.

The MPES sets its purpose as providing knowledge in such a way as to avoid the limitations of both these methods. The basic conviction is that the proper approach to religious questions can be neither strictly neutral nor noticeably confessional. The emphasis is put on striving for the program’s instructors and students to represent an ecumenical attitude towards Christianity. For an ecumenical approach, it is necessary to have on the one hand a tolerant attitude towards other confessions, which offers the opportunity to conduct friendly discussions, and on the other hand to have a deep faith commitment and cherishing of belonging to one’s own church tradition and religious community.

Subjectivity and objectivity need to be united not only in the presentation or learning of material, but also in scholarly research. The program’s desired approach must be multi-confessional, both among the instructors and students and in the selection of courses and methods of teaching and conducting research.

The uniqueness of the master’s program is also formed by contemporary Ukraine’s unique religious situation, which is determined by the historical and cultural inheritance and by a geopolitical factor. It is taken into account that society is in the process of moving from a monocultural approach to a culturally diverse perspective, which provides for the existence of various confessions and religions. Although the ethnographic identity of Ukrainians with regards to religion is associated with Christianity of the Byzantine tradition, it is necessary to keep in mind that Ukraine is traditionally a territory where not only Eastern and Western Christian traditions meet, but where other religions also exist and develop.

The MPES considers its purpose to provide higher education that unites the treasures of theology and spirituality with the achievements of contemporary humanitarian sciences through ecumenical and interreligious dialogue. Through lectures, meetings, discussions, and scholarly research, the MPES strives to strengthen and deepen Christian and confessional identity, to form a spirit of ecumenical thinking in the Ukrainian society, which needs not only to respect the best traditions of its community, but also to know how to study and respect the convictions of other confessions and religions without prejudice. The MPES sees its mission in the preparation of people who will be agents of reconciliation, mutual respect, and unity among Christians.

Purpose and Tasks of the MPES

The goal of the MPES is the preparation of Masters of Ecumenical Studies, who will become teachers of Christian ethics or can work professionally in the sphere of religious journalism.

The program has as its purpose to acquaint students with the theological foundations of the study of the Christian faith in an ecumenical perspective, to give them the opportunity to deepen their knowledge of inter-confessional theological dialogues, to teach them to comment on and critically explain religious
themes and events, to understand the role of Christianity and Christian values in the contemporary world, to provide the necessary pedagogical, methodological, and practical preparation for the teaching of Christian ethics and work in the sphere of religious journalism. It, therefore, belongs to the essential tasks of the MPES:

1. To give students a wide and varied knowledge of the theological foundations of Christianity in an ecumenical perspective (dogmatic, biblical, spiritual, and historical aspects)
2. To acquaint them with the spiritual treasures and uniqueness of various confessions
3. To create a basis of respect, openness, and attention to the convictions of other confessions or religions
4. To acquaint them with the history and contemporary situation of the ecumenical movement and the foundational achievements of ecumenical dialogue
5. To teach them to comment on and critically explain religious questions and events
6. To create methodological competencies for the writing of master’s theses in the student’s chosen specialization

By trying to achieve these goals the master’s program contribute to cultivating character and spiritual values, which are necessary for the formation of the moral base of an intellectual, which needs to be formed by a selfless desire for knowledge, love of truth, the establishment of quality and responsible intellectual work, honesty and openness, self-criticism and impartiality, tolerance for criticism and the thoughts of one’s opponents.

The Distant Learning Program in Ecumenical Studies

In September 2008, the Institute of Ecumenical Studies proudly inaugurated the first academic semester of its Distance Learning Master’s degree Program in Ecumenical Studies.4 This degree program is not only a first priority for the Institute of Ecumenical Studies, but also the first such degree program of this kind in the world. Course instruction is done in English so as to make this program open to a global student body. This program has also brought together a teaching faculty of world-class theologians and scholars who are highly respected among contemporary ecumenists.5

The Distance Learning Master’s Program in Ecumenical Studies (DLPES) offers students a solid ecumenical formation through comprehensive courses in reading and writing, guided by notable figures in the world of ecumenism. It is ideal for the independent, motivated student who wants an opportunity to read, think, and write about ecumenism; to learn from and share his writing with faculty involved in the practice of ecumenism; and to take part in discussions with peers through on-line facilities.

In the first two semesters of study, degree seeking students take five courses a semester on the theology of Christian traditions and on basic ecumenical issues and approaches. Such a foundational course offered within first semester studies include survey courses of the Catholic, Protestant, and Eastern Christian traditions; Ecumenical Theology; and Ecumenical Social Ethics. Within their second semester, students will continue with their foundational studies within the program through courses that cover theological and relational themes crucial to contemporary ecumenism. These second semester courses include ‘Opposition to Ecumenism,’ where students study various viewpoints resistant to ecumenical dialogue; ‘Christian History,’ where students will engage an ‘ecumenical’ presentation of Christian history; ‘History of the Ecumenical Movement’, where students will study the historical basis and development of the

4 See website: www.iesdistance.org.ua.
5 Professors include Dr. Konrad Raiser, former general secretary of the World Council of Churches; Fr. Emmanuel Clapsis, professor of Orthodox Theology at the Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology; Dr. Peter De Mey, professor of Catholic Theology at the Catholic University of Leuven; Dr. Antoine Arjakovsky, historian and director of the Institute of Ecumenical Studies at the Ukrainian Catholic University; and many more.
contemporary ecumenical movement; and ‘Ecumenical Ecclesiology,’ where students will study the relevance of ecclesiology (theology of the church) within contemporary ecumenical contexts.

For the third semester of course offerings, students must choose five selective courses according to their interests. These courses build upon foundational studies within the first and second semesters and focus on particular and specific topics within the contexts of contemporary ecumenism. Students may choose to study specific inter-denominational dialogues and their proceedings in ‘bi-lateral and multi-lateral agreements’, the ecumenical appeal of ‘saints’ across Christian traditions in ‘Ecumenical Hagiography’, the ecumenical reflection concerning the church’s liturgical and sacramental life in ‘Liturgy and Sacraments’, or other such uniquely-themed courses. By the fourth semester (or the successful completion of 15 courses), degree-seeking students will devote themselves to completing their master’s thesis under the supervision of a member of the DLPES faculty. Degree candidates will then present and defend their thesis to a board of selected program professors. Upon successful completion and defence of the student’s master’s thesis, the student will be awarded with a Master’s degree in Ecumenical Studies. In addition to coursework, degree-seeking students report on visits to churches of different denominations than their own within our ‘ecumenical study visit’ program that is completed for three semesters of study within the program.

This program is intended primarily as an introductory or supplementary education for individuals working in other academic and non-academic disciplines, particularly in ministry. It is expected to be of particular use to those interested in working in an ecumenical field, or continuing on to a Ph.D. Program in that field. However, the program does not seek to educate professionals only. The DLPES, or individual classes within the program, is recommended for all those have an interest in matters of Christian unity. The DLPES program is flexible to the needs and intentions of its students and welcomes non-degree seeking students who wish to take individual courses but who do not have the intention of working toward the master’s degree in Ecumenical Studies. Moreover, the program allows for degree-seeking students to study at either a full-time or part-time pace. All degree-seeking students, however, are required to complete their degree within six years of beginning the program.6

Conclusion

Theology is not as it is often thought, a discipline for specialists demanding extensive knowledge or a discipline reserved for clerics. Probably the saying of a church father from the desert is appropriate who once said: “If you pray, you are a theologian”. The teaching of contextual hermeneutics, of English language or of the history of the ecumenical movement has a goal that leads people to open their eyes to the flame of things as suggested by O. Clement. This kind of teaching accompanied by social practice may permit one to marvel at the “ahit” things like the Japanese say, the possibility which allows things to amaze us and to help us to say thank you, evkharisto.

Theological teaching is a place that allows a deepening into theological knowledge within each confessional tradition. It is something different than just doing religious studies as it is performed in the Anglo-Saxon countries or to do the history of religions as it is done in France. Faith cannot be regarded a danger to reason; on the contrary: being afraid of the gift of faith and its illumination of the intellect is the source of all fanaticism and renunciation.

Despite the fact that a critical deconstruction is a dominant paradigm today, the symbolism of the eucharist is more alive than ever today. The Orthodox theologian, Paul Evdokimov, had similar thoughts

6 The credit assignments of the DLPES are compatible with the European Credit Transfer System. Each course in the DLPES carries 6 credits. An additional 0.5 credits accrue upon completion of the Ecumenical Study Visits each semester.
when he was writing already in 1954 that “while the West is affirming that no sign exists without the thing, the East is adding that no thing can exist without the sign”. It is clear in this perspective that nothing can exist only in its sole epistemic or in its sole ontological reduction. All what exists is a manifestation of eternal life. According to Jean-Luc Marion and his perspective of an epistemology of love, only those who love can see proper reality and perceive properly the lilies of the fields and the birds of heaven.
Theological Education Before the Beginning of the Changes in Europe (1910-1990)

The focus of this article is on theological education in Central and Eastern Europe in the period beginning with the second half of the 20th century leading up to the present. Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) by 1910 was in a state of change and turmoil, politically and culturally. Most parts of the region were equipped with theological seminaries and academies which stood on solid historical traditions, often linked to universities and which represented primarily the so-called historical churches, such as the Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Reformed, and Lutheran churches.

Theological education in Central Europe, especially in Hungary, has old roots. Within thirty years after the Reformation, three Reformed institutions for theological education or ministerial formation were established in Pápa (1531), Sárospatak (1531) and Debrecen (1538). From more recent times are the Reformed Theological Academy (now Faculty of Theology of the Károli University) in Budapest (1855), the Protestant Theological Institute in Cluj-Napoca (Romania) (1875), the Catholic University in Lublin (Poland) (1918), the Protestant Theological Faculty of the Charles University in Prague (Czech Republic) (1919), the Orthodox Theological Institute (Cluj-Napoca) (1924) and the Christian Theological Academy of Warsaw (1954), to mention only a few!

Studying abroad was often a constitutive part of training and education. For instance, from the 16th century onwards, hundreds of Hungarians travelled to study theology at university centres in Germany (Wittenberg, Heidelberg), Switzerland (Basel, Geneva) and especially the Netherlands (Franeker, Leiden, and Utrecht).

There is almost no evidence for theological education among free churches (Evangelikale) in this region in the beginning of the 20th century. Most theologically trained evangelicals from CEE received their training in Western European countries, primarily in predominantly Protestant contexts such as the United Kingdom, Germany, and Switzerland. Some Lutheran and Reformed institutions or faculties, especially those more steeped in Pietism, offered theological studies also to Free Church students. In some countries a certain level of persecution, or at least restrictions was still a reality for free church leaders.

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1. E.g. In Romania the distinct law on higher education of 1910 opened up the possibility for each university to organise its own theological faculty, see Mihai Vizitiu, Dragoș Bahrim, and A. Timofti, Două Secole De Învățământ Teologicoseminarial (1803-2003) (Iași, Romania: Editura Trinitas, 2003).
2. The Lutheran one, started in Sopron, has its origins from 1557.
3. It was established as a Protestant Institute for Theology. For its history see: Sándor Ladányi, A Károli Gáspár Református Egyetem Hittudományi Karának Története (1855-2005) (Budapest: A KRE Hittudományi Kar, 2005).
4. For a brief overview on Theological Education in Romania see Tiberius Rata, “Theological Education in Romania,” East-West Church & Ministry Report 10, no. 2 (2002).
7. In February 1903 a manifest was issued by Tsar Nicolay II, followed by decrees in 1905 and 1906, offering to evangelicals on the territory of the Russian Empire some tolerance. But only with the Soviet government total freedom came to the evangelicals for a short time to be severely limited later.
The historical churches, however, had achieved at this time a particularly impressive level in the development of theological higher learning. The Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) was at its high point, competing with and positioning herself distinctly in relation to Protestant scholarship. Achievements of Western scholarship, particularly the historical-critical research on the Bible, were picked up and developed in various theological training institutions in CEE.

It is remarkable that within this region theological education also included some ‘home and foreign’ mission training. The main mission focus was not so much on the new world (Africa, Latin America and Asia), but was located much closer to home. For the ROC, for example, these were the people groups of Siberia or Central Asia. Some of the mission studies were, however, also focused on confronting and persecuting the newly developing free churches. A lively exchange of theological ideas and its impact can be seen in John R. Mott’s visit to Hungary of 1909, which affected future church leaders and seminary professors and could be considered an important factor in the emerging Hungarian foreign mission movement. In the same year the only Hungarian to attend the Edinburgh World Missionary Conference, István J. Kováts, initiated a proposal to include home missions as a required subject in the curriculum of all the Hungarian Reformed seminaries, in each of the four years. This proposal was accepted by the synod of the Hungarian Reformed Church in 1910.

Soon after the Soviet Revolution, theological institutions of the ROC experienced severe persecutions and most had to close their doors by the end of the 1920s. They were only able to reopen again at the end of the Second World War, still experiencing continuing restrictions and persecution. Only after the Millennium celebration in 1988 did the ROC see theological education prosper and flourish.

Beginning with 1910, we find some first attempts of Free Churches to develop theological education in Central and Eastern Europe. For some of them, their end was defined by Soviet authorities and they had to give up the new beginnings at the same time as the ROC had to close down its institutions. In some of the Central European countries, theological institutions continued to develop until the beginning of the Second World War.

After the war and the Communist domination some institutions were never reopened, others were allowed to operate but not for long and a third small group, primarily with an historical church background but also some in the Free Church tradition, were able to continue to train ministers, though with

9 We see members of Free Churches, such as Baptists and Mennonite Brethren, join western missionaries on a mission to India. Also historic churches were engaged in sending missionaries to other parts of the world, see e.g. Anne-Marie Kool, *God Moves in a Mysterious Way: The Hungarian Protestant Foreign Mission Movement (1756-1951)*, Mission (Zoetermeer: Boekencentrum, 1993).
10 Ibid. 210-213.
13 On the 13th of February 1909 a small institution was started in Lodz (presently Poland, then part of the Russian Empire) with 16 students (St. Petersburg Archive). Others insist that it operated already since October 1907 (AUREchB, *Istoria Evangelskich Christian-Baptistov V Sssr* (Moskow: AUREchB, 1989). 169.
14 Alexander P. Kozinko, “Stanovlenie Bogoslovskogo Obrasovania,” *Put Bogoposnania* 1(1996). While ROC theological institutions were allowed to start their seminaries and even academies, under severe restrictions and the watch of the Religious affairs committee and KGB, Free Churches in the FSU had no opportunity until the 1990s to operate resident educational institutions.
restrictions. There was little possibility, if at all, to do serious research as the institutions were controlled and limited by the Communist governments.15

Theological Institutions strictly controlled – suspicious role of the ecumenical movement

The Communist takeover of 1948 had a profound effect also on theological education in Hungary. The Reformed Academies of Pápa and Sárospatak were suspended (1951). In Debrecen and Budapest, it was strictly controlled by the State Office for church affairs, e.g. in the appointment of faculty and in the selective way subjects were taught.16 Regrettably, the “ideological burden” causing “common distrust and suspicion” over and against the ecumenical movement has not been subject of critical historical analysis until today.17 In Poland, faculties of Catholic theology were banished from state universities, thus access to theological education became largely restricted to students of seminaries. The existing Catholic universities, such as the Papal Theological Academy in Kraków or the already mentioned Catholic University of Lublin, were strongly invigilated. Both teachers and students unwilling to co-operate with the regime faced persecution.18

Paradoxically, however, the difficult political situation led to an emancipation of the minority historical churches and an intensification of ecumenical interactions, as the Christian Theological Academy was established in Warsaw (1954).19

15 Many educators managed to immigrate. Alexander Schmemann writes: “The Revolution of 1917 meant a tragic – but thank God, not a total – interruption of that process. While in Russia itself a long and violent persecution began which made all theological work virtually impossible, a significant number of those, who took a leading part in the pre-Revolutionary ‘renaissance’ went into exile and were thus given two or three decades of freedom for creative work” – A. D. Schmemann, “Russian Theology: 1920-1972: An Introductory Survey,” St. Vladimir Theological Quarterly 16: 4 (1972).

16 For instance in the Ecumenical Studies course, taught Imre Kádár in 1960, John Mott was introduced only in relation to the YMCA, but that he was the motor behind the World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh 1910 was kept quiet. János Cziria, “Kádár Imre (1894-1972), a Református Egyház Szürke, De Nem Ignorálható Eminenciása,” in Ökumene 1960-64 között a budapesti Református Teológiai Akadémián (Budapest: Faculty of Theology of Károli Gáspár University, 2009). The course notes of 1980 by Ferenc Bajusz however do mention the Edinburgh conference: Ferenc Bajusz, “Az Ökumenikus Mozgalom Története És Mai Problémái: A Missziói Világkonferenciák, a ‘Life and Work’ És a ‘Faith and Order’ Mozgalom,” (Budapest: Reformed Theológiai Akadémia, 1980), 1-5.


18 For more see: Antoni Dudek, Ryszard Gryz, Komuniści i Kościół w Polsce. 1945-1989 (Znak, Poland 2006).

19 The Christian Theological Academy came into existence after the Faculty of Lutheran and Reformed Theology of the University of Warsaw was closed down by the Communist authorities. The Academy was established by the
Despite the Iron Curtain, foreign students from e.g. the Netherlands, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom, but also from Ethiopia and Angola studied in Budapest, and elsewhere, keeping as it were the windows to the world open.

Issues and challenges of that historical period were similar for all Christian churches: how to train, under restrictions and persecution, a new generation of ministers that would be able to equip the church to survive and to witness in her difficult situation. As the church had been moved from the centre of society to the margins, the possibilities of theological reflection and training needed to respond to this reality and to help priests, pastors and other ministers to lead their churches wisely in such circumstances were limited. Often governmental secret services had infiltrated church structures and it was challenging to maintain integrity, a high level of Christian ethics, and to establish the church as a place of trust for all those coming into its sphere, without being naive.

Both majority and minority churches, those who had in the past enjoyed the status of a state church as well as those that underlined separation of church and state, had to develop new ways to relate to a government that partially tolerated them, but constantly tried to minimize their influence on society and individuals, and especially on children and youth.20 Christian groups in the region had to answer the question which would by one way or another affect their future: where are the possibilities for compromise in the balancing act of maintaining integrity with the faith community while remaining as a member of the society? These issues and challenges created dangerous tensions for the church as different members responded and acted differently in their particular circumstances and betrayals, encouraged by secret services, were common.

After the collapse of the Communist system, even until today, many CEE churches deal with unresolved issues of members and leaders cooperating with the Communist government, with smouldering distrust because many things can neither be proved nor disproved, with guilt and feelings of shame, affecting all levels and areas of church life of any denomination. It will take a long time before churches will be able to recover from this trauma and it will also need theological institutions to address these issues through lectures, seminars and research work on this time period.

Theological Education and the Beginning of the Changing Europe

The late 1980s mark the beginning of sweeping changes for CEE theological institutions and faculties. It seems that the church in CEE as well as in the West was not prepared for such drastic changes. Historic churches were in a better position as they were able to build on existing institutions but found themselves in a situation where they had only a limited number of well trained theological educators, of whom many were older and shaped by the Communist past.21 But they were able to revive the training of a new generation of theologians and also to develop and reshape the theological education inside and outside of their countries. In some Central European countries, such as Romania (Bucharest) or Hungary (Budapest), institutions of Free Churches, such as the Baptists, were able in Communist times to maintain a small cohort of students.22 This became now a solid basis for theological training centres. But most colleges,
seminaries and theological faculties of the Free Churches were able to start their institutions only after the
collapse of the Warsaw Pact.

Some of the newly started institutions were formed by national churches and leaders, while many were
initiated by western evangelical para-church organizations. At the highpoint, over 100 theological
institutions of Free Churches were operating as a response to the urgent need for trained lay leaders who
would address the task given to the new generation after the changes.23 The search for meaning by many in
the society and the expectation at the early stage to find these answers in Christian churches resulted in an
overwhelming need for trained priests, pastors, teachers, and lay leaders. The almost unlimited possibilities
in which all Christian churches were experiencing total religious freedom created a variety of different
theological institutions in the region who enthusiastically threw themselves at the task. The enormous
number of people looking for a place to study theology led to the illusion of an unending need, which was
the reason for so many newly established institutions, especially in the evangelical tradition.24

Nostalgia and re-orientation

It was the time when expertise in operating meaningful theological education was needed and institutions
responded quite creatively.25 Many young women and men were sent to be trained in western institutions,
as was the custom in the early 20th century, especially in the Free Churches. A diverse and multifaceted
pool of educators appeared in local theological training. Like in the restrictive Communist past, some
priests and pastors continued to be involved.26 Some of the faculty in theological institutions consisted of
those who had in the past taught Communist philosophy or were trained to combat Christianity. But on the
side of national theological educators were also theology teachers from the West who offered their
expertise. Among evangelicals, many theological educators came as missionaries serving in training a new
generation and helping to overcome the gap. At least one more type can be found in various institutions:
those who try to negate the recent past and reconnect to the nostalgic past of the days before Communist
changes.27 This reality has not yet been overcome and so the worldviews of those who managed to survive
the time of persecution and restrictions are clashing with those who see new possibilities due to the
changes and call for new approaches, for a reformation of the church and its theological education.

Theological Education in Eastern and Central Europe
Most of the theological educators could continue their work. A strong tendency was present everywhere to re-establish educational institutions, including theological schools following the pattern existing before 1948. In Poland many state universities reactivated their formerly existing faculties of Catholic theology, others decided to create and include a faculty or chair of theology into their structure, and a significant number of new public and private Catholic colleges and universities were established. Seminaries which were suspended re-opened their doors. The main arguments used were related to the past. They continued their work in the buildings of the past, putting an enormous effort in reclaiming them even when the costs for refurbishing were significantly higher than erecting a new building. The past is related to issues of identity, and identity was in need of restoration after 40 years under Communist oppression. Gradually these historic institutions were officially recognized as of university level education, with state accreditation and the related financial support, requirements, expectations and conditions to be fulfilled. The pressure on these theological educators to teach significantly higher numbers of students than before, combined with the lack of experience in dealing with accreditation matters, and having to adapt to the Bologna system of higher education, left little time and energy to reflect on the curriculum for the perspectives of the changed context. Most theological institutions affiliated with historical churches acknowledge the need for transformation, and the need to become contextually relevant. The National Conference of the Faculties of Orthodox Theology in Romania is a good example to demonstrate the willingness of historical churches to realise a contextually relevant theological education. Next to these efforts, however, there are still views which see the role of theological education as one preserving the nation and propagating patriotism.

By the mid and end of the 1990s, some of those sent to western institutions for graduate and postgraduate studies returned, while a number of them decided to stay in the west, leaving their Soviet experience behind and enjoying an economically more stable life, usually for their family’s sake. Those who returned, partly together with western theological educators, sometimes became almost an antithesis to the generation which was trained in CEE countries. Different worldviews, different theological concepts, and different methods of teaching and learning collided. In some places in CEE, western and ‘eastern’ theologies are in serious tension, as the same denominational traditions have developed their theology to adapt to local community and context needs. It seems that contemporary theological institutions need to keep both in conversation, as this creative tension is helpful to develop a contextually relevant theology for Christians in the post-communist world. They need to be able to maintain continuity and build on the experience of the 20th century but at the same time to bring fresh views into theological training to be able to face present and future postmodern challenges.

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28 After the transition some centuries-old faculties of Catholic theology were reactivated e.g. at the University of Wrocław, University of Warsaw, University of Silesia, new theological faculties were established at the University of Toruń (1996), University of Szczecin (2004), University of Białystok, where eventually also a chair of Orthodox theology came into existence in 1999.
30 E.g. One of the resolutions of the Second National Conference, held in 2005, proposes the adaptation and harmonization of the curricula in such a way that ‘the educational process should answer both the contemporary needs of the church and the European structural reforms decided at Bologna’, Dragos Mirsanu, ‘The Romanian Orthodox Church Aspects of Religious Life in Romania’, Journal of Eastern Christian Studies 58 (2006), 105-124, 115.
31 See Ion Bria, Orthodox Theological Education: The Case of Romania (Geneva: WCC, 1993).
For some denominational traditions this creative tension is only dawning. The curriculum of most historic institutions reflect the standard theological curriculum characteristic of the Corpus Christianum or as a senior faculty member commented lately: “no changes took place since the 18th century.” As the churches were forced to live in a ghetto under Communism, and not to speak to relevant issues in society, in most cases the curriculum could be characterized as non-contextual. Mission was defined as equal to all regular church activities, like under Communism. A relevant paradigm for mission to the own Post-Communist context was non-existent. Burning issues in church and society like the deep prejudices to minorities as the Roma, at most resulted in adding an elective course, but not in structural changes. First steps toward a reforming of ministerial formation in Hungary were taken in 2000. The main reason was not the changed context, and the related issues which the curriculum should deal with, but the position of the pastor, characterized by Sándor Fazakas, rector of the Debrecen Reformed Theological University, as “institutionalized isolation”. The question was asked: “what should we do in the field of ministry formation, in order that the burden of the ‘institutionalized isolation’ in the world, in society and in the church would not weigh on the pastors of the future church.” As one of the indispensable criteria of ministerial formation as mentioned is the preparation to dialogue with secularized culture, apart from a shift from a pastor-centred to a team-centred approach and theological competencies.

The discussion is taken up in 2008, when Gábor Vladár, rector at the Reformed Theological Academy in Pápa, asks the pertinent question: “Are we aware that we prepare pastors for the Hungarian society of the 21st”, which is located in the community of the European people and is searching for its self-definition..., that we have to turn into such a missional community, which exactly can tell: in whom and in what we believe, and why we live that way? (Italics mine, AMK)” No explicit mention is made of challenges and issues related to a post-communist and post-Christianum context, but for the first time the need of a fundamental re-thinking of the mission of the church is mentioned in relation to ministerial formation. The explicit formulation of the expectations of the church towards ministerial formation vis-à-vis theological education as verbalized by Július Filó, former Bishop of the Lutheran Church in Slovakia, opens up the discussion on the current lack of clarity in many cases with regard to the relation between church and academia: in what sense should theological education as a formative discipline serve the church or as an academic discipline keep a critical distance?

The same concern for the proper education of the clergy can be observed in the case of the Orthodox Church in Romania. After the changes of 1989, Orthodox Theological Institutes in Romania doubled their numbers, yet one of the major challenges this numerical growth poses is the issue of spiritual formation of the students. As Dan Sandu, professor at the Orthodox Theological Faculty in Iasi puts it: ‘Given the

37 Ibid., 82.
40 In 2008 the annual report on Theological Education of the Romanian Patriarchy gives account of eleven theological faculties and four theological departments, www.patriarhia.ro (accessed 14/12/09).
large numbers of graduates of higher theological education, it is hard to distinguish the limit between the studies done to secure a rewarding clerical career and the genuine vocation for priesthood.´

Mission studies and ecumenical learning

Although the context of the churches in the Post-communist societies significantly changed, structural changes in the curricula hardly took place. However, several independent institutes for Mission Studies and Ecumenical Studies were founded. In Budapest, the predecessor of the Central and Eastern European Institute for Mission Studies (CIMS) was established in 1995 as an independent foundation by the Károli University and the Reformed and Lutheran Churches of Hungary. In 2006, it was incorporated in the Károli University. However no subsequent curriculum changes took place in the faculty of theology. In the same year, the Central European Centre for Mission Studies (SCMS) was established in Prague in cooperation with the Presbyterian Church of Korea as an ecumenical, Protestant, non-profit missiology organisation. Only in very few instances is missiology taught at the level of a Chair (Debrecen). This differs much from the situation at the Roman Catholic Faculties of Theology in Poland where missiology is more established. The field of ecumenical learning gives a mixed perspective. In Debrecen a slight modification was pursued in the curriculum as the Department of Ecumenical Studies was dissolved in 1991 as a reaction to the suspicious role of the ecumenical movement under communism. Instead a Department for Mission and Denominational Studies was established. In 1994, an Institute for Ecumenical Studies (IES) was founded in Prague to stimulate an ecumenical dialogue and facilitate ecumenical theological education. It took five years of church diplomacy to gain accreditation under the Protestant Theological Faculty in Prague. The Ecumenical dialogue website lists numerous churches and organisations.

In general, it can be stated that in CEE based theological institutions, Ecumenical Studies more often than not is taught in the spirit of an early working definition of ecumenical education dating from 1957 as “imparting knowledge about the history of the efforts for Christian unity or about the development and growth of the ecumenical movement.” Konrad Raiser emphasizes that it rather should aim at “nurturing

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42 Protestant Institute for Mission Studies Foundation.
43 The aim was to “promote the study of mission related issues and further missionary training, in order to support, strengthen and serve the Protestant churches, that the congregations are more effective witnesses of Jesus Christ in this pluriform world.”
44 Only one required course in Missiology is included in the five year MA program.
45 See www.missioncentre.eu.
46 In Warsaw at the Faculty of Theology of the CSWU, the Chair of History of Mission together with the Chair of Theology of Mission prepare specialists in theoretical and practical knowledge of the missionary activity of the church. The two year studies at the Postgraduate Missionary College also function in the same area of education. www.uksw.edu.pl/en/node/597.
50 Raiser, “The Future of Theological Education in Central and Eastern Europe: Challenges for Ecumenical Learning in the 21st Century.”, 57f. Stefan Tobler presents the results of a survey in Romania as to the contents of the subject ecumenism: “the course about Ecumenism meant that the professor handled a series of wrong teachings promoted by
understanding for (an) ... ecumenical process that embraces unity, mission and renewal of the churches, leading to active engagement and informed participation. It is the ultimate aim of the process to enable the churches to be truly church; realizing and living out the ecumenical commitment of one’s own church then becomes even more important than appropriating information about the growth of ecumenical consensus.”

Multiple networks

Multiple networks for theological education have been in place for decades or were newly established. They are more or less determined by language area and focus.

The Coetus Theologorum (Group of Theologians) is a network of Hungarian Reformed theological educators, which was established in 1939 with the purpose to bringing the Hungarian speaking Reformed theological research and education in line with each other and to deepen the cooperation between the faculties of theology. It was suspended during the communist time and resumed its work in 1990.

In 1994, a consultation was held in Oradea on “Theological Education and Leadership Development in Post-Communist Europe” under the title “Equipping for the Future”. It resulted in the Oradea Declaration, an excellent summary of the challenges for theological education in CEE, and a network mainly among the newly established evangelical theological schools in CEE. One of the key activities of this network has been to meet the needs of inexperienced theological educators by organising annually Institutes for Excellence in Global Theological Education.

In 1996, the SOMEF – Südostmitteleuropaeischer Fakultätenentag für Evangelische Theologie (the Conference of South-East-Central European Faculties for Evangelical Theology) was established by the University of Vienna with the purpose to serve the academic theological exchange between the ten participating Faculties and their members from Austria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania and Slovakia. It is a German speaking network.

Since 2002, the Kerk in Actie (Church in Action) program of what is now called the Protestant Churches in the Netherlands (PKN) annually organise consultations on theological education and practice with partners in Central and Eastern Europe with the main aim to “discuss the interaction between the

other churches and explained why the Orthodox Church cannot agree with them”, a student said. “We were taught how to defend the real truth in the controversy with the other churches”, she added. And this is not a singular case. There are often cases when during a whole semester the professor teaches about “the fight against sects and heresies” – to which particularly belong the neo-protestant churches. Tobler, “The Ecumenical Situation in Romania and the Ecumenical Research Institute in Sibiu.” Tobler gives an overview of which theological schools in Romania teach Ecumenics and in what way.

52 It not only consists of the Faculties of Theology of Debrecen, Budapest, Sárospatak and Pápa, all located in Hungary, but also the Hungarian speaking theological schools in Cluj (Kolozsvár), Romania, and Komárom (Slovakia). It meets once a year for a week, usually in the summer.
53 http://20yearsoffreedom.wordpress.com/2009/05/12/oradea-declaration-october-1994/. A Council for Eastern European Theological Education (CEETE) was established, now incorporated into two accrediting agencies, the EEAA and the EAAA, both linked to the ICETE.
55 http://somef.univie.ac.at/sitemap31/. The ten participating Faculties are located in Slovakia (Bratislava), Czech Republic (Prague), Hungary (Budapest (2), Debrecen, Pápa and Sárospatak) and Romania (Sibiu and Cluj) as well as Austria (Vienna). Every two years a conference is organized on a variety of themes. In 2005 they dealt with current issues in theological education, following the introduction of the Bologna Declaration. Bisschop Július Filó addressed the issue of the expectations of the church toward theological education from a mission perspective. Filó, “Er wartungen Der Kirche an Die Theologenausbildung.”
educational training in theological faculties and seminars on the one hand, and the reality of the practice in church and society on the other.”56

In the same year, the Central and Eastern European Association for Mission Studies was established as the CEE branch of the International Association for Mission Studies. It links theological educators in the field of mission studies and reflective practitioners in CEE. Regularly conferences are held, and, in 2008, a missiological journal *ACTA MISSIOLOGIAE* was established.57

Since 2008, the World Council of Churches’ Program for Ecumenical Theological Education established the Network for Ecumenical Learning in Central and Eastern Europe (NELCCE) located in Sibiu, Romania58 which focuses on the ecumenical challenges facing theological education in Central and Eastern Europe, flowing out of preceding consultations held since 2003. Other networks are more all European and denominational in character: among linking Baptist theological schools59 and Orthodox theological institutions60.

**Important challenges**

One particular issue needs to be raised as a problem of the post-Communist time, the issue of proselytism. It is remarkable that historical churches often understand proselytism as a sign of their shortcomings. Dan Sandu argues that in Romanian one could talk about a ‘highly preamble religious ground’ which in the absence of a proper Orthodox care welcomes the missionary activities of the so called neo-protestant churches. In this way in many places ‘besides century-old churches or monasteries there is at least one new house of prayer of the main Neo-Protestant denominations, which raises serious questions about the effectiveness of Orthodox mission and religious education.’61 The best place to deal with this issue seems to be in theological institutions of both historical and Free Churches. Much has been published and discussed at different platforms but issues are not resolved and the discussion needs to continue. It seems that in order to fully handle the issue, one needs to address the past before Communism, where issues of religious persecution needs to be dealt with. Issues of the Communist past and what it did to church and society need also be taken into this discussion. But it is especially important to define together what proselytism means. The joint discussion through different forums and published literature will help to get to know each other and the God given role for each tradition in the region. In the last decade many promising developments on this issue can be noticed, thanks to different educators in theological institutions who were able to widen their own and their students’ worldviews. The discussion inside of different faculties with a different experience will help to shape a better understanding and respect for other church traditions.62

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56 The network consists of a variety of institutes for theological formal and non-formal education, ministries and churches.
57 See www.ceeams.org.
59 Consortium of European Baptist Theological Schools (CEBTS).
60 European Forum of Orthodox Schools of Theology EFOST and the Association of Religion and Theology Educators in Eastern and Central Europe ARTEE.
Another important topic since the time of the changes in CEE is the role of women in ministry. Obviously it is not an easy topic for the Orthodox and Roman Catholic churches, while a number of mainline Protestant groups in CEE have quickly adapted to western views and with this shortened the discussion in their region. But, similar to the Orthodox and Catholics, most Free Churches struggle with the role of women in the church. At the same time, one finds many well-trained women in the region. The spectrum of views on women in ministry is wide and some views still depend on the ecclesiology of the Free Churches formed during the time of non-profit organizations of the late 18th and 19th century. A careful study of Biblical and church historical material will help to find ways to appropriately understand the role of women for the present church. Theological institutions and church leaders together need to open up this dialogue to form a new generation of leaders for the churches, by discovering gifts, callings and ministerial needs given by the biblical text and the present context of the church.

**Theological Education at Present: Challenges and Opportunities**

Twenty years after the fall of the Berlin Wall, a new paradigm in theological education is emerging in the region of CEE in most of the newly established theological institutions. The time of pioneering visions and visionaries in theological education seems to be over as theological institutions face new realities. One of the realities is that there is no urgent need any more for so many theological institutions in the region, especially those from a Free Church but also of other church traditions. Some of this has to do with the reality that during the last 20 years many of the older generation, which previously had no access to theological training, as well as some of the present generation, have been trained meanwhile. What adds to a decreasing need is that not as many new parishes and churches have been established as was hoped for in the early 1990s. Most churches and parishes, especially in Central Europe, have trained priests or pastors meanwhile which will probably remain in ministry for the next ten or more years and will not need to be replaced. This lowers the need for more theologically trained people because at the same time the number of new established parishes and churches is diminishing. The demographical statistics show that the actual total of young people has also dropped in many CEE countries and all higher institutions admit lower numbers of incoming students in general.

The result is that many theological institutions in the region have only a small numbers of residential students, in a form of theological education which has a long tradition and was preferred in the early and mid-1990s. The changes in CEE and opportunities for development and earning a good living in the region have attracted many young people to go into non-theological studies, as often the uncertainty over a paid ministry position becomes difficult to reckon with, especially in Free Church traditions. As a result, many training institutions have to re-focus and consider offering part-time studies. The great advantage of part-time studies is that most students can remain in their secular jobs or continue their positions as a priest or a pastor while being able to engage in theological education. Overall, the financial condition of pastors and

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63 Interestingly, the number of female theological students in Poland is steadily increasing and women now amount to 60%, whereas in 1989 they constituted only 35% of all students (Łukasz Jaksik. *Specjaliści od Pana Boga*. In: *Niedziela* 39/2009.)


65 This has been confirmed from different countries of Central Europe, such as Romania, Czech Republic, Poland as well as from most countries in the former Soviet Union.

priests has stabilized in some places, while in others places some have to earn money and work beside the parish ministry in order to be able to feed their families.67

*A new paradigm?!*  
Among the historic theological institutions with their rich heritage in Biblical Studies, Church History and Dogmatics, it seems that fundamental changes have taken place only in the margins. Courses focusing on current contextual issues like Mission Studies, Ecumenical Learning and World Christianity are only incidental, and even then taught in a very limited form. Renewal in theological education has more taken place in terms of accrediting structures and requirements than in terms of transforming its curriculum into one that is both contextually relevant and biblically and theologically grounded, in a creative tension with both context and text.

In that sense there is a significant difference with the newly established theological schools which seem to focus more on current contextual challenges and empowering and informing Christian Mission. One might ask for the reasons behind this observation. Why did significant changes not take place? Is it related to a certain resistance within the churches to accept the transition from a *Corpus Christianum* to a *Post-Christianum* situation?68 Is it related to the requirements and the implicit or explicit limitations of the accrediting agency: state, church or an independent association? Is it fear for change in general? Or fear for letting go of power? Or is it related to uncertainty in national identity and to the often so closely related religious/church identity?69

Theological faculties at many places have been able to train and recruit new and younger teaching personnel, so that often there is no urgent need for more well-trained women and men in theological institutions, and this has also an impact on the new student numbers.70 A notable exception to the general trend would be Poland, where the number of theological students has quadrupled since 1989, owing also to an exceptionally high demand for teachers of religion in public schools.71 Some of the self-trained educators and a number of older faculty members, often with pastoral background, have left theological institutions to provide space for the mostly well-trained new generation which, however, has little church or parish experience. Some of the visionaries who initiated theological institutions twenty years ago have also left and, with this, the young team works without mentors and models. Such situations will definitely have an impact on students presently trained for ministry who are educated by persons scholarly well prepared but distanced from their church communities.72 In Poland, church authorities have responded to the growing interest in theological studies by establishing new Catholic universities and colleges. Many of them are led and financed wholly by church orders, which is a recent phenomenon marking the beginning of a new trend within the Polish theological education.73

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70 There is still a need for theologically trained women and men in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, especially on a postgraduate level. At the same time the overall need for faculty is dropping so that some have to leave their institutions to find work in a church or in a business or earn additional money as a taxi driver.

71 The concordat ratified between Poland and the Apostolic See guarantees access to religious education (Catholic) for elementary and high school students, thus religion lessons are part of the curriculum in all public schools.

72 Impressions from conversations with CEE theological educators at the International Association of Evangelical Theological Education in Sopron Hungary (5-9 October 2009).

73 One of the largest Catholic universities in Poland, the Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński Catholic University of Warsaw was established in 1999, so was the Higher School of Philosophy ‘Ignatianum’ in Kraków led by the Jesuits.
Towards a new parochialism?

Twenty years after the Berlin Wall came down, it seems that new walls are preventing open interaction and learning in some of the historic church related theological institutions. The glorious past and the challenges of meeting the ever changing requirements of the national system for higher education and the increasing financial pressures because of dropping student numbers leave hardly any energy to focus on re-thinking the curriculum from a contextual perspective.74 Added to the struggles related to the post-communist past in a number of CEE countries, this leads to a more and more inward looking attitude. According to the European Value Studies 2008 this is definitely true for Hungary.75 It is undoubtedly a reaction to strong globalizing tendencies. The uncertainty of the future also results in a reverse in ecumenical attitude. The ecumenical openness of the time of John Mott’s visit to Hungary in 1909 seems to be limited to certain levels of the church. Attempts to introduce ecumenical learning do not adequately take into consideration factors of resistance related to the unclear role of the ecumenical movement in the communist era.

There is also a growing isolation due to the fact of constantly being exposed to models from the West ("West is the best"), which confronts one constantly with the gap of the long way still to go. The almost complete lack of interaction with theological schools from the majority world prevents alternative, more realistic models to be applied. As there are lively relations between East and West, as well as between West and South, links should be strengthened between East and South. The spiritual vitality of non-western churches and their theological schools could give a new impulse to the stalemate situation which often can be observed at present.

Another missing element in theological education in CEE, adding to the growing isolation, is that most of the theological educators from the international community who in the 1990s primarily came from the West have left the recently established institutions or those institutions that needed their help in the early years after the fall of Communism. While the theological debates and conflicts over issues which they brought remain, their voice which helped to widen views of theological faculties and students is missing at a time and in a world where so much happens in the interaction between the local and the global. With their absence, also some aspects of the mission and vision for theological education and an interaction of churches of different theological traditions have been partly lost.76 In order to regain these, theological institutions and faculties should proactively invite international faculty and offer space for genuine international student exchanges, which were so much a characteristic of the past and which are now possible for many within the framework of the Erasmus and the Erasmus Mundi Programs, facilitating the Bologna Agreement. It is important to widen the horizon through the invited international faculty and students but keeping in mind not only the West, but also the majority world. With the absence of a western missionary-faculty, also the financial help from Western Europe and North America has dropped drastically and to make a living has become a great challenge for many institutions.

Resources and publications

An issue that still reflects the realities of post-Communism is the lack of national publications and its accessibility to many CEE countries. Some Ph.D. dissertations and a number of other books have been published in the last ten years. Journal articles coming from the CEE have improved and a number of new journals have been initiated of which only a few have survived beyond a limited number of issues. But there is hope that much more will be published by national authors in the coming decades, particularly in

Bobolanum
74 Dropping student numbers in many cases directly affect state support, which is a support per capita.
75 http://forsense.hu/content/Pressrelease.pdf.
contextual and historical theology areas. More can be done, similar as in the majority world, if faculty members would not be too involved and torn apart by the variety of projects devolved on too few capable people. Some trivial, but also some solid materials have been published until now, written by national authors or translated primarily from the Anglo-American context.77

Although more and more is published related to church, society and mission in CEE, it seems that the academic interaction is more and more limited to ones own linguistic network. German and English networks in CEE hardly seem to communicate, sometimes seem not even to know about each other’s existence. Linguistic barriers, limited or no access to (electronic) journals, difficulties in distribution of publications results in the paradoxical situation that the academic discussions on real issues of church and society in CEE take place more outside CEE than within the region.

Fragmentation and pluralization

The high number of theological schools in CEE and the great number of networks for theological education are an indication for the fragmentation of the landscape of theological education and the related duplication of efforts. One of the strategies of the communist authorities was the old principle of divide et impera, the effects of which are still felt today. Cooperation and partnership are hindered by a high level of mistrust, and many unresolved issues of the past. The danger of “structural apartheid” is very vivid.78 The need for a Regional Forum for theological education beyond the ecumenical movement, taking the reconfiguration of the ecumenical movement seriously is of crucial importance.79 Dialogue on major goals and common cooperation in theological education are needed “more urgently now then ever before, lest isolation and fragmentation overcome the churches and the responsibility for promoting and supporting theological education is neglected.”80 It includes also the promise and possibility of mutual learning and reinvigorating each other.

Creative alternative theological training for the third millennium is what is still in the making, as the different church traditions – mostly independently – respond to the present challenges in CEE. While preparing for future changes, influenced by issues such as demographics, new religious movements, church leaving, opportunities and threats of postmodernism, many churches and parishes will need to deal with issues of lay ministry and serious adult lay training. Vocational training, life-long learning programs and e-learning have been occasionally used and developed in the region. Some CEE theological institutions are more open than their western European colleagues to pick up creative alternative ways, because in the last decades they have constantly been in the process of creatively adapting theological training to rapidly changing realities. With the present difficulties of resident theological institutions, new approaches will be taken more seriously in order to equip people serving their communities, their societies and, in all of this, being part of the mission of God.81

77 Also a number of publishing houses have been started which have been involved both in translating theological literature as well as in supporting national authors. Langham Partners has been one of the helpful organisations for evangelicals in the region. A few publications of this kind have been used in this article.
79 Ibid., 82.
80 Ibid., 83.
81 See part on: “So Many Models for Theological Education” (225-228), in the article written by Walter Sawatsky, “Educators for Mission and the Western Missionaries,” in Theological Education as Mission, ed. Peter F. Penner (Schwarzenfeld: Neufeld Verlag, 2005).
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THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION IN BALTIC CHURCHES

Riho Altnurme

Three Baltic republics emerged only during World War I. Until then, we can only speak about the territory of Baltic states under the Russian Empire, which had some cultural continuity for the local nationalities – later to establish themselves as independent nation-states. The same cultural continuity was the basis on which the national churches were formed in the Baltics beforehand. We can also trace some continuities for the influence of predecessors in the study of theology – which in the case of Estonia and Latvia, had been predominantly a Baltic-German tradition of Protestant Theology, and in the case of Lithuania a Roman-Catholic Theology, much influenced by the close connection with Poland and Polish culture. Of course, there are also some institutions of Roman Catholic theological education in Latvia and some institutions of Orthodox education in all of the Baltic territories (later states). The picture is quite mixed. One can separate as major trends a Protestant tradition (primarily Lutheran, in Estonia and Latvia), a Roman Catholic tradition (mostly in Lithuania), and an Orthodox tradition.

The most enduring centre of theological education in the Protestant tradition is the Faculty of Theology at the University of Tartu in Estonia.

Faculty of Theology at the University of Tartu

Since its establishment in 1632, the University of Tartu (UT) has included a Faculty of Theology. It was one of the four original faculties. Under Swedish governance, the faculty was modelled on the Faculty of Theology of Uppsala University. Pursuant to the university’s by-laws, the theological orientation of the university and its Faculty of Theology was to fit into the frame of Lutheran orthodoxy. Theologians of the UT had scientific connections with the key Protestant universities of Europe.

In the beginning of the 19th century, the university was reopened in order to keep students away from the West European universities, which were poisoned, as it was believed by authorities, by the ideas of the French Revolution. In the German-language Faculty of Theology of the UT (1802–1918), pastors were trained for Lutheran churches all across Russia. Here, the first generation of ethnic Estonian theologians also received their education. First the professorship was quite rationalist, dividing itself also from the mass of parish members. In the early 1820s, the Faculty of Theology was reformed in the spirit of Pietism. In the 1840s, Lutheran churches in rural Estonia and Livonia experienced a crisis caused by the spread of the Moravian Brethren movement and the conversion campaign of the Russian Orthodox Church. The churches found support from the Faculty of Theology in Tartu. Particularly distinguished in this

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The historical account is mostly based on the encyclopaedic overview of the history of Faculty by Tarmo Kulmar, Urmas Petti and Alar Laats, About the History of Theology in Estonia, www.ut.ee/35867 (accessed 3.12.09).

Bibliography about the 19th century Faculty can one find: Urmas Petti, “Kakssada aastat Tartu ülikooli usuteaduskonda” [200 years of the Faculty of Theology of the University of Tartu], in: Mille anni sicut dies hesterna: Studia in honorem Kalle Kasemaa, ed. Marju Lepajõe, Andres Gross (Tartu: Tartu Ülikooli kirjastus, 2003), 290–299. Also an interesting coherent treatment of several theologians in Tartu then is by Thomas-Andreas Pöder, “Jeesus Kristus kui Jumalinimene. Kristluse alus ja kese 19. sajandi Tartu teoloogide mõtlemises” [Jesus Christ as the Godman: The Foundation and the Centre of Christianity in the Thought of the 19th century Tartu Theologians]– a long article through Akadeemia 1 (207-231), 2 (421-447), 3 (653-671) 2005.
respect must be the dogmatic Friedrich Adolph Philippi (in Tartu in 1841–51) and the practical theologian Theodosius Andreas Harnack (in Tartu in 1847–53 and 1866–75), who were remarkable representatives of Lutheran confessionalism on a European scale.

In the second half of the 19th century, Tartu was the place of study for several scholars who later won pan-European acclaim, such as Nathanael Bonwetsch, Reinhold Karl Gustav Adolf Seeberg, and Adolf Harnack. Alexander Konstantin von Oettingen has to be mentioned as a scholar of local descent who won fame in Europe for his *Moralstatistik* (1868).

In 1916, thanks to the First World War, the faculty was decreed to transfer to Russian as the language of instruction. The professors resigned in protest, and the faculty dissolved itself. It resumed operation briefly under German occupation in the autumn of 1918. Following the opening of the Estonian-language University in 1919, a few German professors accepted positions at its Faculty of Theology, thereby ensuring a degree of continuity. The faculty remained the only place for the Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church (EELC) to prepare its pastors. There was also a chair for the orthodox faith, in order to help to prepare Orthodox priests. In fact, the chair only had five graduates. Still, the fact of the friendly co-existence of the orthodox chair inside the theological faculty (1924-1940) helped to improve the ecumenical atmosphere in the relations between two major churches in Estonia. Two bishops came from the professorship of the faculty – Hugo Bernhard Rahamägi (bishop in 1934-39) and Johan Köpp (bishop in 1939-44), also an archbishop in exile. One of perhaps the most important representatives of Estonian theology in the 20th century has been Uku Masing with his works on the Old Testament, Semitic languages, and comparative theology. He studied in the faculty and also taught for a while in the 1930s.

After being closed during the Soviet period from 1940 onwards (in German occupation 1941-44 restored as an Institute of Theology in Tartu, officially subordinated to the rule of the bishop of the Lutheran church), the Faculty of Theology was re-opened only in 1991. It was re-established as an interconfessional faculty, on the Lutheran basis. The former dean of the EELC Institute of Theology (see the next chapter), professor Kalle Kasemaa, started as the first dean (1991-1996) of the re-established faculty. Still the staff was not formed only from the Lutherans, there were from the beginning also Baptists included. At the beginning of the new millennium, the formulation “evangelical” was written into the rule of the faculty. It followed the German division of faculties of theology – Evangelical or Catholic. In 2007, a more precise definition was given describing the faculty as dealing with theology and religious studies, referring to the tradition of Protestant theology, not excluding other theologies.

The re-opened Faculty of Theology is non-denominational and offers the opportunity for study to people from all religious backgrounds and even to those who have no connection with the churches. The faculty has tried to restore the Orthodox chair. It has been successful to the extent that the visiting professor has taught Orthodox theology in the years between 2005 and 2009. The theology of the Roman Catholic Church has been introduced by some visiting professors as well. The faculty is connected with churches (EELC, Estonian Apostolic-Orthodox Church, Evangelical Christians and Baptists, also the ecumenical organisation Estonian Council of Churches) by several agreements. The purpose of the agreements is to

1157 More about the faculty in Estonian Republic can be found e.g. in: Riho Altnurme, “Olaf Sild Tartu ülikooli usuteaduskonnas” [Olaf Sild in the Faculty of Theology of the University of Tartu], in: *Mille anni sicut dies hesterna: Studia in honorem Kalle Kasemaa*, ed. Marju Lepajõe, Andres Gross (Tartu: Tartu Ülikooli kirjastus, 2003), 300-313.


1159 *Usuteaduskonna põhimäärus 2007* [Statutes of the Faculty of Theology 2007], www.us.ut.ee/29748 (accessed 11.10.07).
maintain the quality of theological education, also by the cooperation between the faculty and private universities belonging to the churches.\textsuperscript{1160}

There are two fields of study in the Faculty of Theology of UT: Theology and Religious Anthropology. Theology can be studied at the Bachelor’s, Master’s and Doctoral degree levels, whereas Religious Anthropology can be studied, in full-time study as well as in the Open University (distance courses), at the Master’s level. The specialisation in religious anthropology is also available at the level of Doctoral studies. While the studies of Theology follow the Christian (Protestant) paradigm, the primary interest of Religious Anthropology is the religiousness of a human being. Both fields may prove interesting irrespective of the student’s confession or the lack of it. In the Master’s programme in Theology, one can specialize in the field of religious pedagogy. In the years 1991-2009, 23 doctoral dissertations have been successfully defended in the Faculty. The scholars from the Faculty are participating in several international cooperation projects.\textsuperscript{1161}

**Other Estonian Protestant Institutions for Theological Education**

However, the Lutherans and the Orthodox are not the only ones with their own educational institutions in Estonia. The Estonian Seminary for Baptist Preachers was established in Keila in 1922. The seminary operated in Tallinn from 1931 to 1940 under the name of the Estonian Baptist Theological Seminary. In addition to professional preparation, the seminary also provided secondary education.\textsuperscript{1162} The Adventists ran the Estonian Theological School of Seventh-Day Adventists from 1935 to 1940.\textsuperscript{1163} National grounds were the reason for establishing Lutherakademie (1931-1939) by some Baltic German Lutheran scholars to balance the Estonianized Faculty of Theology at the University of Tartu. It was not a particularly successful enterprise.\textsuperscript{1164}

Developments in the field of theological education were virtually impossible during the Soviet period, but the restoration of independence opened many new possibilities in this field. The re-opening of the Faculty of Theology at the University of Tartu did not mean the liquidation of the Theological Institute of the Lutheran Church (which was established 1946 in order somehow to replace the Faculty). The initially semi-legal Institute of Theology – operating under the name “Higher Theological Examination Committee” until 1967 – maintained the continuity of higher theological education throughout the Soviet era.\textsuperscript{1165}

The assistant pastors of the Lutheran church, who had not received a higher education diploma, were now given opportunities to fast-track their studies. However, certain adjustments were required and the Institute of Theology started to specialise in providing professional qualifications for people working in congregations, but also continued to provide higher education in Theology. The churches were uncertain about the consequences of these educational reforms, and were concerned about the fact that many

\textsuperscript{1160} Faculty of Theology at the University of Tartu. Introduction www.us.ut.ee/37397 (accessed 6.12.09).

\textsuperscript{1161} Faculty of Theology 6.12.2009.


graduates from the Faculty of Theology did not go on to work in a church.\textsuperscript{1166} From 2001, the Institute of Theology is listed as one of the four private universities in Estonia.

During the period of relief after Stalin’s death, the Estonian Union of Evangelical Christians-Baptists was able to restore the provision of their theological education, albeit only in the form of Theology courses that lasted from 1956 to 1960.\textsuperscript{1167} On 16\textsuperscript{th} October, 1989, the Baptists reopened their seminary in Tallinn as an institution of higher education and under a new name – Higher Theological Seminary. After a year it was decided that the seminary would be relocated to the premises of the Calvary Baptist Church in Tartu. In 1994, the seminary moved to its own building at Räpina road on the edge of Tartu.\textsuperscript{1168}

The changes and adjustments in the Lutheran Institute of Theology also led to creation of a new institution of theological education, the Tartu Academy of Theology, opened in 1992. Eenok Haamer, the founder and Rector of the Academy, emphasises that the academy focuses on the intellectual heritage of the Estonian people and on ecumenical education. In addition to the preparation of ministers, the academy provides study programmes in pastoral care, Christian media, Christian youth work, and religious education. In 2008, the Academy awarded its first Masters degree in Applied Theology.\textsuperscript{1169} In 2009, the Ministry of Education questioned the quality of education at the academy and the state’s recognition of the institute’s M.A. degrees is currently being reviewed.

The Baltic Methodist Theological Seminary was founded in 1994, and was modelled on the Asbury Theological Seminary in the United States. Wes Griffin and his wife were sent by the United Methodist Church to provide assistance at the founding of the seminary, and Andrus Norak served for a long time as the Rector of the seminary. A specific trait of the Baltic Methodist Theological Seminary is that it provides education in the Estonian, English, and Russian languages. Russian is the native language of nearly one third of the students. The seminary is a centre of education for the entire region, with students coming from Latvia, Ukraine, and Belarus. The seminary also educates students who are not Methodists and, similarly, the academic staff includes representatives of various denominations.\textsuperscript{1170}

The three latter schools all provide applied higher education, after which the graduates may choose between either a professional career or a continuation of studies in a Masters degree programme. However, only the Tartu Academy of Theology offers its own Masters degree programme in Applied Theology from 2007 onwards. The Faculty of Theology and the Methodist Seminary provide full-time education, while the organisation of studies in other institutions is based on study sessions. The Bible School of the Estonian Christian Pentecostal Church operated from 1992 to 2005. It was not an institution of higher education. The Bible School was founded by Harry Leesment and it was managed for a long time by Urve Heiter.\textsuperscript{1171}

There were plans, in 2005, to merge the educational institutions of denominations due to a small number of students in private institutions of theological education.\textsuperscript{1172}

\textsuperscript{1166} According to Triin Vavilov, 45 percent of theology students who graduated between 1995 and 2001 entered careers in the fields related to the churches. – Triin Vavilov, \textit{Tartu Ülikooli usuteaduskond aastail 1991–2001}. Bachelor’s thesis, manuscript at the Faculty of Theology at the UT (Tartu, 2005).
\textsuperscript{1167} Toivo Pilli, \textit{Dance or Die: The Shaping of Estonian Baptist Identity under Communism} (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2008), 42-44.
\textsuperscript{1169} Tartu Teoloogia Akadeemia – meie www.teoloogia.ee/tta/meie.php (accessed 31.3.09).
\textsuperscript{1170} \textit{EMKTS ajalugu} www.emkts.ee/index.php?option=com_content&amp;task=view&amp;id=17&amp;Itemid=39 (accessed 31.3.09).
\textsuperscript{1172} \textit{Eesti oikumeenia lugu} [History of Estonian Ecumeny]. Ed. By Riho Altnurme (Tartu-Tallinn: Eesti Kirikut Nõukogu, 2009), 212. An English version of this lengthy collective monograph is to be published on 2009 as well.
Latvian and Lithuanian Protestant Institutions for Theological Education

The Theological Faculty at the University of Latvia was established in 1920. Until then, pastors for the Latvian territory were trained at the University of Tartu. The Faculty was closely connected with the Lutheran church, although according to official documents, the Faculty had to be non-confessional. In 1937, the Department for Orthodox Theology was opened. In 1938, a new Faculty of Theology – this time for Roman Catholic theology – was established. In 1940, the Soviet authorities closed down both faculties.

In 1969, unofficial courses for candidate pastors were started, which were reorganized by the Lutheran seminary in 1976. This establishment served as a basis for reopening the Faculty of Theology after the political changes in 1990. The reopening was initiated by Lutheran pastors, who were also among the new teachers. There were also many teachers returning from the West. The grounds for the later conflict may be seen in the different backgrounds of those two camps in their teaching staff. Janis Vanags, former docent of Old Testament at the faculty, became an archbishop in 1993 and decided not to ordain any more women. The Dean of the Faculty from 1994, Vilis Vārsbergs (who had returned from USA), took a strong position against this move. In 1997, the Lutheran Church established its own institution for education – the Lutheran Academy. This institution did not recognize the courses of systematic and practical theology, which were taken from the faculty. The faculty itself could not later recognize the courses taken from the academy, as this school did not seek state recognition and the co-operation between them has slowly faded. In 1998, the faculty was declared ecumenical. It felt that the Catholic Faculty should not be re-opened, as the university already had an open, ecumenical Faculty of Theology. The faculty became known as “liberal” in church circles – mostly because of the question of the ordination of women. This constrained attempts at co-operation with other churches.

The new Dean from 1999, Juris Cālītis (who had returned from Canada), was excommunicated from the Lutheran church in 2006 because of his support for the rights of homosexuals. This did not help to improve relations with the Lutheran Church.

Today the Faculty of Theology at the University of Latvia has students and teachers from different confessional backgrounds, and even those without confession. The tensions between conservative and liberal understandings are still being felt inside the faculty.1173

In Lithuania, Klaipeda University (established in 1991) has a small unit for Protestant Theology – there is a Theology department under the Faculty of Humanities. It has given space to the Reformed and Lutheran theologians. The department has been developed from the Center for Evangelical Theology (established 1992). It has a teaching staff of six, being smaller than the other faculties or church institutes in Estonia or Latvia. The department teaches a Bachelor programme in Theology. Its student body is ecumenical.1174

Roman Catholic Theological Education in Lithuania and Latvia

The Academy of Vilnius, later known as University, was founded in 1579 by Jesuits. This university was also famous for its theological school. The university was closed from 1832-1919,1175 later to remain under Polish authority until the Second World War. After the restoration of Lithuanian independence, the Faculty of Theology was not re-established; only the Centre for Religious Studies remains in the university.

The Lithuanian government established the University of Lithuania in Kaunas in 1922. \(^{1176}\) The Faculty of Theology and Philosophy at the University of Lithuania in Kaunas was established on April 12th, 1922. The Vatican Congregation for Seminaries and Educational Institutions canonically approved the faculty in 1928 and gave the right to award degrees in Theology and Philosophy, as well as other privileges commonly granted to analogical institutions subordinate to the Apostolic See. In 1930, the university took the name of Vytautas Magnus – Lithuanian Grand Duke (Lith.: Vytautas Didysis).

The Faculty of Theology and Philosophy as part of Vytautas Magnus University functioned until 1940, when the Soviet Union occupied Lithuania. After this, the faculty was separated from the university and with the consent of the above-mentioned Vatican Congregation, it was moved to Kaunas Interdiocesan Priests Seminary, and became independent, under the jurisdiction of the Great Chancellor and ordinary bishops of Lithuania. As there was a lack of qualified teaching staff of philosophy, in 1953 the faculty was re-organized into the Faculty of Theology.

In 1989, Vytautas Magnus University was re-established. In 1990 the university senate re-established the Faculty of Theology and Philosophy, a resolution approved by the Lithuanian Bishops’ Conference. Four years later, at the Vatican’s suggestion, the Faculty of Theology and Philosophy at Vytautas Magnus University and Kaunas Faculty of Theology at Kaunas Interdiocesan Priest Seminary were integrated into a single Faculty of Catholic Theology at Vytautas Magnus University.

The institution has developed even further. In 1995, St. Anthony College in Kretinga was incorporated into the Faculty. In 1999, a department of the Faculty of Catholic Theology was established in the diocese of Vilkaviškis, as were the centres of Catholic Pedagogy and the Church Law (the latter for Masters degrees only). The former centre was later re-organized into the Centre of Religious Studies, offering the possibilities of a four year or prolonged six year undergraduate study programme for the qualification of a teacher of religion. A doctoral programme was started in 1998.

This is not the only Catholic higher education institution in Lithuania. The Department of Catholic Doctrine, within the Faculty of History in Vilnius Pedagogical University, was established 1993. The graduates acquire the Bachelor’s degree in Religious Studies. The Department of Catechetics within the Faculty of Pedagogy in Klaipėda University was founded 1995. The Bachelor’s programme of Educology and Teaching of Religion and the Masters programme in Religious Studies (since 1998) are offered, as is specialisation in Catechetics (since 2003).\(^{1177}\)

In Latvia, the Roman Catholic Seminary in Riga served the whole of the former Soviet Union. The Soviet regime had attempted to destabilize Roman Catholic congregations outside Latvia and Lithuania by preventing the training of new clergy. Under pressure, the authorities relented and allowed a trickle of seminarians from outside Latvia, but as punishment they confiscated almost half of the seminary’s rooms. The church skimped and struggled, but did not change its policy. By 1978, the expropriated space was returned, and three years later permission was granted for the construction of a new seminary. Thereafter, seminarian numbers increased rapidly from 18 in 1980, to 107 in 1989. Most of the students were non-Latvians recruited for service from other areas of the Soviet Union. After the political change, the Roman Catholics acquired a modern seminary, but they had problems recruiting able scholars and teachers as well as students. Most Roman Catholic seminarians from outside Latvia have returned to their respective republics, and new seminarians are being trained locally.\(^{1178}\)
Orthodox Theological Education in Baltic States

Until 1918, the Riga Orthodox Seminary served both Estonian and Latvian territories, providing them not only with Orthodox priests, but also many cultural and political activists, especially in the case of Estonia (President Konstantin Päts was a graduate). The seminary was re-established in 1994.

Although there was a Chair of Orthodox Theology at the University of Tartu, the Estonian Orthodox Church also established also a seminary (operated at the Monastery of Pechory from 1933-1940).

Before the Second World War, there was no Orthodox theological seminary on Lithuanian territory. In the Soviet Union, it was customary to ordain priests without seminary education. In Lithuania, where a Catholic culture operated in which ordination was possible only after theological studies, the dearth in knowledge exhibited by the Orthodox priests was particularly noticeable. Nevertheless, given the circumstances prevailing in the Soviet Union, the situation was comparably better in Lithuania. Whereas in the inter-war period there were no theological seminaries in the Soviet Union, and only half of the priests had acquired theological education, in the Lithuanian Eparchy 72% of the Orthodox priests were graduates of theological institutions of education, and a number of them were studying at seminaries and academies. In October, 1946, the Orthodox Theological Seminary started functioning in Vilnius. It was closed under pressure from the Council of Ministers of the Lithuanian SSR in September, 1947. After the political changes, the Estonian Apostolic-Orthodox Church opened the St. Platon Seminary, in 2001, to provide Orthodox Church workers with doctrinal knowledge. It is not an institution of higher education.

In Latvia, a private higher education institution, the Latvian Christian Academy, was established in 1993. Although the school began using the names “Lutheran Deaconal Institute” or “Latvian Evangelic Lutheran Christian Academy” the “basic resources for theological activities were found in Orthodox Church heritage”. The academy has two Bachelor programmes – Theology and Bible Art – and a Masters programme in Theology. There are also two applied higher education programmes – Social Charity Work and Public Relations. Although there is a discernible emphasis on Orthodox theology, the academy welcomes students from all Christian denominations.

About the Cooperation

From the point of view of the University of Tartu, today, there is a remarkable amount of cooperation within the theological institutions that seems to grow. Although Tartu lacks the contact with Kaunas, all other larger institutions (Protestant or Orthodox) have had some kind of co-operation with Tartu. Especially close is the co-operation within Estonia itself, but Estonian scholars also have the opportunity of joint projects with the Latvian institutions, especially in the field of Doctoral studies, where Tartu has provided help in organizing their own Doctoral study programme (in case of the University of Latvia) or places for Doctoral studies also for students from Latvia. Klaipeda has been also active in networks or conferences concerning Protestant theology and church history. Still, differences in the confessional

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1180 Eesti oikumeenia lugu, 22.
1182 E-mail from Andrei Sõtšov to Riho Altnurme, 1.4.2009.
1184 Religious Education in Latvia. Manuscript, sent by e-mail from Skaidrite Gutmane, the Rector of Latvian Christian Academy, to Riho Altnurme (accessed 19.11.09).

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backgrounds of Protestant and Catholic faculties have resulted in their continued participation in different networks.

Bibliography
Protestant Theology as a European Phenomenon

The origins and development of Protestant theology are inseparably bound up with the history of Europe. The Reformations of Luther, Zwingli and Calvin were European events, which as such extended their influence all over the world. As a deeper reflection on the gospel, Protestant theology sparked off the Reformation of the sixteenth century and then made a normative contribution to the history of Christianity – not just of Protestantism. Until far into the twentieth century all the decisive paradigm changes of Protestant theology also took place in Europe. Even in the future, those who are concerned with Protestant theology in Asia, Africa or America will not be able to pass over authors such as Friedrich Schleiermacher, Karl Barth, Rudolf Bultmann, Dietrich Bonhoeffer or Paul Tillich. The building of the transcontinental bridge of a European concept of theology can be made clear especially through Tillich.

Of course, the forms of Protestant theology have meanwhile developed their own dynamic on other continents and attained their own importance. Today, theological communication is moving to and fro between the continents to a welcome degree. Theological thinking in Europe would be ill-advised to preoccupy itself only with itself and its questions which are native to Europe. There is not the slightest occasion for any kind of feelings of exclusiveness.

Nevertheless it remains important to become aware of the European origin of Protestant theology and its style stamped by this origin. This origin carries obligations. It sets standards and marks out the horizons within which thought obligated to the truth of the gospel should move.

Europe is also beyond doubt one of these horizons. Is there sufficient consideration of what this horizon means for theological reflection? A European consciousness and thus a consciousness of a responsibility of Protestant theology which transcends frontiers are by no means especially marked. That may not least be because of the regional orientation of the Protestant church, which presents itself to us in the form of regional and state churches, and in contrast to the Roman Catholic world church, must time and again be reassured of its international character and thus its catholicity.

Here Protestant Christianity in Europe has European ‘directives’ which must by no means be underestimated. One of these directives is Protestant theology. One can practise Protestant theology – like any other discipline – only in a way which transcends lands. There are simply fundamental questions and insights which do not present themselves differently in Prague and Vienna from the way in which they present themselves in Helsinki, Heidelberg, Amsterdam or Strasbourg. Regardless of all regional peculiarities and accents, a consciousness of problems running right across Protestant Europe can be presupposed; this will also make itself clearly evident in a theology which is aware of its obligation to the truth and thus will bring out a binding European dimension to theological work.

Protestant theology moves along the lines of the linking of biblical exegesis and humanistic education, the science of faith and criticism of authority, existential claims and at the same time a lively use of reason, which was developed by Luther, Melanchthon and Calvin. The in-depth profile of the subject of Protestant theology is marked by an evangelical accent: the orientation on the gospel of Jesus Christ as the all-decisive, redeeming word of God for the future of human beings and their world. At the end of the day,
their scholarly efforts are aimed at the right understanding of this gospel, at grasping the potential of freedom that it contains rather than squandering it. Against the horizon of the gospel, the complexity of reality appears in a lively, tense interaction with the mystery that is the basis of its life, the mystery that the language of faith addresses as God.

**Academic Profile and Relations with the Church**

Protestant theology is a discipline which is closely bound up with the history of the European university. One can study Protestant theology in many European countries in state universities and colleges. When the churches maintain their own universities, colleges or theological seminaries, they see themselves as being in the academic tradition of Protestant theology and want to be measured by it.

The arrangement and structure of study are usually orientated to the training of ministers. Over recent decades the training of religious teachers has become increasingly important. But one can also study theology out of an interest in philosophy, religion or culture without aiming at a career in a church or school. In the future, consequently, the consideration of such a professional practice will also define the profile of theological study. In this regard theology is no exception compared with medicine, jurisprudence or even engineering, disciplines which in an analogous way are also grounded in a relationship to the underlying professional fields.

Isolated efforts have been made in Europe to transform the faculties of Protestant theology into departments of religious studies or to incorporate them into such departments. Experiences here – the example of Sweden is very instructive – show that this is not good either for religious studies or for theology. There can be no unprejudiced access to religion. Theology ends up by misunderstanding itself when it believes that it has to deny its orientation to the church. In 2002, a consultation of theological faculties and places of training arranged by the Conference of European Churches (CEC) in Graz confirmed this by stating that religious studies could not replace theology.

Protestant theology can be understood as a discipline which provides orientation for the social partsystem which is the Protestant church, and here appears as a critical function of the church as understood by Schleiermacher and Barth. In precisely this way, it achieves an influence on the whole of society which is not to be underestimated. Indeed its public influence is in a direct relationship to its effects in the sphere of the church.

**Demands in Twenty-First Century Europe**

The discussions about a reference to God in the preamble of a European Constitution have again demonstrated how ambivalent the relationship of the European public is to its religious origins. In no other part of the earth is secularization so marked. The traditional guidelines provided by religion and world-views have clearly lost influence. The church milieus are undergoing marked changes, stratifications and pluralizations. How long the existing institutional forms of the churches as at present constituted will hold up has become uncertain. Sociologists describe the situation as an epoch-making departure from tradition. Quite a few regions of Europe have again become mission territories.

Students who take up the profession of minister have to be capable of speaking to non-Christians and giving them information; they must be able to translate the gospel into the worlds of people whose lives are remote from the church. Church life must be shaped in a way which is inviting and attractive. Those holding office in the church will have demands made on their spiritual credibility and will have to show style and professionalism in public – often in the media – especially if they attain positions of responsibility.
Thus the following demands are made on those who complete a course of theological training in Europe.

Firstly, they must have a high degree of theological competence. That means that they should be in a position to develop, reflect on, judge and correct their professional activities on the basis of theological knowledge, discernment and skills, and put them in a recognizable relationship to the Christ event as the centre of faith. Theological competence is to be seen as the mainstay of other fields of competence in their future profession (e.g. in pastoral work, teaching, cybernetics, charitable work, spirituality or the ecumenical sphere). Qualifications to teach the faith and communicate the gospel stand in a direct relationship to capacities to make theological judgments. Anyone who wants to be able to cope with the questions of today’s men and women about Christian faith must have a reliable theological orientation. Theological competence is the indispensable presupposition for dialogue with those who think otherwise.

Secondly, those who complete theological studies must themselves be sufficiently socialized in the faith, the insights of which they hand on to others. They must have discovered the opportunities of a lived-out spirituality and should have experience of living spirituality. Only those who are embraced by the faith and its dynamic which supports life will be able to point others towards the fascination of the faith.

Thirdly, those who complete theological studies will work with others. A capacity to communicate, patience and empathy are the decisive presuppositions for their professional success. This makes considerable demands on their social and personal capacities. The process of training and examining such capacities will again become important.

Fourthly, those who complete theological studies will have to exercise their professions under the conditions of communication in highly-complex public arenas. They must be prepared for the specific demands which are posed by the exercising of their profession. These include skill in dealing at various levels of their ministry with the media and with those in positions of responsibility in politics and business. Professionalism builds confidence. That is also true for ministers, indeed particularly so.

In tomorrow’s European society, in the long run only those theological graduates will survive who are in a position to make the basic insights of Christian faith true to life in an elementary way and who are bold enough also to approach people who have turned away from the churches. What can change lives and support lives must be capable of being expressed in simple, clear statements, free of all ingratiation.

Unmistakably, Protestant theology puts the main emphasis on the preaching of the word, the promise of the testimony of the gospel, without neglecting the liturgy and the symbolic power of the rite. Because the main emphasis is put on the word of preaching, the training of Protestant theologians is to some degree centred on the situation of the testimony of faith, and college studies are essentially an intellectual initiation into the basic exegetical, systematic and practical steps necessary for that.

Trainning in Two Phases

The current models of the organization of training provide for two phases in the training of pastors. The first phase takes place in the academic sphere at a theological faculty or church college. In the second phase, graduates are trainee ministers in a congregation; this is supplemented by training periods of varying length at a preachers’ seminary or comparable institution. This model has the advantage that the two stretches of training support and take the load off each other. In the first phase one attains the requisite professional knowledge, develops a capacity for judgment with a scholarly training, and gains a personal theological identity. Then professional initiation into the fields of pastoral work follows in the second phase.

It should be emphasized that the first, academic, phase of training is also orientated on church (and social) praxis. But here the encounter with praxis takes place primarily at the theoretical level. Of course, time and again one gets to know concrete practical fields and situations, for example, in ethics or the
discipline of practical theology, but one approaches them primarily as an observer and analyst, not yet putting them to the test. If such situations are embarked on in the first phase of training, for example, in a seminar on homiletics or religious education, that serves to present the themes of the study with an orientation on experience, theological reflection on personal experience and a deepening of professional motivation. The phases of praxis provided during the study (e.g. practical training in the community or in a diaconical institution) have a special position. Their success depends on how those practising them are supervised and how their experiences are worked into their study.

In this phase of the training, praxis is deliberately explored and thought thorough against the background of academic study. It would not only be premature at this early stage immediately to provide initiation into dealing with the professional tools which pastors will need later; that would also mean forfeiting the opportunity to support and encourage students in gaining their own theological identity. One needs to learn how to be a competent pastor only in the second phase of training, with its intensive praxis.

Training in two phases has proved itself. It provides the spiritual free space that is necessary for the processes of training if they are to succeed. It relieves academic study of premature evaluations of interest and preserves it from any professional pragmatism which without theological education will ultimately imprison itself in a lack of orientation and burn itself out.

The Interplay of the Theological Disciplines

The study of theology orientated on the future has to observe three fundamental guiding perspectives: firstly, the perspective of attention to the situations of the origin of faith in the biblical tradition founded on biblical scholarship (and that also means in the medium of the original languages); secondly, the perspective of historical-analytical attention to the historical development and unfolding of Christianity from the beginnings to the present; and thirdly, the perspective of attention to the present forms of the life and expression of the Christian faith reflected on in theology.

This present perspective can be made concrete as follows: the issue is above all the capacity of the Christian faith for language and reflection in the situation of ideological and religious pluralism; reflecting on the shaping of church life in highly secular contexts; a commitment to the ecumenical cooperation of the churches of different confessions; and the necessary ethical qualification in the challenges to a responsible praxis of life and society which are becoming ever more complicated.

Work under and with these guiding perspectives takes place in a collaboration of the five main classical disciplines: Old Testament, New Testament, church history, systematic theology and practical theology. It should be emphasized that it takes place with the collaboration of the theological disciplines. Even if here an ideal state is perhaps being described, it must be emphasized that work under and with the guiding perspective mentioned above involves all theological disciplines, though in different ways. It is not the case that particular disciplines or groups of disciplines can simply and exclusively claim a monopoly for a specific guiding perspective. Otherwise theology could not longer be experienced – and studied – as a unity. And study should make it possible for processes of theological training to come into being in which the students learn time and again to link together the differentiated ways of working and key focal points of the canon of theological disciplines – to relate together levels of biblical-critical, historical, systematic-theological and practical theological argument, instead of having to let them stand side by side as unconnected fields of knowledge.

The continuing specialization of present-day theology does not make any fundamental difference to this situation. All the main disciplines have produced corresponding sub-divisions: systematic theology is studied as a theory of principles, dogmatics and ethics; practical theology in an orientation which is on the one hand pastoral and on the other related to religious education. The discipline of church history participates in the progressive specialization in historical study generally; it too is researched and taught in
eras. In addition to that, in past decades further specialist disciplines have grown out of the main classical disciplines, thus for example religion and mission studies, confessional studies, ecumenical theology, Judaistics, Christian archaeology and church art, the sociology of the churches, pastoral psychology, social welfare studies or even church journalism. These differentiations within disciplines are to be regarded as a source of wealth. However, they can be exploited only when focal points are set and a view of the whole is not lost. An awareness of the logical rooting of all disciplines and sub-disciplines in the three guiding perspectives could make theology recognizable in a new way as an interdisciplinary dialogue and understandable as an expression of a common task and responsibility.

So, academic study has not reached its goal simply when it leads to sound exegetical, historical, dogmatic, ethical or practical knowledge. The real effect of education only makes itself felt when the internal connection between these spheres of knowledge and work are grasped, practised and perceived as inspiring opportunities.

Theology should be marked by curiosity and a readiness for dialogue; it cannot cut itself off in a position of splendid isolation. Its existence in the sphere of the humanities should be an inspiration toward an exchange and co-operation which transcends frontiers. There has always been both a special intellectual affinity and a readiness for conflict between theology and philosophy. Today, by preference, many theologians are orientating themselves in the sector of the so-called humanities such as psychology, pedagogics and sociology, which in view of the expectations of its empirical possibilities, enjoy a high reputation. Remarkably, the contacts between Protestant theology and jurisprudence cannot exactly be described as intensive. Here there are amazing points of contact, both in the fundamental problems of ethics and the orientation of the law and also in the way of discussing and solving problem cases. The exchanges between doctors and theologians on ethical problems at the limits of life and death of clinical pastoral care are friendlier. Likewise, the relations between theology and the modern sciences have gained in openness and intensity over more than a generation.

The Shaping of the Study of Theology as a Common Project
for the Reformation Churches in Europe

There are numerous contacts between the Protestant theological faculties, colleges and institutes in Europe, both in co-operation in research which transcends frontiers and in the exchange of students. In the last ten years, there have been several consultations on a European level on questions of shaping and reforming the study of theology. The so-called Bologna Process – the concern of European college policies to shape a common European college scene – is also exercising pressure towards the exchange of experiences, and is underlining the urgency of the question of binding concepts, forms of work and study which transcend lands, indeed possibilities of an intensive collaboration in the sphere of theological training.

But alongside Bologna, we should not overlook Leuenberg. The Leuenberg Agreement of 1973 stated the mutual recognition of ordination. In the churches involved, questions are increasingly being asked about the practical consequences of such recognition. Can common standards for theological training be developed which also make possible the mutual recognition of the successful completion of courses and

1 Cf. the statement by the Executive Committee of the LCF on the 25th anniversary of the passing of the Leuenberg Agreement, Oslo, 23 May 1998, 4, 2, 1: ‘The LA [Leuenberg Agreement] provides for mutual recognition of ordination. More and more participating churches are asking about the practical consequences of such recognition. Common education as well as mutual recognition of qualifications and careers within the churches should also be made possible, as well as the exchange and, if necessary, secondment of clergy and laity. This requires new regulations, which are so far lacking’ (in W. Hüffmeier and C.-R. Müller (eds), Versöhnte Verschiedenheit – der Auftrag der evangelischen Kirchen in Europa. Texte der 5. Vollversammlung der LKG in Belfast, 19. – 25. Juni 2001, Frankfurt am Main 2003, 258-67: 266).
facilitate changing college right across Europe, possibly combining different forms of training, and also facilitate the exchange and in some cases also the adoption of pastors?

At the General Assembly of the Leuenberg Church Fellowship (LCF) in Belfast in 2001 the strengthening of the Protestant voice in Europe on the programme for future work was raised. This voice can be strengthened in many ways: an improvement of communication and interaction between the churches, an intensification of collaboration, the creation of forums for the regulation of common affairs in the European institutions in Brussels and Strasbourg. But strengthening the voice also begins with forming it and cultivating it. The appointed place for forming and cultivating the Protestant voice is the study of Protestant theology in Europe. It can be said without exaggeration that the quality of theological training will be a decisive factor in the quality of the Protestant voice in tomorrow’s Europe.

Under the mandate of the Executive Committee of the LCF – since 1 November 2003 the Community of Protestant Churches in Europe (CPCE) – an international consultation was held in Berlin on ‘Training for the ordained ministry in the Leuenberg Church Fellowship’. Those who took part in it agreed that in rapid steps common standards, binding all over Europe, should be developed for the content of theological studies which lead to ordination within the churches of the LCF and examinations in them. The aspects of compatibility, mobility, college teaching and transparency had to be taken account of in the development of new regulations for study within the framework of the Bologna Process. Only regulations for study which corresponded to the standards to be agreed on could be recognized by the theological institutions and the churches. A baccalaureate to be achieved after three years’ study could not be regarded as a professional qualification for the pastorate. Where consecutive courses of study had been or would be undergone, at the least the academic master’s degree was to be prescribed as a presupposition for the appointment of a pastor.

The Executive Committee of the CPCE accepted the recommendations of the consultation, and the 6th General Assembly meeting in Budapest in 2006 will present a project on ‘Training for the ordained ministry in the Community of Protestant Churches in Europe’ for a conclusive version. Accordingly, a project group will develop a study which can then be passed at the following General Assembly, having been circulated in the churches as a basic document on theological training in the CPCE.

What is being aimed at is agreement over the principles and ways of training pastors in the member churches of the CPCE. What is to be the professional image that guides the organization of training? What understanding of theology is normative, what understanding of study and training? What will be the relationship between training and education? Will the possibilities offered by a university be utilized? What impulses can other areas of scholarship expect from theology? But also quite practical questions like those of making it easier to study all over Europe and transferring student qualifications will need to be clarified.

In November 2008, an international consultation took place in Berlin. Thereby the work on the project on theological education was started that was commissioned by the 6th General Assembly of the CPCE. The presentation of the models practiced in different regions of Europe showed great basic similarities and made clear that generally a five year (often even a six year) period of study at a university or a theological seminary is required for an appointment as a pastor, regularly followed by a period of training in a parish/congregation (internship, combined with courses at a theological college). The differentiation in Biblical, Historical, Systematic and Practical Theology cannot be put into question, with further perspectives such as ecumenism, religious and mission studies and sociology of religion being added.

Some further basic thoughts for the drafting of a joint CPCE document on theological training were formulated: Training for the ordained ministry aims at the practice of pastoral ministry according to the commission of the church and the professional standards. A good cooperation of the theological faculties in the similar theological institutions and the churches is necessary. Their relationship should develop in such a way that, on the one hand, the interest of the church is regarded to full extent and, on the other hand, the
freedom of academic theology, as emerging from the confession of the church, is ensured without restrictions. In view of the growing challenges of the professional skills, the clarification of motivation and of personal suitability for the profession has gained greater significance. In this context, possibilities and limitations of alternative forms of access to the ordained ministry need to be discussed. The service of theology is, however, not restricted to the training of theologians, but refers to all dimensions of the life of the church, in which it is not only dependent on the orientations given by academic theology, but also is engaged in a theological way on its own. Thus, the post-graduate theological training of ministers needs to be intensified.

On the basis of the results, the project group is elaborating a text of principles regarding the training for ordained ministry in the CPCE. In autumn 2010, the participants of this consultation will meet again, in order to discuss the draft and to prepare a proposal for the 7th General Assembly of the CPCE in 2012 in Florence.

The impact of Protestantism in Europe is normatively influenced and governed by the quality of theological training. Concern for a study of Protestant theology, which makes this impact possible and furthers it, is an important contribution of Protestant Christianity, to the witness and service of the Protestant churches and the spiritual and intellectual culture of tomorrow’s Europe.

**Bibliography**


This paper has a narrow focus. It is concerned only with theological education in England, and the focus will be largely on the position as it relates to the Church of England. This is not to minimise the importance of the institutions that serve other churches, but is a limitation both of the length of the paper and the author’s competence. Although some reference will be made to the (rapidly) changing position of theological education in universities the focus will be primarily on theological education as it relates to the church’s education and formation of its ordained ministers (while not disinterested in lay education the Church of England’s focus and investment of money and time has been given to ministerial education and training). 1987 is a key date. In this year, an occasional paper by the Advisory Council for the Church’s Ministry (ACCM) was published, called *Education for the Church’s Ministry* and commonly known thereafter as ACCM 22. Around the same time, a second major development was changing the way ministers were training: the establishment of part-time, regional ‘courses’. These two developments are the focus of this essay.

**ACCM 22 and Beyond**

The publication of this paper set in train a process that has revolutionised theological education for the Church of England, and through ecumenical partnerships, it has had a pronounced effect on the education and training institutions of other churches as well. To understand why the paper was so significant, we must briefly describe why change was needed.

The 19th century had seen the establishment of a growing number of theological colleges in England, responding to a desire to ‘professionalise’ the education and training of the clergy. Colleges were small, often located in a cathedral close, normally in university towns (there is a very strong – some argue disproportionate – college presence in Cambridge and Oxford). At the turn of the turn of the 19th century new colleges came into existence through some Bishops gathering men in their palaces who because they were older (or from a ‘lower’ social class) could not go to university in Oxford or Cambridge. Colleges were concerned as much with moulding character as with teaching truth. H.P. Liddon, vice-principal of Cuddesdon College near Oxford, writing at the turn of the end of 19th century, places practical self-discipline at the heart of college life through the cultivation of piety, which focused around a systematic meditation on Christian faith and the daily use of morning and evening prayer. He argues that “a house which has a religious purpose should be a house of rule, it should be governed by a system” and this means not just study and prayer but exercise, recreation, even sleep should be ordered. As Jacob succinctly puts it:

> The method was to enable clergy to live in the world without being part of it, by taking them out of the world to develop a spiritual, religious and moral consciousness so that they could influence and improve it.\(^4\)

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3 H.P. Liddon, *Clerical Life and Work*, London: 1895, 57-90, quoted in Jacob *op cit*.
4 Jacob 1981, p 188.
Liddon speaks from a Catholic, high Anglican perspective. Evangelical colleges shared similar aims but used different organising metaphors. The model of the Christian family was more likely to shape the practices and values of such colleges. A large family created by and around the Principal was seen to be an ideal way of enabling clergy to see their parish as a family gathered around the father figure of their minister. Colleges until the middle of the 20th century saw their role primarily in terms of the context they provided for the formation of spiritual and moral character rather than for the content of what was learned or studied. This was inevitable as university departments of theology provided the ‘academic’ learning for a degree in theology, leaving colleges to provide additional ‘pastoralia’, which was primarily in the form of transmission of experience, ‘hints and tips’, from the Principal and tutors. I recently discovered some photographs in my own College, Queen’s College in Birmingham, taken in the 1950s of the Principal – dressed in academic gown and hood – smoking a pipe in the Common Room with his ‘family’ of young men gathered around him as he shares his undoubted wisdom in a fatherly manner. As another report of the Church of England’s Central Advisory Council for the Ministry (a forerunner to ACCM) put it:

The best theological college is one in which the chapel, the lecture room and the common room are all working together to make a fellowship of Christian life both natural and supernatural, the power of which shall remain in the memory of the ordinand and as a pattern and inspiration for his future work in a congregation.5

This process would not normally have been called ‘formation’ but we can see in it a formative process which socialised young men into a set of cultural, moral and spiritual values of the church – or at least of what was thought necessary for the life of the church. Residence is fundamental to this process. Small-scale religious communities, into which young men were withdrawn, could be closely ordered by discipline and ‘family’ obligations, under the direction of senior clergy. The system undoubtedly excelled in transmitting particular cultural values. From the evidence of the way ministers spoke of ‘their’ college there is no doubt that strong bonds of loyalty and friendship which often persisted through a person’s ministry were formed, even when the experience in college was not necessarily happy. The assumption that college life is a pattern for congregational life does not appear to have been strongly contested even though it is a pattern more appropriate for a congregational understanding of church rather than one that obviously enables an Anglican minister to deal with the reality of a parish of tens of thousands.

The ideals and values of this college pattern come under increasing strain and after several decades the system has to change radically. The strains come from three directions.

First, the particular and restricted nature – young single men – of the college community begins to change. From the 1960s, the average age of the ordinands increases and more ordinands are married. Provided married men are a minority, colleges can continue to behave as though they were not married. In many instances wives were not even allowed on the premises except for public occasions. But as the number increased so more married men ‘lived out’ and had to find ways of living in two formative ‘family’ communities. From 1970, women begin to train as deaconesses in some colleges. In at least one college (Queen’s), Methodists and Anglicans trained together (the fact that the Methodist ministers included women meant that romantic relationships were also formed across denominations – something not always welcomed by church authorities!). The integration of common room, chapel and lecture room felt the strain as the college community became more varied.

Second, a decline in the number of ordinands meant that many small institutions were no longer viable. A process of merger and closure resulted. Proposals in 1968 to leave just nine colleges in university centres and three larger self-contained colleges were strongly opposed and quietly dropped. Market forces accompanied by partisan support took over instead: in 1968 there were 25 colleges with over a 1000

ordinands; by 1985 that number had nearly halved with a 25% drop in the number of ordinands in training (14 colleges with 824 ordinands). Market forces and changing trends in the vigour of different ‘parties’ within the church have continued to close colleges in an unplanned and damaging way.

Third, the curriculum taught within colleges was proving no longer fit for purpose. Since 1921 every ordi

Education for the Church’s Ministry (ACCM 22) was published in 1987 and proved revolutionary. It started with the problems of the General Ordination Examination but asked more fundamental questions about the nature and purpose of theological education. Faced with multiple claims on the time and energy of a candidate, claims that were often competing as classic theological subject disciplines vied for curriculum space and prominence alongside emerging disciplines, the report decided not to try and form a new common curriculum. Instead it began by asking how theological education should be shaped and ordered. For the first time in the Church of England, and I think in any English theological institution, educators were asked to consider the rationale for the learning and teaching that took place. Thus, instead of a curriculum, the report proposes a theological and pedagogical method. This method makes the purpose, the rationale and the coherence of the curriculum conscious and explicit. Colleges (now joined by other theological institutions – see below on courses) had to articulate the theological principles which shape and give intention to what they think should be taught and learned, how it should be taught and how what has been learned can and should be assessed. The report sees this process as a fundamental response to and participation in the mission of God. God’s mission in creating, redeeming and sustaining the world includes the work of the church and, therefore, the work of the church’s ministers. If a curriculum is going to prepare the church’s ministers their place within the church, their roles and task in relation to the mission and ministry of the church and the ministry of the whole people of God, has to be explicated. But the mission and ministry of the church can only be described in the context and as a result of the mission of God. The report required each training institution to answer three questions:

1) What ordained ministry does the church require?
2) What is the shape of the educational programme best suited for equipping people to exercise this ministry?
3) What are the appropriate means of assessing suitability for the exercise of this ministry?

The report offered an indicative answer to these questions but not the answer, for it recognised that there was legitimate diversity of approaches and that different rationale and, therefore, different curricula could be offered. A ‘validation document’ had to be written based on these questions and a group was established to scrutinise the resulting submissions and recommend approval of the curriculum to the house of Bishops. The report envisaged a further piece of work from the church (but did not specify how this was to be done) which would set out key principles or a controlling framework by which the scrutiny group could make its assessment. Because this was never done, some complained that training institutions were being required to answer questions that the church should properly answer. This reaction, however, largely

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**Part II: Regional Surveys of Developments in Theological Education Since 1910**
misses the point. There is no definitive answer to the questions. The answer will always be shaped by the context of those answering. The primary purpose of the questions is not to elicit the ‘right’ answer, but to make the rationale of the answer explicit. Responsibility for the curriculum was, therefore, pushed back on to colleges and courses, requiring them not only to think about what they were teaching, but also to explain why they were teaching it and how they knew what they were teaching had been learned. My own experience of this process was that it provided in itself a powerful educational tool for theological educators, enabling them to become more critically conscious of their work – in short, to become better reflective practitioners – just as they were demanding of their students to be.

The report is radical, not only in abandoning long held assumptions about a prescribed common curriculum, but also in seeing the demands and place of all theological disciplines as subordinate to a central aim or goal of the learning. Every discipline, every subject has to justify its place in the curriculum against the criteria of how this serves the primary goal of enabling the ministry of the church to participate in the mission of God. Not everything can be taught – indeed the attempt to ‘cover’ everything betrays its own assumptions about the purpose of learning. Choices have to be exercised, selections have to be made, organising principles have to be established, omissions are inevitable; what matters is the rationale for such choices which shows that they are made intentionally and coherently.

The report is radical in stressing that the curriculum must include not only what is taught but also how it is taught and learned. The context of learning is itself part of the learning and, therefore, needs to be consciously and deliberately shaped to the primary end that has been articulated. Residence needs a rationale; learning in lectures needs a rationale, as does learning by experience or in non-directive groups.

The report is radical in requiring assessment to serve the primary goal of enabling the church to participate in the mission of God. Some assessment tests knowledge; other assessment tests skills; other assessment tests character; other assessment tests how these are integrated. For example, if the ministry of the church is characterised by inter-dependence and inter-animation (two favourite terms in the report) how does the curriculum, its delivery and its assessment enable this objective?

The report is radical in that it trusts that the spirit of God is at work even in the world of theological education. If some feared chaos as colleges and courses developed divergent, contradictory approaches and curricula, the report had greater trust. In a review conducted 5 years after ACCM 22, the report’s trust was vindicated. Although there were different approaches, there were striking similarities and points of convergence. 10 years after the publication of the report, a follow-up report Mission and Ministry broadly endorsed and reaffirmed the method of ACCM 22, while sharpening its mission focus and orientation.

Education for the Church’s Ministry has transformed theological education and the church’s training institutions, energising colleges and courses by inviting them to engage in creative theological thinking, shaping a process that is mission focused and contextually alert, enabling curriculum to develop and change responsively, responsibly and creatively.

**Theological Education for the Church and the Role of Universities**

Prior to 1987, most colleges worked in conjunction with a university department of theology. Ordinands typically studied for three years, often doing a B.A. in theology through the university department, and adding distinctive ministerial learning as extras within the college. Because grants were available from public funds for first degrees, the church gained a significant part of its theological education for free and university departments gained a substantial number of students keeping them viable. Scholarship was primarily found and fostered within university departments of theology; colleges offered some stepping

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7 *Integration and Assessment* ABM Ministry Paper No. 3, 1992.
stones to an academic career but the courses that were offered ‘in house’ were not normally part of a degree and were often regarded as not academic.

By 1987, a greater number of mature students who already had first degrees and who, therefore, could not receive funds for a university degree in theology, were doing most of their learning in a theological college not in a university. As we have seen, ACCM 22 responded to the chaotic and incoherent learning that resulted. The outcome of ACCM 22 for the relationships between the church’s educational institutions and universities may not have been foreseen. As we have seen, ACCM 22 encouraged the churches’ training institutions to take responsibility for the overarching goal of the programme which was to enable and serve the mission of God in the world. Even where university departments of theology may have been sympathetic to such a goal, the theological college was more likely to develop an greater autonomy. From the position where the majority of those preparing for ministry did degrees in a University department the opposite rapidly emerged with the majority doing programmes offered primarily in Colleges or Courses. These programmes were not taught in the University but were only validated by a university. We have noted the gains: a greater coherence; a rationale for theological learning being harnessed to the task for serving the mission of God; a primary accountability to the church rather than to a ‘secular’ institution. The losses need also to be noted.

First, some departments were greatly weakened, some perhaps fatally, by the withdrawal of a significant number of undergraduates from its programmes with the resulting loss of finance. The number of departments of theology in England has fallen rapidly; the number of university departments of theology that are robust and have not morphed into departments of religion, is even smaller.

Second, programmes (especially in courses) could be developed which did not need to be validated by a university. For some this was a matter of principle – validation and accreditation were said to distort the aims and distinctive learning for ministry. What has Athens to do with Jerusalem? When higher education in the UK was available only to a minority, many thought that university validation restricted access and trapped the church in its middle class milieu. With the widening of access to higher education that has been a feature of the last 20 years, this argument has less weight, and most programmes are now accredited by a university, and most find the rigour of an external body to be a welcome discipline. In a context when virtually every profession is accredited (and normally beyond graduate level) accrediting clergy training is important to give public and personal confidence in the churches’ ministers.

Third, with ‘ownership’ and more crucially the funding of the training for ministers in the hands of the churches, the pressures to reduce the learning and formation process are powerful. The typical length of training has dropped from three years to two years’ full-time with many ministers qualified only to diploma level (also the outcome of three years’ part-time training). Older candidates will often receive even less. In comparison with Europe as a whole, English clergy are less well qualified and their training is much shorter in duration. Against that, the claim is made that the training received is better integrated, more focused on mission and ministry, and that the learning in post given through a three year curacy, where the newly ordained work under the direct oversight of an experienced training minister, has no equivalent in European churches. Nevertheless, direct comparisons of the depth and duration of ministerial education and training between England and the rest of Europe are embarrassing, and potentially a problem for ecumenical relationships and ministerial recognition and exchange.

Fourth, the churches’ scholars and theological educators have been for the most part nurtured and developed in universities. With weaker and fewer departments the question is pressing as to how theological educators and scholars will continue to be nurtured. The churches will have to invest far more substantially in their own institutions if they wish for this outcome, but most churches in England have a strong anti-intellectual streak and it is hard to see how this commitment will be realised. Although there is a greater desire on the part of many ministers to undertake higher degrees, the question remains as to how scholarship that takes decades to nurture will be enabled.
Regional and Local Courses

The last quarter of the 20th century saw the development of new institutions to serve the church’s educational needs. In 1968, the Diocese of Southwark (in London) established the first Ordination Course which offered part-time, non-residential ordination training for Anglican ordinands. Over the next 20 years, the number of such courses, often originating in an individual diocese but increasingly serving larger regions in England, increased dramatically. In 1985, there were 14 such regional courses with 383 ordinands between them. These courses were designed for people in employment and provided theological education and ministerial formation through evening classes and short intensive periods of residence at weekends and summer schools. A pattern rapidly emerged of three years of such ‘part-time’ (although in reality it may be better designated ‘spare time’ learning and formation), with weekly evening classes, 6 residential weekends and a one week summer school. ‘Residence’ remained a crucial element of this pattern of training and those who experienced this found in the short periods of residence an intensity that could be lacking in the ‘college’ experience.

These courses were initially designed to respond to the desire for ministers and priests whose ministry would be primarily served in their place of employment. These ‘ministers in secular employment’ found inspiration in the French ‘worker priest’ experiment and drew on theological developments current from the 1960s of a church that was called to come of age in a secular world. However, the ‘normal’ pattern of parish ministry rapidly exerted itself and the majority of those learning on courses were preparing for ‘non-stipendiary’ parochial ministry. To begin with, this was called ‘auxiliary ministry’ but fearing a ‘two tier’ ministry the House of Bishops agreed that the training for this ministry was equivalent to full-time ‘residential’ training in college. The equivalence in recognition of the training was an important principle for an equal ministry as well as for the growth in confidence in the courses and those who taught and learned on them. Courses, serving regions, also developed ecumenical relationships. Some exercised an ecumenism by invitation, allowing or welcoming those training for other denominations to share in an Anglican process. Others were more consciously and intentionally ecumenical in their constitution, staffing and accountability. For some this remains one of their great strengths; for others it is a fatal weakness.

Despite their undoubted success in preparing thousands of women and men for ordained and lay ministries in England, courses are still undervalued and subtle (and not so subtle) prejudices remain that they are pale imitations of the real college experience. The fact that those under 30 are not allowed to train on courses is an indicator of this. Courses struggle for other reasons to find a real equality with colleges: being regional they have not developed ‘party’ identities in the way that are so important for colleges and for many in the Church of England; almost all senior clergy in the church have trained in colleges so there are few advocates in influential positions. As colleges become more diverse places and as their experience of residence become broader, they are beginning to offer their own pattern of part-time training. With their resources of staff and facilities, the future of flexible patterns of training that enables the development of voluntary, self-supporting ministries may well lie in their hands.

Conclusion

The last 20 years have seen a revolution in the way theological education is understood, organised and structured in England. This has in many ways been creative and liberating, enabling the learning and formation of the churches’ ministers to be responsive to rapidly changing needs and opportunities. There are no signs that the changes are completed.
THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION IN SCANDINAVIAN CHURCHES

Vidar L. Haanes

Scandinavia includes Denmark, Norway and Sweden, though Finland and Iceland are often considered Scandinavian countries, but we usually say the Nordic countries to include all. There are many similarities between the Nordic churches, but also variations. Scandinavia became a part of Christendom in the 10th century, leading to three church provinces: the archbishop of Denmark (and southern Sweden) had his seat in Lund since 1103; the archbishop of Norway (including Iceland and Greenland) in Nidaros (Trondheim) 1153; the archbishop of Sweden (and Finland) in Uppsala 1164. In Finland the diocese of Åbo was established in 1229, now the seat of the archbishop of Finland. In all the Nordic countries, the Reformation led to Lutheran state churches.

After 1950, we see the development of the secular welfare states in Scandinavia, with an egalitarian social and cultural policy.¹ There is still a significant majority in the Nordic countries who are members of the Lutheran national churches (75-90 %), but less than 5 % of the population attends church regularly.² The Nordic countries have indigenous minority groups in their population, as the population in Greenland (Denmark) and the Sami people in Sweden, Finland and Norway (70.000). Due to revivals and immigration, there are several minority churches and denominations in the Nordic countries, but none of them hold more than 2-3 % of the population. In Finland the (Greek) Orthodox Church is the second official church, but only 1.5 % of the population are members.³

The Nordic Network of Theological Faculties consists of university faculties or specialized university institutions only. In Sweden: the universities of Uppsala (1477) and Lund (1666); in Denmark: the universities of Copenhagen (1479) and Aarhus (1928); the University of Iceland (1911); in Finland: the universities of Helsinki (1640), Åbo (1918) and Eastern Finland/Joensuu (1969); in Norway: the University of Oslo (1811), as well as the specialized university institutions: MF Norwegian School of Theology in Oslo (1908) and Stavanger School of Mission and Theology (1843). For centuries the education of the Lutheran clergy has been the responsibility of the theological faculties in the state universities, and the ministers have been state officials as well as pastors for the congregations. Some impulses for alternative theological education returned from the Scandinavian immigrants in America, who established several theological schools and seminaries in the mid 19th century.⁴ Still, except for Norway, the vast majority of ministers in the Nordic national churches are educated in the state universities.

The theological faculties in the Nordic universities are under a certain pressure due to the Bologna process and the rapid changes within the European Higher Education Area (EHEA).⁵ Many Higher

Education Institutions are merging, and the theological faculties go through external evaluations and benchmarking processes. The threats are not so much on quality as of economy, resources and critical size. Some of the theological faculties in Scandinavia have merged with other faculties and institutes. There is a growing interest in the study of religion in general, but not a parallel interest in the study of theology and in life-long ministry. The national churches are under pressure as a result of secularization and pluralization in the Nordic countries. In Sweden, a long process led to the separation of church and state in the year 2000. In Finland, there are some discussions on the state church relations; in Denmark, hardly any discussion at all. The Danish Church is the only national church in Scandinavia without an assembly or church council. Norway is in the final stage of the almost 500 year old state church system, with a parliamentary act on formal separation in 2012. The state will however continue to take care of the economy in the Church of Norway and other denominations, religious and secular, already receive a comparable financial support. The historic bond between the national church and the people will not disappear with a schism between church and state. But the former state churches will have to find their place in a secular society, as a (majority) church among other churches and denominations.

The Nordic Churches were among the founders of World Council of Churches, the Lutheran World Federation and Council of European Churches. But the tradition with national churches and theological education in the state universities has not made it easy for other denominations to build and develop a sustainable theological education. Whereas the theological faculties originally had strong formal links with the confessional Lutheran states, this has gradually changed during the last decades. Today, there are seminaries offering theological education for pastors in other churches and denominations, in addition to some theological colleges or schools with or without accreditation.

The theological faculties in Denmark, Finland and Norway still have a monopoly in offering the degree candidatus theologiae, which is required for ordination in the respective national churches. Because of the Bologna-process, the Nordic universities have adopted the 3+2+3 year degree structure. It is difficult to find room for all the disciplines in 5 years, including the languages and practical theology. New courses in practical theology, studies in leadership and spirituality and so on, have been added to an already overstretched syllabus. The problem is that the timetable cannot take the strain, for hardly anything already existing is allowed to drop out. In Norway, the cand.theol-program was allowed a 6th year of practical theology with integrated praxis. In Denmark, theological students are offered a first year propedeutics (classical languages), in addition to the 5 year master’s program.

In Denmark and Sweden, pastoral training and practical theology is placed outside the universities, in pastoral seminaries owned by the church. In Norway, applied and practical theology, including periods of praxis (internship), is put as several integrated courses in the curriculum. In addition, the students will take several inter-disciplinary courses, some obligatory and some elective.

The Higher Education Institutions in the Nordic countries have gone through intense national accreditation processes. The universities’ and colleges’ legitimacy and role in society will increasingly be linked to attractiveness, quality, cooperation and relevance. The theological schools and seminaries are in many ways forced to work for quality, and it is vital for the Nordic institutions to earn national accreditation. In addition to all the Nordic state university faculties, even the two private Norwegian specialized university institutions: MF – Norwegian School of Theology and MHS – Stavanger School of Mission and Theology have institutional accreditation and membership in the Norwegian Association of Higher Education Institutions. In Norway, accreditation is seen as a necessary step towards autonomy and

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7 Sweden: www.svenskakyrkan.se/default.aspx?di=295562; Denmark: www.praesteuddannelse.km.dk
more predictable economy, and a glance at the un-accredited theological schools and seminaries in the other Nordic countries undergirds this presumption. The two Danish private institutions: The Lutheran School of Theology in Aarhus and Copenhagen Lutheran School of Theology (DBI) have struggled for decades to earn national accreditation and the right for financial support from the state and student grants within the Danish educational system, but they are systematically discriminated against due to their confessional profile. Several theological schools in Scandinavia are members of the European Evangelical Accreditation Association (EEAA). On the other hand, many evangelical schools and seminaries are ambivalent to academic accreditation in fear of losing the missiological perspective in theological education.9 They are in conflict because the accrediting agency is working with a different set of parameters and a different definition of what makes an educational institution effective. Bernhard Ott’s thesis is that the evangelical Bible school movement has jeopardized the original values by their pursuit of academic accreditation. Theological faculties in many European universities have suffered from fear of not being relevant to the academic audience, which has resulted in a focus on Religious Studies or a liberal theology which may seem less relevant for the church. But the opposite is also possible, that theological schools and colleges leaving the university sphere or academic level are in danger of being irrelevant to both society and church. One may ask whether the accreditation agencies would turn their thumbs down for the reason of adjusting to a contextual and inductive learning process. In Norway, this is definitely not the case.

In 2006, OECD’s Directorate for Education visited Norway for a review of tertiary education, also commenting on the private theological schools. The review mentions that students who attend private institutions benefit, under the same conditions, from the same basic financial support as in state institutions to cover costs of living. The OECD-group especially gives positive attention to this, as it clearly facilitates students’ freedom of choice and enables the development of institutions with distinct approaches and purposes.10 This distinct approach and purpose is precisely the education of ministers and deacons for the church on an international academic level, with a focus on pastoral formation.

In Denmark, Sweden and Norway, there is an overweight of female students in all theological faculties. In Finland, the male students are still in the majority. The first ordination in Scandinavia of a female pastor we find in Denmark in 1947; then Sweden followed in 1960, Norway in 1961, Iceland in 1974 and Finland as late as 1988. In Norway, four out of eleven bishops are women, all alumni of MF Norwegian School of Theology.

**Denmark**

The theology of N.F.S. Grundtvig is of great importance for Danish identity, as is the focus on the theology of the welfare state; the social democratic egalitarian society, where the role of the national church is to build a spiritual and ritual framework for the members of society. The church ideally should keep to the rituals, the services and the catechetical education through confirmation, and not interfere in public, political matters.11

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9 Several examples can be found in Bernhard Ott’s monography on mission studies in evangelical theological education in Germany and German-speaking Switzerland, especially the schools in membership with the Konferenz Bibeltreuer Ausbildungsstätten (KBA). Bernhard Ott: Beyond Fragmentation: Integrating Mission and Theological Education: A Critical Assessment of some Recent Developments in Evangelical Theological Education. Oxford: Regnum Books, 2002.


11 Peter Lodberg, in Ryman 2005:23.
There is an ongoing debate in Denmark between the two theological faculties on the question of the traditional theological curriculum. In the University of Copenhagen they will only accept a strict theological curriculum including the three languages (Greek, Hebrew and Latin). The five classical disciplines are to be done in coherence, they say. In The University of Aarhus they argue that the Danish Church could need ministers with different curricular profiles (even with a majority of courses in religious studies), while Aarhus had 120 students in theology a few years ago; today they have 50 in Religious Studies, 30 in Arabic/Islamic studies and only 40 in theology.

In the University of Copenhagen, the research priority area Religion in the 21st Century has brought together researchers from all of the university’s six faculties in order to combine the study of separate themes into an overall picture of religion today. More than 70 projects have been organized within this framework. There is a general tendency that courses in religious studies are more popular than in theology.

The prescribed period of study is six years, comprising a “three plus one”-year Bachelor’s degree programme which includes a one-year instruction in Greek and Latin for all students who have not passed the A-level course in these subjects in upper secondary school; and a two-year Master’s degree programme which continues and expands on the study of the main theological disciplines and supplements it with the study area of practical theology. To become a pastor in the Church of Denmark, you need a six months’ program at the Pastoral Seminary either in Aarhus and Copenhagen, hosted by the Danish Ministry of Ecclesiastical Affairs.

The Lutheran School of Theology in Aarhus was established in 1967 as an evangelical alternative to the education given at the theological faculties at the universities of Copenhagen and Aarhus. The School in Aarhus has no national accreditation, but just like the Copenhagen Lutheran School of Theology (DBI), they have an agreement with the University of Wales, which validates their Bachelor’s programme in theology. This is an arrangement made possible because of the Lisbon Recognition Convention. The two private Danish schools of theology invite students from the theological faculties in the universities of Aarhus and Copenhagen to receive supplementary and alternative teaching – while assessment take place in the universities.

**Sweden**

Professor Ingmar Hedenius initiated an intense debate in Sweden 1949 on the premises for academic theology, leading to a gradual change in the traditional theological disciplines. After 1970, all formal links between the Church of Sweden and the theological faculties were broken. Systematic theology was developed into a new subject called the “science of faith and worldviews”. In fact, theology as an academic discipline was secularized and deconfessionalized, and the empirical, scientific character of theology was underlined.

To become a pastor in the Church of Sweden, you need to take 300 points (ECTS) in theology either in a university or a college, participate in practice and then follow a program in one of the Pastoral Institutes of the Church, including practice (internship) in one of the dioceses. The curriculum consists of pastoral theology, knowledge about the Church of Sweden, Science of Faith and Life-views (the Swedish alternative to Systematic Theology) and Biblical studies. The students must choose at bachelor-level between Hebrew / Old Testament or Greek / New Testament. It is possible to follow the theological program at bachelor level in any faculty or college offering this program.

The study of theology has been a part of Lund University’s curriculum since its inauguration in 1668. Today, theology is part of The Centre for Theology and Religious Studies (CTR). More than 600 students are studying religion or theology in Lund, and about one third of them are planning for ministry in the

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12 www.teol.ku.dk.
Church of Sweden. At CTR, one can take courses in six different subjects: History of Religions, Human Rights, Islamology, Jewish Studies, Religious Studies or Theology. The programme in Theology is non-denominational, but it is an integral part of the education for future ministers in the Church of Sweden.14

The Department of Theology at Uppsala University is one of Sweden’s largest departments of religious scientific research. Theology in Uppsala is precisely defined as “religious science: the study of the role religion plays in people’s lives and in society”.15 Research in theology is a key to understanding societal developments and people’s living conditions and how these processes can be influenced, says the official website in Uppsala. Theological research in Uppsala spans from “The great world religions in history and our day” to “New patterns in world views and values”. In the curriculum, one finds courses spanning from “Immigrants’ assimilation processes in Sweden” to “Theological and philosophical aspects of animal ethics” or “Church Administration”. Currently, the Department of Theology is in charge of a research program on Religion and Conflict, and they have received grants for a ten year research program on The Impact of Religion: Challenges for Society, Law and Democracy. In Uppsala there is a Swedish Institute of Missionary Research (SIM), working as a link between academic institutions and the Church and Missionary Agencies.

Orebro Theological Seminary offers programs in theology for students from different denominations.16 The seminary is owned by InterAct, an evangelical fellowship of 330 churches, with a total of 30,000 members. Some 150 missionaries are engaged in InterAct’s international ministry, in co-operation with 60 international partners. InterAct describes its identity as Baptist, Evangelical, Charismatic and Mission-oriented. A four-year program gives (at present) a B.A. in Theology, and is accredited for being comparable with the Master of Divinity degree through EEAA (European Evangelical Accrediting Association). An alternative way of getting into ministry is to follow the two-year church-based theological program called SALT (Scandinavian Academy for Leadership and Theology). SALT is a network including Swedish, Danish and Norwegian partners.

Johannelund Theological Seminary is providing theological education for ministry in the Church of Sweden as well as in the Swedish Evangelical Mission (EFS).17 Pastoral formation as well as lay ministry, mission and evangelization are central focuses in Johannelund. The pastoral degree programs are intended primarily to provide training for pastoral service in Sweden, and they advice international students to apply to theological programs designed for pastoral ministry in their own context.

The Stockholm School of Theology (THS) is established by the Swedish Mission Covenant Church, the Baptist Union of Sweden, and the United Methodist Church of Sweden.18 THS provides Bachelor’s degrees in Theology and in Human Rights. The school has 500 full-time and part-time students. Most programs are in Swedish. The Theological Program is a four-year program leading to a Bachelor of Theology. The program involves various field courses as part of pastoral formation.

The Newman Institute for Catholic Studies, established in 2001, is conducted by the Jesuits in Sweden.19 A Bachelor’s program in Philosophy, Theology and Culture attracts candidates for the priesthood as well as other students. The Institute aims to serve Orthodox Christians as well. The Newman Institute cooperates with Uppsala University and with MF Norwegian School of Theology in Oslo, as well as with the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome.

There are several challenges for Theological Education in Sweden. Before 1994, only the state universities (Lund and Uppsala) delivered formal theological education in Sweden. In 1994, the Swedish

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17 www.johannelund.nu.
19 www.newman.se/English.html.
authorities allowed three (denominational) theological seminaries: Johannelund, Orebro and the Stockholm School of Theology, to grant recognized degrees (at bachelor level). The majority of prospective ministers still train in theological schools at major Swedish universities. In addition to the theological faculties in the universities of Lund and Uppsala, the universities of Umeå, Karlstad, Linköping and Göteborg offer programs in Theology and Religious Studies. Until 2007, only the Church of Sweden Pastoral Institutes in Lund and Uppsala offered the compulsory courses in Church Ministry, including praxis (internship). In 2007, all the universities offering theology, as well as some colleges and seminaries, were allowed to give three out of four compulsory courses for ministry in the Church of Sweden. These courses are now under severe attack from The Swedish National Agency for Higher Education, worrying about the implications of confessional education in state universities. The state universities are also criticized for their cooperation with the confessional seminaries and colleges without accreditation. The National Education Agency reported in June 2009 that state-supported schools and universities must favour studies in comparative religion over theological education. Schools that aim to train ministers for church service must shift resources toward general Religious Studies. This shift in focus means several theological schools currently training pastors fail to meet the new standards for accreditation. Should the seminaries and schools fail to satisfy the agency, they will lose their accreditation for bachelor degrees in theology. All the Swedish programs in theology will have to include more courses in Religious Studies. In addition courses in practical or confessional theology should be separated from “academic” courses, and cannot earn credit points. The report is thus a problem for all theological education in Sweden, not only for confessional or denominational education.

Iceland

The Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies is the smallest in the University of Iceland (1911), and is placed within the School of Humanities, one out of five schools in the University. At present there are seven professors and 130 students. They offer a five-year programme leading to the degree cand.theol., which qualifies for ministry in the National Church of Iceland; a three-year program leading to a Bachelor’s degree in Theology; a degree which confers the right to work as a deacon; and a Master’s and Ph.D. program in Theology.

Finland

The theological programs necessary for ordination in the Church of Finland can be received in the University of Helsinki, the Swedish speaking Åbo Academy in Turku or the University of Eastern Finland (Joensuu). Like the Swedish and Danish counterparts, the Finnish university faculties declare themselves not to be “attached to any religious denomination”, although most of the graduates enter the service of the Evangelical Lutheran Church. The Research Institute of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland coordinates research on religious life, church matters and various trends in contemporary society. The church owns its own university, Diaconia University of Applied Sciences (Diak) in Helsinki, but they do not offer theological programs, but programs of education and training in diaconia, media studies, nursing, sign language interpretation, social services and youth work. Diak has about 3,000 students.

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20 www hsv.se/download/18.1dbd19a120d72e05717f3e37771/643-3060-07+b.pdf.
The **Faculty of Theology in the University of Helsinki** is among the largest theological faculties in the world. They have more than 2100 students, and in addition only one in four applicants get in. The University of Helsinki is a member of the *League of European Research Universities* (LERU). All theological disciplines are represented in the faculty. About 60% of the graduates find employment in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland and in spite of the large number of graduates in theology, the general employment rate for theologians is low. The **Catherine Institute** in Helsinki conducts and promotes research on religious life in Russia and Eastern Europe, the Byzantine cultural heritage and Orthodox tradition. Helsinki hosts several European and Nordic research projects, like the Nordic project on children’s life situations; the Nordic homiletic project on Lutheran sermons in the Nordic countries; and with the Research Institute of the Lutheran Church in Finland, an extensive project called *European Values*.

The Faculty of Theology in **Åbo Academy** (Turku, Western Finland) was established in 1924, serving the Swedish speaking minority in Finland. The Faculty trains ministers and teachers. Many future teachers supplement their theological studies with courses in psychology or history.

The Department of Theology in **Joensuu** in the newly merged University of Eastern Finland was established in 2002. They offer programs in Western Theology and in Eastern Orthodox Theology. Approximately 550 students participate in these programs. The Department of Orthodox Theology, founded in 1988, is the only institution in Scandinavia to offer academic education in the Orthodox tradition, including theology, liturgy and hymnology. The Department is an active member of the *World Association of Schools of Orthodox Theology* (WASOT).

**Norway**

The Faculty of Theology in the **University of Oslo** (1811) has been a liberal, yet confessional Lutheran institution with links to the Church of Norway, but declares today that “in its meeting with the postmodern and globalisation it is in the process of being transformed into a Faculty of Theology for the new millennium”. They offer programs on Bachelor’s and Master’s level in Theology, Professional Ethics and Religious Studies, and they do research in all the theological disciplines. One of the five interdisciplinary programs in the University of Oslo is about Religion, with the Faculty of Theology as a major participant. The faculty has a proud history of learning, with several distinguished scholars like Sigmund Mowinckel, Nils A. Dahl and Jacob Jervell. The theological faculty in the University of Oslo is a member of INATE.

The three theological faculties/schools in Norway co-operate in lifelong learning programs for the clergy. Congregational practice and integrated practical theology play a larger part in the curriculum in Norway. Theological professors in the University of Oslo have to be members of the Church of Norway, although dispensation is possible. This regulation is now under revision, and the university faculty has to find new ways of relation with the church, also due to the process of separation of church and state. Theological professors vote in the election of bishops, and the deans/rectors of the three theological faculties have seats in the Church General Assembly. There are no similar links between the universities.

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23 www.helsinki.fi/teol/tdk/english.
27 www.tf.uio.no/english.
28 For a presentation in English: www.tf.uio.no/english/research/theological-disciplines.html.
29 INATE’s offices are located at Gurukul Lutheran Theological College and Research Institute in Chennai, India, www.inateonline.org.
and the national churches in the other Nordic state universities, as they have to respect the differentiation between academic and religious affairs.

*MHS – School of Mission and Theology* in Stavanger has a special competence in cross-cultural theology, and cooperates with schools and seminaries in Africa, in education and research. This school was the first institution of higher learning in Norway to admit students from Africa (from the 1860s). They have approximately 300 students and offer Master’s programs in Theology and in Global Studies (in English). The Mission Archives – with valuable collections of texts (from the 1820s) and pictures (from the 1860s) – is part of the Department of Documentation and Library, and includes the historical archives of the Norwegian Missionary Society and a number of other mission organizations.

*Ansgar School of Theology and Mission* in Kristiansand is owned by The Mission Covenant Church of Norway (MCCN), a member of The International Federation of Free Evangelical Churches (IFFEC). The school is evangelical, subscribing to the Lausanne Covenant. In terms of ecumenicity, both the faculty and student body are open and belong to different evangelical churches and denominations. They offer several courses at Bachelor’s level as well as a Master’s program in Biblical Studies.

*MF Norwegian School of Theology* is the largest theological institution in Norway. MF has accreditation as a specialized university and is a member of the *Nordic University Association*. There are strong links with the Church of Norway, though no formal or legislative bonds. A large majority of the Norwegian clergy, including all the present bishops, are graduates from MF. MF offers Bachelor’s programs in Theology, Religious Education, Social Sciences, Intercultural Communication and Youth Ministry; Master’s programs in Theology (Lutheran, Roman Catholic, Methodist, Salvation Army and Pentecostal), Biblical Studies, Practical Theology, Sociology of Religion, Psychology of Religion, as well as in Diaconia, Religious Education and Religion, Society and Global Issues. Many of these “cross-denominational” courses are fitting the concept of ecumenical Missiology, or “Mission as Theology” as described by David J. Bosch.

MF started as a Lutheran confession institution, but has moved into an ecumenical theological school with a Lutheran platform. The Lutheran Church of Norway is still the most important stakeholder, but today MF has students and faculty members from the major churches and denominations in Norway. The education of pastors and priests is done in cooperation with the respective churches. The students now preparing for ministry within the different branches of Christianity will hopefully cooperate and communicate better when they become priests and pastors. The universities of Copenhagen, Helsinki and MF Norwegian School of Theology are members of the Global Network of Research Centers for Theology, Religious and Christian Studies, together with the 25 leading universities and theological schools all over the world.

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30 www.mhs.no/eng.shtml.
33 The present General Secretary of WCC, Dr. Olav Fykse Tveit, is a graduate from MF, and gained his PhD from MF in 2002 on *Mutual Accountability as Ecumenical attitude. A Study in Ecumenical Ecclesiology Based on Faith and Order Texts 1948-1998*.
35 www.globalnetresearch.org.
It is the intention of this short article to combine a brief survey on (Protestant) theological education in Germany with an introduction to the special role of Religious Studies, Missiology and Ecumenics (“MER”-subjects, in German: “RMÖ”-Fächer) which have a unique role in providing access to the horizons of World Christianity and World Religions in the context of a highly developed theological education tradition which historically predominantly served the needs of territorial churches within the boundaries of a nation state.

Theological education and theological research in Germany has a history of some 600 years: since the 12th and 13th centuries, the universities founded in the Middle Ages knew about theological faculties, as theology, along with canon law and medicine, was regarded as one of the three “higher faculties” to be established in each university while being complemented by the three “lower faculties”(artes liberales). In Germany, most of the theological faculties were founded between the 14th and the 17th centuries with Heidelberg (1386), Wittenberg (1502) and Marburg (1527) playing a major role in the formulation of the theological identity of the churches of the Reformation. For the Protestant Reformation, theological education and research had a key role as Martin Luther often referred to his role as a university teacher of theology in defending his insights and challenges for the renewal of Christian faith. Particularly Luther’s demand for studying the Holy Scriptures instead of relying just on the traditional philosophy provoked major changes in university education which later were put into a program of university reform by Philip Melanchthon. It is with the Reformation that the academic study of theology becomes the obligatory condition for becoming admitted for ordination in church ministry.1 Theological faculties receive the role to examine the clergy and to safeguard the doctrinal purity and truth of church ministers in their preaching and public ministry. Protestant theological faculties and universities (Marburg 1527) were only possible to be established with the support and active promotion of the territorial feudal authorities (Landesfürsten) which had led to a predominant orientation of theological education to the needs of territorial churches and less to the needs of the universal church.

The political separation between church and state in Germany in 1918 did not lead to an abolition of state-related theological faculties.2 Rather the new constitutional framework of Weimar (Weimarer Reichsverfassung Art 149, 3) provided some guarantees for the churches to continue theological faculties within the regulations of state law, though self-determined in their doctrine and curriculum content according to the needs of the Christian churches. Carefully formulated treaties between territorial churches and territorial states (Landeskirchen und Ländern) allowed for a continuation of theological education within the general university system, funded by the state, but organized in accordance with the needs of the churches.

Today, in Germany, there are 19 Protestant theological faculties and two church-related theological colleges which train both future pastors and teachers of religious education.3 During the winter semester 2007/2008, there had been 9,517 students enrolled in Protestant theology. Theological studies and courses

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are offered equally in all five main disciplines in all theological faculties in Germany.\footnote{See introduction into theological studies in Germany: www.ekd.de/EKD-Texte/ekd_texte_28_1.html.} Theological faculties in state universities are a matter of joint concern between the church and the state in Germany because – while taking seriously that there is no state church in Germany – theological faculties are state-backed institutions which fulfil also church-related tasks in the area of theological education. All Protestant theological faculties in Germany are joined together in a common forum which is called “Evangelischer Fakultätentag in Deutschland”.\footnote{www.evtheol.fakultaetentag.de/. There are certainly also some 20 Roman Catholic Roman theological faculties in state related universities and in addition some 35 Roman Catholic institutions relating to religious education of teachers in Germany.}

Apart from this body, there is a Joint Commission for Theological Education (Gemischte Kommission) in which representatives of state-related theological faculties and representatives of churches come together to discuss issues of theological education as well as a church-based theological education commission in which only the representatives of territorial churches responsible for theological education programs meet together regularly (Ausbildungsreferentenkonferenz).

Theological Education takes place in three different though interrelated phases:

1. as theological education in academic studies of theology (usually six years of academic study in universities)
2. as pastoral and liturgical education in church-related pastor’s training seminars (Predigerseminare) (usually 2-3 years of practical training)
3. as a continuing education program in the first years of ministerial service offered in church-related pastors’ education extension programs (Pastoralkollegs).

There has been an intense dialogue on theological education in Germany both in the 1960s (leading to the common framework of theological education in three phases in Germany agreed upon by all EKD member churches: “1987: Theologiestudium -. Vikariat – Fortbildung”), in the 1980s (leading to a common foundational paper: 1988: “Grundsätze für die Ausbildung und Fortbildung der Pfarrer und Pfarrerinnen der Gliedkirchen der EKD”) and in the 1990s (leading to a basic curriculum and core list of themes relevant for exams for Protestant theological education in Germany: 1996: “Übersicht über die Gegenstände des Studiums der Evangelischen Theologie und die Voraussetzungen und Gegenstände der theologischen Prüfungen”).\footnote{For details see: Art. Theologiestudium, in: TRE Bd. 33, Walter de Gruyter Berlin, New York 2002, 349ff.} In the context of the WCC planned World Conference on Theological Education in Oslo 1996 (“viability in theological education”), a number of crucial contributions were prepared to interrelate the international debate on theological education in PTE/ETE to the particular situation of theological education in Germany.\footnote{See: Dietrich Werner, Theologie zum Leben bringen. Anforderungen an eine zukunftsorientierte theologische Ausbildung, EMW Informationen Nr. 105, August 1995; see also: The Life Power of Theology under the Conditions of Modern Civilizations. A position paper from Evangelical Church or Germany (EKD), and: Bringing Theology to Life – Challenges for Theological Education geared to the future. A position paper from Evangelisches Missionswerk (EMW), in: Ministerial Formation No 76 (January 1976), 12-22 and 22-35.}

Also, in the context of a new debate on the legitimacy and relevance of Protestant theology in state related universities in the 1990s and the emerging decisions concerning the Bologna reform of university studies as a whole, a number of important new statements on theological education have been published, all of them (unfortunately) only available in the German language. There are several important key texts on the understanding of theological education in Germany, like a document on common understanding and

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cooperation between regional churches and theological faculties in Germany (2008)\(^8\) or a major study on the relevance of academic theology in society, in the university and in the church.\(^9\)

As the number of students in theology has gone down due to the demographic changes in western societies and also due to the fact that Protestant churches could not offer sufficient jobs for those who have finished theological education in the past, there are growing indications that some churches in Germany might see a severe shortage of well-educated ministers in the years to come. New public relations work and deliberate invitations to join studies of theology have started already.\(^10\)

It is a key conviction of the following deliberations that Religious Studies, Missiology and Ecumenics (“MER”), while historically being ‘latecomers’ in the field of theological disciplines in the context of German theological education, served and continue to render a liberating and widening perspective for the horizon in which theological education as a whole takes place. Religious Studies, Missiology and Ecumenics do have the vital function in opening up church horizons to the wider context of World Christianity, ecumenical unity and religious plurality and thereby engaging Christian identity with a genuine sense of the catholicity and dialogical mission of the church which, for many centuries, was preoccupied with its orientation to territorial boundaries and power realities (“Landesherrliches Kirchenregiment”). While historically this may seem late for this part of Christianity religious pluralism, minority situations and challenges for church unity have become an indisputable part of Christian witness and life in a German context in the later decades of the 20\(^{th}\) century, it is the role of MER studies to seriously engage with these realities and to equip religious educators and future pastors to become fit for the realities of a polycentric Christianity in the 21\(^{st}\) century. There has been an ongoing debate, therefore, on what ecumenical learning for theological education means for German theological education.\(^11\)

The study of missiology, ecumenical theology, and religions (MER) has been established at some German and other European universities for some decades already. In Germany, it started with the institutionalization of a missiological chair at the University of Halle in 1896 for Gustav Warneck who later would be called the father of the German Protestant theology of mission. From 1912, the Swedish Lutheran theologian and scholar of religious studies, Nathan Soederblom, was the first one to hold a chair of religious studies at Leipzig University. The study of religions was established at theological faculties due to a conceptual address the church historian Adolf von Harnack had given in 1901 as the new president of Berlin University.

\(^8\) die gemeinsam vom Rat der EKD und dem Fakultätentag erarbeiteten Empfehlungen “Das Zusammenwirken von Landeskirchen und Theologischen Fakultäten in Deutschland” (2008).


\(^10\) www.ekd.de/theologiestudium/startseite_theologiestudium.html.

How did the close link of mission studies and religious studies come about? Many missionaries, in the course of fulfilling their assignment in Asian or African countries for many years or even a life-long service, came close to the religious realities in their respective contexts, and started to research by doing what we call fieldwork nowadays. They wrote books about local godheads, regional cults and ceremonies, the world view of African tribes, the mythology of Indian gods, and the religious philosophy of ancient China, only by giving some examples. Many missionaries turned to ethnology and religious studies, learned the vernacular language, wrote dictionaries, and returning to their home countries, became renowned scholars in that respective field, be it Richard Wilhelm as a Sinologist (Frankfurt University), or Wilhelm Gundert as an expert on Japan (Hamburg University).

This close biographical affinity of mission work and religious field research was one of the origins of the inclusion of religious studies into the field of missiology. In many cases, a deeper knowledge of other religions was felt necessary in order to have an efficient mission approach, so that missionary-minded-scholars were the ones to represent this connection most fittingly. The result was that other religions were viewed through a theoretical framework under a theological influence, a syndrome which has been criticised sharply by non-theological religious scholars for the last 20 years. Only in the last few decades has the mission-oriented theological approach to religious studies given way to a more scholarly hermeneutics towards other religions which could also be communicated to other scientific disciplines in the humanities. We now have the situation that religious studies can be performed within theological faculties at state universities as well as within church related colleges – both performed as an independent interdisciplinary scholarly field, either directed by non-theological experts, or by missiologists, which are no longer accused of instrumentalization for missionary purposes. Along with this goes a very close cooperation between the scholarship of mission and religious studies, which applies both to relations between persons as well as to relations between organisations and institutions.

Both the disciplines of missiology and religious studies, in Germany, are nowadays struggling to gain or keep the status of a fully recognized area of studies and part of examinations within the range of the other theological disciplines (Old and New Testament, Church History, Systematic Theology, Pastoral Theology). Many churches and faculties either still do not include them in the compulsory curricula or provide them with a lower status.

As of now, there are three university institutes / chairs covering the whole field of MER, five chairs for Religious Studies and Missiology, in one case, Heidelberg, in addition to a chair for Ecumenics and Systematic Theology, a chair for Ecumenics and Systematic Theology at Bochum University, in addition to a chair of Religious Studies, and a chair of History of Religion at Rostock University with a chair holder having a strong interest in missiological issues.

Changes in the Understanding and Realities of “Mission” and Their Implications for the Understanding of Theological Education and the Disciplines of MER

The problem of recognition is part of a greater problem signified by a decay of ecumenical consciousness in churches and theological education. Particularly from the early 1990s onwards and after the unification of the two Germanys, a trend could be seen to focus on the effects of secularisation and the interest of regaining ground of western churches. “Mission” in this new context tended to be viewed as mission in the interest of traditionally strong churches to regain some of their original strength. Some chairs for mission and ecumenics at universities followed the trend to reshuffle their involvement towards the topic “mission in our own context” and entered into areas that had been reserved for pastoral theology. The worldwide horizon, which had entered into theological education with the perspectives of Religious Studies, Missiology and Ecumenics, was in danger of being narrowed down again and replaced by a Europe-
centered and German-focussed perspective interested mainly in revitalizing the church as the substantially missionary space which can face up to the challenges of a religiously and culturally plural society.12

In this shifting emphasis, it tended to be forgotten, that the key word of the “missionary structure” or renewal of the local congregation previously, in the 1960s, had meant something else. The focus on the missionary structure of the church and congregation, which was part of an ecumenical learning programme influenced by the thinking of the Dutch theologian Johannes Christian Hoekendijk, was not church-centered, but was about realizing the world context for the mission of the church and spelling out the idea of shalom, of the humanization of the world and seeing the church as one (not the only) instrument within the wider purpose of God for the healing and reconciliation of his creation (a program which was inspired and directed also by the German missiologist Hans Jochen Margull). It might well be that the debate on the mission of the church in the 1990s in Germany can still be inspired and enriched by aspects of the earlier ecumenical debate on the missionary structure of the congregation which, in contrast to present trends, is not determined by the overarching interest to re-gain church members and to find ways out of the crisis in church funds and resources.

But Missiology, Ecumenics and Religious Studies are continuing their role in enlarging the perspectives and transforming the terms of reference in interpreting the churches’ situation today: It has often been said that the “ecumenical world” now is being present in the midst of Germany on our doorsteps: many missiologists have pointed out the realities of migrant congregations of African, Asian, and Latin American origins, being at home now in Germany and other European countries, celebrating their worship services here and in a different way than German congregations around them, living in our neighbourhoods and challenging the traditional rhythms and customs of the church. As many of them have a Pentecostal orientation, the existence of these migrant congregations have shifted into the centre of interest at German university chairs of mission and ecumenics, leading to the inclusion of courses on Pentecostal theology and churches into the teaching tableau as well as to related research programmes.13

The pluralistic religious and cultural context in Europe has made many chairs of mission turn towards interreligious dialogue. The respective chairs in Lund (Sweden) and in Aarhus (Denmark), as well as in Glasgow, for some years have been convening large international and interdisciplinary conferences on bilateral interreligious dialogue or with a multilateral approach facing the context and redefining mission as a programme of interaction with the great variety of cultural and religious challenges. The Institute for Missiology, Ecumenics and the Study of Religion at Hamburg University in the 1980s started a regular programme on interreligious dialogue with a constant participation of Islam, Buddhist, Hindu and Jewish representatives giving their respective views on subjects of common interest of a religious, social or cultural character.

It becomes more and more obvious, in contrast to some trends in the earlier understanding of ‘mission’ in the 1990s, that Christian mission, under the circumstances of the second half of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century, can no longer be spelled out just in terms of propagating the gospel, church growth, and ‘reaching the unreached,’ but that commitment to Christian mission consists of the endeavour to figure out Christian self-understanding in relation to and interaction with a context of religious and ideological pluralities of which Christians are a part of together with many others. New research fields like the issues of conversion, double religious belonging, multiple religious identity and post-colonial discourse have become popular. Thus Religious Studies, Missiology and Ecumenics do play a vital role in theological education by directing educational processes towards realizing and deepening the

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12 Typical for the trend was Andreas Feldtkeller/Theo Sundermeier (ed.), Mission in pluralistischer Gesellschaft, Lembeck: Frankfurt/Main 1999.
13 For this subject see the issue No. 1-2/2005 of the Zeitschrift fuer Mission (“Migration”) and the issue No. 6/2009 of the journal Evangelische Theologie.
understanding of Christian witness, service and identity in the midst of an increasingly plural and complex social and political environment.


In order to clarify the position of missiology within the ‘canon’ of theological disciplines in the university, to define the relation of missiology/intercultural theology and study of religions, and also to readjust the subject with regard to the perspectives of the new situation described above, the “Religious Studies and Mission Studies” Section of the (German) Academic Association for Theology (WGTh) and the Administrative Board of the German Association for Mission Studies14 jointly developed and passed a joint position paper in 2005.15 It states that the field of MER has assumed many additional responsibilities from the whole range of theological subjects and – with respect to the situation of religious plurality – needs to be renamed “Missiology/Intercultural Theology”, bearing in mind that the term ‘missiology’ due to the historical development of the concept should not be dropped. The document reads: “In its current approach, the subject – from a wider theological perspective – focuses on the encounters and disputes between Christianity and non-Christian religions, as well as on theological reflections about the non-western cultural dialects of Christianity in close connection with the general question of ecumenism”.16 Along this line, the statement identifies three working areas: “1. The History of Theology and Christianity in Africa, Asia, Latin America and Oceania. 2. Intercultural Theology in a narrow sense (e.g. contextual theology, North-South-interaction and conflicts in World Christianity, migration, development problems) 3. The theology and hermeneutics of inter-religious relationships (e.g. inter-religious dialogue, Mission Theology, Theology of Religions)”.17

From some reactions to the paper, from a Japanese, New Zealand, and African background18, it has become obvious that some of the points stated in this document are borne out of a particular context and that the way missiology and religious studies are defined here is reflecting a particular European if not a German perspective. In particular, the new term “Intercultural Theology” which was added to “Mission Studies” provoked some criticism, such as focusing too much on cultural issues and leaving out social, religious, political dimensions. It was also asked whether “Interreligious Theology” might be the more appropriate term.

On the whole, the way by which this German position paper was received and criticised in the subsequent debate was like a process which resembled the principles of “Intercultural” Theology. One of the issues of the position paper certainly was to stabilize the subject of MER as to its position within the theological faculties in a German university setting, facing some trends to reduce the ‘canon’ of theological disciplines to only five, which in effect would have led to excluding the disciplines of MER.

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14 Fachgruppe Religionswissenschaft und Missionswissenschaft innerhalb der Wissenschaftlichen Gesellschaft fuer Theologie, Verwaltungsrat der Deutschen Gesellschaft fuer Missionswissenschaft.
17 Ibid. 107.

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What is Particular about German/European Missiology?

It has become a common conviction nowadays, in most of the circles in theological education in Germany both on the churches side as well as in universities and their faculties, that MER has an indispensable function for relating the understanding of Christian faith and identity to issues of religious plurality, World Christianity and church unity. It still is a major responsibility of European chairs for mission to do research and teaching about theologies in Asia, Africa and Latin America and to update churches in a German or European context about what is going on in other contexts. The challenges for Religious Studies, Missiology and Ecumenics in the countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America might be different, as living in a minority situation and in direct contact with other religions is not a new phenomenon for them like it is for some European churches. To write a history of Christianity in East Africa is a matter of church history for an African theologian, but it can become a matter of mission history for a European theologian as it is an issue of missiology in a German context to analyze the thinking of a Korean theologian which would be a matter of systematic theology for a Korean scholar. Theological education in ecumenical and interreligious perspective, therefore, is bound to learn from perspectives of colleagues from the same disciplines in other contexts. This is why the exchange and dialogue with regard to inter-continental perspectives which is offered by the International Association of Mission Studies (IAMS) and the Journal of Mission Studies is so important also for the dialogue on theological education in Germany. The particular focus and approach in German missiology might not be in all its elements and topics as such (as these might resemble topics taught in other context as well), but in the deliberate attempt to relate these diverse topics to the realities and complex challenges of churches in Germany which irrevocably want to learn about and study their Christian identity in relation and fraternal partnership with other Christian churches in World Christianity and brothers and sisters in other world religions living in their own contexts.
BOLOGNANIZATION OF THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION IN 
GERMANY AND SWITZERLAND

Reinhold Bernhardt

On 19 June 1999, 30 European governments signed the Bologna Declaration. The goal of the process agreed upon therein is to create, by the year 2010, a common European Higher Education Area, in which programmes of study, measurements of achievement and degrees granted are comparable and transparent. This fundamental reform of the structures of study courses, and, therefore, also of the entire domain of higher education, is intended to lead, in the participating countries, to improved offerings of courses of study, more strongly oriented towards areas of employment, to less lengthy periods of study, to increased mobility of students and lecturers, and to assurance of quality. In the meantime, there are now 46 participating nations. Follow-up conferences are held every two years to check on progress toward these goals.

The implementation of these goals is especially intended to bring about the following changes1:

(a) A system of academic degrees is to be established, at the bachelor’s and master’s levels, which are to be compatible both nationally and throughout Europe, and recognized by all participating countries. Doctoral study can be included as the third step, beyond the master’s degree.

(b) The courses of study are structured in modules. Modules are units of learning, defined by their content, each consisting of several aims to be achieved. Besides the content, the goal of study, the way it is to be carried out and tested, and the workload required of the student is defined in the plan for each module. The module concludes with an examination. In this way, the examinations which formerly were given only at the end of the course of study are broken up and distributed throughout the period of study.

(c) As a “guarantee” that individual achievements during the course of study are counted, a credit point system (ECTS, European Credit Transfer System) is to be introduced. One credit point corresponds to 30 hours of work by the student, including attendance at lectures etc. and preparation for examinations. This convertible way of recognizing achievement should make it possible to transfer credits for study work already accomplished between different programmes of study and between institutions in different places.

(d) To earn a doctorate it will no longer be sufficient, as previously in most subjects, to write a dissertation and pass a rigorosum examination. Instead, the student will be required to follow a course of doctoral study, during which his or her achievements will be documented by credit points (“Bologna III”).

(e) Study should be undertaken as part of a process of lifelong learning. Continuing education, at the postgraduate level after earning a degree, will be more strongly promoted as a task for universities. It will include the recognition of achievements in learning which have taken place outside academic institutions.

For the study of theology, this new system brings about drastic changes, and there has been opposition from many faculties of theology in Germany during its implementation. The process of discussion and implementation in Germany continues at differing speeds, while in Switzerland it has already been completed. The theology faculty at the University of Basel was the first to do so and in the autumn of 2001 it had already introduced the ETCS and a programme of study structured in modules for the “licentiate” degree. It then proceeded to work out the division into “Bachelor’s” and “Master’s” programmes of study. These were launched in the autumn of 2004. During the spring semester 2009, the faculty evaluated its

1 Information is available from the German Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung at www.bmbf.de/de/3336.php#inhalte.
experience gained so far and undertook a first revision of the system, so that shortcomings which became evident during the first phase could be corrected.

Since among all the German-speaking faculties of theology the Basel faculty has the most extensive experience with the Bologna system, I shall base the following observations on this model with which I am very familiar. Certainly there are difficulties with the structure that cannot be eliminated, but at best only reduced. Nevertheless, it offers important advantages that clearly represent gains compared with the previous arrangements for theological study. I shall describe these advantages and disadvantages with reference to the five points mentioned above.

### The Different Levels of Courses of Study

The “Bologna Philosophy” provides for a clear distinction, or even a separation, between the broadly based bachelor’s and the specialised master’s programmes of study within an academic discipline. For the bachelor’s programme, 180 credits must be earned, normally within three years (though this is more the ideal than the reality). For the master’s programme there are 120 credits to be earned, supposedly within two years. The student is intended to have access to the master’s programme after completing a bachelor’s degree in any of a number of different fields, and the reverse is also true: completion of bachelor’s studies in theology should enable students to choose from a number of different fields in which to earn a master’s degree. This separation of levels also includes the basic principle that a bachelor’s degree represents qualification for an occupation.

If this model with its different levels is seen and practised in this way, so that the bachelor’s programme leads to an independent and complete degree that already qualifies one to practise a profession, and not all those who earn it go on to further studies, it cannot be applied to the culture of theological scholarship. The study of theology is an integrated course of professional preparation, and it does not make sense to separate it into segments. The same is true of other classic academic disciplines leading to professions, such as the study of medicine or law. Just as a bachelor’s degree in medicine does not qualify one to practise as a physician, and in law does not qualify one as an attorney or judge, in theology it is not sufficient preparation for priest or pastor of a parish church. Thus the churches are right to consider the B.Th. degree as an insufficient qualification for acceptance as a trainee (Vikar), a pastoral assistant in a local church. The B.Th. degree may be sufficient for certain areas of work within and outside the churches, but not for service in the pastorate. The master’s programme emphasises not only practical theology as a subject, but also the broadening and deepening of knowledge of the other subjects. In addition, the master’s programme gives the student the important opportunity to develop his or her own image.

In Germany, the Conference of Evangelical Faculties of Theology and the EKD executive committee on academic reform have criticised the two-level model and rejected it. 2 The intent is to look for ways of adopting some elements of the Bologna reforms (such as structuring the course material in modules), while avoiding the use of others (such as degree programmes at two separate levels).

However, it is entirely possible to make constructive use of the two-level model, a bachelor’s programme followed by a master’s programme, if it is made clear that, as a rule, the course of study is really one course, leading from one level to the other. In so doing, the Bologna concept would not be implemented in terms of only a smaller number among those who earn the BTh being allowed to continue to the master’s level. The guiding concepts of the Bologna reform should not be applied in a rigid,

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legalistic, uniform way to all disciplines, but rather be applied flexibly and adapted to different academic cultures.

Unlike the German Conference of Ministers of Culture, the Swiss Conference of University Rectors recognized the bachelor’s degree, not as a normal qualification for a profession, but only as signifying that one is preparing for a profession. To qualify fully to practise a profession, further educational steps are necessary. This solution makes sense from the point of view of theology. If it is made clear that the B.Th. and M.Th. programmes belong together, as two levels of a single course of study, the distinction between the two programmes does also make sense. It divides the course into a first phase, in which knowledge of ancient languages is acquired along with methodical and foundational theological studies and an overall perspective, while in the second phase one delves more deeply into the theological content and has the opportunity to specialise.

The B.Th. degree documents the student’s progress so far. Through the module examination results taken together, the student can see whether he or she is able to meet the expectations of theological study and thus make an informed decision about whether to continue to the second phase. Under the old system, problems of suitability and capacity for achievement often were not confronted openly, despite intermediate and preparatory examinations, until the final exams after long years of study, resulting not infrequently in a deep personal crisis for the individual. But on earning a B.Th. the student has the opportunity to change direction earlier, and has in any case completed a university degree, instead of standing there empty-handed as someone who “couldn’t finish”.

A further advantage of the two-level model is the possibility of offering a variety of master’s curricula, thus acknowledging the fact that not all theology students, by far, are planning to serve a church or to teach beyond the secondary level. At the University of Basel, where there are no students preparing to teach at college/university level, yet even so only about 60% of theology students are planning on a pastorate. The other 40% go into other fields of work. If a theology faculty has the capacity, it can offer both a master’s programme of preparation for service in a church and another which is more oriented to cultural studies. Further differentiation is possible, and is being developed at some of the German faculties, for example at the University of Jena, where a programme called “Christianity in Culture, History and Education” leads to a “Master of Arts” (M.A.) degree rather than the M.Th.3 In this way a faculty can develop its own specialised image and academic market position. However, such a variety of masters’ programmes can only be implemented if existing modules are offered for credit in several different programmes of study, or new modules are developed for such multi-purpose use, or credit is given for modules offered by other faculties. Even so, this sort of multi-purpose situation can be created easily.

The reform has also made it possible to incorporate the acquisition of the Hebrew, Greek and Latin languages into the B.Th. programme. The language and reading courses are offered at Basel for credit, and are either given in conjunction with Old Testament, New Testament and church history modules, or – as also at the University of Bochum in Germany – counted as elective courses. A student beginning the programme who already demonstrates satisfactory knowledge of one or more of these languages can receive the credits given for the language course(s) in question. In Basel language teaching is organized in three successive semesters, in which Latin, Greek and Hebrew can be studied, in that order. The courses are also intended to convey knowledge of the life of each particular culture, in order to mesh the acquisition of each language with its place in the actual study of theology.

The three-year period expected for completion of a bachelor’s degree is, however, almost impossible to adhere to if all three languages have to be learned. A few faculties extend the normal period of study accordingly for each language which the student still has to learn.

3 www.uni-jena.de/unijenamedia/MA_Christentum.pdf.
Structuring of Study Programmes in Modules

The “Bologna philosophy” calls for programmes of study no longer to be structured primarily in terms of subjects (the most important for Protestant theology being Old and New Testaments, church history, history of theology, systematic theology and practical theology), but rather as modules according to content. Each module as a unit of study consists, as a rule, of a number of precisely determined individual requirements (lectures and seminars), is to be completed within two semesters and must be validated by a module examination. The contents, the goals for learning, the forms of instruction and the type of exams, along with the credits to be earned, are precisely defined. Each study programme consists of a certain set of modules which build upon one another. They can be put together like building blocks and can also be integrated into other programmes of study. The student has varying degrees of freedom to decide the order in which to complete them. However, this freedom is in fact quite limited within the bachelor’s programme, in which the logic of building knowledge upon other knowledge leads to a normal curriculum to be followed. In the master’s programme there is distinctly more such freedom. There is an area of required modules and another of elective or optional modules, in which students can pursue their own interests and develop emphases of their own.

The change of system from subject-oriented courses to content-oriented modules has opened the possibility for rethinking the content of studies and structuring programmes anew. Many faculties have benefited from the opportunity to define modules touching on more than one subject area, in which exegetical and historical perspectives, and those arising from systematic theology and practical theology, are focussed together on one theme. For example, in the Catholic theological faculty in Freiburg/Breisgau, Germany, there is a module called “World and Humankind as God’s Creation”. It contains texts and concepts of creation from the Old and New Testaments, approaches to the philosophy of nature and philosophical anthropology, distinctions between [universal/monistic thinking Alleinheitsdenken und Schöpfungsdifferenz], theological anthropology, as well as sexual ethics and [Ethik der Lebensformen].

Such multi-subject definitions of modules correspond to the basic principle of the Bologna reform, that orientation toward content and acquiring competence is to replace conveying knowledge of subjects in isolation. This also leads to increased exchange among theological disciplines and cooperation among the teaching faculty members. This cross-disciplinary networking among bodies of knowledge also mitigates, at least in part, the deficit that arises from the lack of the previously customary final examinations.

Before the Bologna reform, the study of theology was in actual fact often divided into three parts: in the beginning phase the emphasis was on learning the classical “languages of theology”; in the middle phase, the student attended theological lectures etc. and fulfilled the requirements for registering for the examinations. The third phase (which not infrequently lasted several years) was that of preparation for the final examinations, in which the students acquired the enormous amount of knowledge needed by working alone and in small groups. The final examinations consisted of written and oral examinations, not infrequently as many as ten in all. The need to master such a large quantity of material, together with anxiety, could constitute quite a psychological burden and sometimes resulted in postponement of the examinations, extending an already long period of study even further, or caused the student to give up altogether without receiving a degree.

The Bologna model provides for the final exams to be replaced by module examinations, each one to be taken as the module is completed. This spreads the burden of the examinations over the entire period of study. This model has been implemented by the Swiss Protestant faculties of theology, but the German ones are prevented from doing so by policies of the churches. In Germany the provincial churches (Landeskirchen) have the sole right to administer examinations to candidates for ordination to the pastoral ministry. Each church engages, for this purpose, professors from a theological faculty – usually the one at

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4 www.theol.uni-freiburg.de/studium/studienberatung/mot/modulhandbuch-200709 (Modul M6).
the nearby university within its province \(\text{(Land)}\). By contrast, the comparable Swiss cantonal churches have agreed a “concordat on the training of pastors for German-speaking Switzerland”, in which they have yielded their right to examine candidates for ordination to the faculties of theology at the universities of Basel and Zürich, and dissolved their own “church examination boards”. This cleared the way for the change to the system of module examinations in the course of theological studies.

In my view this change is one of the greatest advantages of the Bologna system, but it too comes at a price. As the price of distributing the burden of the examinations throughout the period of study, the student loses the integration across subject boundaries of the entire body of knowledge acquired, which had previously been the result of preparation for the final examinations. Ideally, the student was thereby to gain an overview of theology. However, there are other ways of instilling this interdisciplinary view, for example through the cross-subject modules described above, or through interdisciplinary bachelor’s seminars and master’s seminars. In the Bologna model as implemented in Basel, a study programme does not end without an examination. At the end of both bachelor’s and master’s programmes there is also a scholarly paper to be completed at home, consisting of extensive study of a topic selected with the participation of the student, and a seminar which is related to this paper, but also goes beyond it.

The introduction of these interim examinations during the course of study, however, has created much more work for the teaching staff. This involves advising students about the exams, administering the exams and especially conducting them. Besides the module exams, attendance at each day’s lecture or other element has to be validated. In Basel, this validation covers the examination requirement for many modules, which eases the double burden for both students and lecturers.

For the students, their studies have become a permanent hurdles course from one exam to the next. Especially around the end of the academic year, module exams are bunched together and are given during an exam week outside the lecture schedule. Preparation for these exams can end up being postponed into vacation time. The students complain about this burden, but they are also aware that it spares them the “big crunch” at the end. They have to learn to organize their work properly, to judge what they can accomplish and to implement it by practical management of their time – capabilities which will serve them well in their future careers.

Not only regarding examinations, but also with regard to planning their studies and following them through, the intensity of counselling for students has clearly increased. Students need support in choosing lectures to attend according to modules, and in deciding which modules it makes sense to pursue within a given academic year. There are also many questions regarding validation of individual lectures, seminar sessions etc. Much of this advice takes place “horizontally” between students, which in turn promotes communication within the student body and thus works against the individualization of each one’s study plan. But it has also increased contact between students and teachers.

The organisation of the study material into modules also has consequences for the planning of courses to be offered. Each module must contain certain obligatory offerings. This includes more introductory and general survey offerings, i.e. basic courses and lectures that cover the material of the entire module or at least a large part of it. The lecturers are obliged to offer such lectures and sessions in a regular cycle. That means that on one hand, they have to give lectures with the same content about every four semesters, like the former “lecture cycles”. This entails less preparation for the lecturer each time the material is repeated, even when a lecturer is conscientious about bringing it up to date each time. On the other hand, it becomes harder to keep one’s teaching responsibilities in step with one’s research. However, new vessels can be created for this purpose. In Basel we have met this need with the possibility of offering research-oriented activities in modules designed for in-depth study.

The change of system also affects the sequencing of the study programme. Since modules usually extend throughout a year, the academic year becomes the structural unit, instead of the semester. This brings about more continuity in the learning process for the individual student. He or she becomes part of a

\[\text{Handbook of Theological Education in World Christianity}\]
The group of students who are more likely to be in the same year of their studies, and can build relationships among themselves. This in turn influences the grouping of participants in lectures and sessions, and thus affects the way these can be conducted. Under the old system a given lecture would be attended by students at all different stages of their study programmes, but now the range is more limited, which means the levels of knowledge of the participants are more comparable and the presentation can better avoid being too demanding for some and not demanding enough for others.

**The European Credit Transfer System**

Under the ECTS, credit points are given for the fulfilment of every academic requirement during a programme of study. As a rule, this applies to all learning opportunities offered as part of the programme, including lectures but also work done at home, as well as the module examinations. In special cases, for example when required lectures etc. are not available or for compelling reasons the student is unable to attend, it is possible to make a “learning contract” with the professor under which credits may be earned through alternate activities. A basic principle is that credits can only be earned through active work or participation, not by mere attendance. Presence at lectures is validated by oral or written checks, while in interactive seminars etc. one must not only attend, but also participate in discussions and present papers or other individual achievements.

This leads to regular attendance by the students and motivates them to be prepared and to collaborate in the learning process. The discussions in seminars profit from it. In general it can be observed that this system encourages students to be more disciplined and forthcoming.

But the two-level structure, the modules and the granting of credit points are repeatedly criticised as characteristics of the system which are incompatible with study in the humanities. David Plüss sums up the complaints against the Bologna reform as follows: “Rather than all-inclusive *education* of the person as such, it is said that this should be called goal-oriented *training*. Rather than being allowed their freedom, as under the previous system, and having responsibility expected of them, it is said that students under Bologna are *dictated to*, and the [customary] freedom of the student is *massively reduced*. It is claimed that the *organization as in a school* makes individual, independent theological educational experiences impossible, and that the Humboldt university [concept] is being degraded and reduced to a school [for children].”

There is no doubt that study under the Bologna system is much more clearly structured than used to be the case. This structuring is intended to bring about reform. The introduction of the module system clearly increases the requirements to be completed during study. Especially in the bachelor’s programme, the opportunity for choice is quite limited. Certain academic offerings (lectures etc.) are also prescribed within the modules in this programme. In the master’s programme, however, the plan of study establishes only the *types* of offerings (lectures, seminars etc.), so that students can decide according to their subject preferences which ones to choose. The area of elective courses is also increased.

It is my experience that the individual initiative of the student, and his or her readiness to design an individual path, does not suffer greatly under a more strongly structured system. In making their choices, students are certainly concerned about earning their credits, and they adapt their choices to the guidelines of the study plan, but they have enough leeway in creating their individual plans to pursue their own interests – in any case, provided that they dispose of enough time and energy to invest largely in their studies as opposed to other demands.

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On the other hand, the more structured character of the bachelor’s programme in particular prevents disoriented and chaotic approaches to studies, in which the foundational learning takes place too late in the game. The clearly ordered initial period of study helps students find their way at the university level. The lack of orientation which many students used to display has been reduced, and a more goal-oriented and effective approach has been made possible. The demands of a structure do not have to hinder, as many people fear, development of an independent intellectual personality, but can actually strengthen certain learners. Admittedly, any system will be better suited to particular students, and the Bologna system tends to foster certain types of students, just as the previous system tended to foster others.

The reproaches that students are dictated to and their freedom is limited certainly may not simply be ignored, but they are not generally applicable to all types of learners, only to specific ones. No system can cover entirely the needs of all types of learners and do justice to them. What is crucial is how well the system can absorb the other types. The more “niches” and possible variations there are, the greater the capacity to absorb, even though administration is thereby complicated.

This discussion must also include consideration of how theology can benefit from students’ opportunities to earn credits in other faculties and have them counted as electives. This ruling also attracts students in other faculties to try attending offerings in theology. Some may have been interested in theology, but were deterred by the language requirements from choosing it as their field; in this way they can come into contact with theological subject matter, students and professors. This may even motivate some to change their field of study.

Conversely, theological students benefit from a more interdisciplinary influence on their programmes of study. They, too, can make use of the opportunity to earn credits in other faculties and programmes and thus broaden their horizons. In this way, theology can become more strongly associated with the other university disciplines than it used to be.

The theological faculties could also seize upon this opportunity to design offerings specifically to meet the needs of students in other faculties. A few semesters ago in Basel, an introduction to theology for art history students was very well received. Possibilities for cooperation between faculties may also be discovered, for example, joint offerings by exegetes with scholars of ancient history from the philosophy and history faculties. This applies also to other subjects and their neighbour disciplines in still other faculties.

**Structuring of Doctoral Study Programmes**

The structural reform of theological study extends to doctoral study as a third level. The degree of Doctor of Theology is earned through the successful completion of a structured programme of study which, besides the dissertation, requires other achievements of the student. This is intended to prevent the narrowing of students’ vision to the particular topics on which they are working and to promote the gaining of further subject-related, interdisciplinary knowledge which is relevant for their future careers. Implementation of Bologna III has not yet advanced very far in Germany, so I will speak mainly about the planning and developments in the process here in Switzerland.

The three theological faculties of Basel, Bern and Zürich have made an agreement to cooperate in setting up a joint doctoral programme as their institutional vessel for doctoral study. The aim is networking in the supervision of candidates, to offer them more learning and continuing education opportunities, but also to enable intensive contact among them, so they can share experience and support one another in their research projects. The existing doctoral colloquia in all three places are included in this programme while retaining their independence. In addition, doctoral candidates from the three faculties in all theological fields are invited to a regular series of interdisciplinary plenary conferences, where they work on issues of method and content.
The curricular portions of the doctoral study programme, for which 30 credits may be earned, are completed through central and decentralized programme offerings. They also include the acquisition of competence in areas outside the student’s subject of focus, and research skills which help in preparing written work but also increase one’s employability. Credits can be earned through presentation of the student’s own research project, through lecturing, writing reviews and essays, taking part in conferences, acquiring teaching skills, learning languages or developing working methods such as presentation technologies and writing according to scholarly standards.

Advising and supervising a doctoral student is no longer solely the province of the professor who is chiefly responsible for him or her. A small committee is formed for this purpose, and may include representatives of different subjects, especially in the case of an interdisciplinary dissertation topic. Colleagues from other universities can also be included.

An agreement is made between the doctoral candidate and the supervising persons, specifying the sequence, the aims, the supervision and the conditions of the study to be undertaken. It must definitely ensure regular feedback to the candidate on the progress of his or her research work. This agreement is not a hard and fast contract, but rather a friendly arrangement which also takes into account the candidate’s personal situation. Many doctoral students are also working during their studies, and have a limited amount of energy to invest in their dissertation. Therefore, the three years foreseen for the completion of a doctorate only works in ideal cases.

A doctorate can also be pursued outside the structured doctoral study programme. This also entails curricular requirements to complete, but not as many. The previous route, in which a dissertation is written under the individual supervision of a single professor, is to remain an accessible choice. The future will show whether it proves useful to preserve both possibilities.

**Lifelong Learning**

For students who complete the master’s programme and do not seek a doctorate, but rather plan to continue towards ordination and a pastorate, the third level of their training, after the B.Th. and the M.Th. programmes, is practical training as assistant to the pastor of a local church (Vikariat). The transition to this level has always been regarded as an almost complete change of learning environment and learning content, aims and methods, as well as in definition of the personal role of the candidate for ordination. The “Bologna philosophy”, however, seeks a stronger cross-relationship between studies and academic training [?]. And even more, it stands for lifelong learning that continues to enrich a person’s life during the practice of a profession. For theology, this means that study, field work, Vikariat and further education should be more closely linked during the first years of service and throughout one’s professional life. “The various phases of training and further education should be distinct, yet integrated parts of a process that lasts throughout one’s career.”

This opens up new fields of endeavour for theological faculties, making new demands on their capacities. They will need to work together with other institutions such as preachers’ seminaries, church programmes of further education for pastors, church adult education, and community adult education (Volkshochschulen).

Theological study programmes should include spaces left open for field work (Praktika). In the Basel and Zürich faculties a “church practical semester (EPS)” has been introduced, during which students explore different areas of church work such as teaching school religion classes, social service agencies.

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6 Jochen Cornelius-Bundschuh: “Der Bologna-Prozess und die zweite theologische Ausbildung”, in Albrecht Grözinger, Jan Hermelink, David Plüss (eds.): Reform der theologischen Ausbildung (see bibliography), 132-133. [English not found, provisional trans.].
work in a local church; this period also can be used to gain insight into different domains of society such as economics, politics and the environment. The EPS is the responsibility of the churches, lasts five months and is usually taken between the bachelor’s and master’s programmes. Participants “deal with basic questions of faith in various areas of church and society. They continue the thinking process of their bachelor’s study by reflecting on the mission of a church community in the postmodern age, they gain experience during their own work in a Reformed provincial church.”7 The programme begins and ends with a church seminar co-sponsored by the theological faculties of Basel and Zürich.

At the University of Bern, the “practical semester” has been integrated into the bachelor’s programme and credits can be earned for it. It lasts 24 weeks and begins with practical work in a social service agency, business or agriculture setting. The practical stint in a local church then follows in parallel with the autumn semester. The students also take part in seminars in which they prepare for, are supported during, and evaluate their practical work.8

An area with great potential for development is further education for those holding higher education degrees, those practising professions and those interested in education. Offerings can range from one-time events to several-year study programmes leading to a certificate. The theological faculty in Basel offers, together with the Advanced Study Centre at the University of Basel, “Studies in Theology and Philosophy of Religion” especially for people in non-theological careers, to inform them about Christianity and other religions and also help them to understand religious content. It is possible to complete the study programme in three years and earn the degree of “University Professional” (UP).

The postgraduate programme on “Integration in a Multi-religious Context” is targeted at people in theological careers, teachers of religion, professional caregivers, social welfare educators, and ethnologists who work with people from different cultures and religions. Theoretical basic concepts in the culture of religions, theories of integration, ethnology, jurisprudence, conflict management etc. are studied, practical exercises are carried out and concrete projects discussed. The programme begins with a section leading to a certificate then the opportunity is offered for more intensive study towards a diploma. In a third phase, a “Master of Advanced Studies in Multi-religious Integration” (MAMRI) can be earned.

**Summing Up**

The Bologna reform, the essential features of which we have described here, has far-reaching consequences for theological study and the work of faculties of theology. The advantages outweigh the undeniable disadvantages. This is also true of the increased structuring of the study programme, which has been and will continue to be strongly criticised as a return to a “school-like” situation. It is the result of a basic paradigm shift. Whereas it used to be especially examinations, particularly the final examinations, which were regulated (by sets of rules for examinations), now the efforts at structural improvement take in the entire study process. The perspective has shifted from the end of the road to the road itself, from the overall qualification obtained at the end to the individual areas in which competence should be achieved during a long learning process. This paradigm shift is based on a concept of higher education which is appropriate for our time, as well as a sensible understanding of scholarship and education which should not be seen as opposed to the Humboldtian ideal.9 The students receive continuous feedback. They receive much more support along their way, and are taken notice of and evaluated, which communicates to them that they are valued.

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7 [www.konkordat.ch/htm/eps.thm.htm](http://www.konkordat.ch/htm/eps.thm.htm) [English not found, provisional trans.].
8 [www.kopta.unibe.ch/content/praktisches_semester](http://www.kopta.unibe.ch/content/praktisches_semester).
Another good and important element is the distribution of the material to be learned from the various theological disciples over the entire process of study. Students have previously tended not to deal with issues of systematic and practical theology until relatively late in their studies. The study programme structured in modules places introductory courses in all subjects near the beginning. For example, in Basel the fundamental module in “Systematic Theology / Dogmatics I”, the prolegomena of dogmatics which deals with the doctrine of God and with Christology, must be completed during the bachelor’s programme.

One goal of the “Bologna philosophy” has not been met, however: the mobility of students, the ability to move freely from one university to another, has not been increased. Experience in Switzerland has shown that it has actually become more difficult to enroll for individual requirements and whole modules in other faculties, or to move to another place during the bachelor’s or master’s programme. Since modules are defined differently by different faculties, entire modules from one faculty can only be counted at another faculty in individual cases. Instead, individual achievements must be fitted into the modules of the new place of study. But this also can cause difficulties, because often the instruction given by one faculty does not fit well into the module structure of the other faculty. The only time to transfer to another university without such problems is after completing the bachelor’s degree. But these limitations on mobility are not caused by the Bologna system as such, but rather by the way it is being implemented and the policy context of the universities in which this process is carried out. The pressures of competition and of image which have been and are being felt by universities have led them to construct the most varied and competitive study programmes and modules possible. In so doing they have neglected consultation with other universities.

Even though this goal may not be fulfilled, other substantial improvements have been made, so that in my assessment the overall outcome is positive. The deficits of which the critics complain can be lessened in part by implementing the Bologna guidelines in more flexible ways. The gains in quality will more than compensate for the faults that remain.

Translated into English by WCC Language Services

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**The Consultation Process Between European Theological Faculties (The Graz Process)**

Viorel Ionita

During the late 1990s several European churches asked the Conference of European Churches (CEC) to undertake a study process on the recognition of theological diplomas between different churches on this continent in order to facilitate an interchange of ministers between the respective churches. Theologians who received their theological diploma in a specific country could not be employed easily in another country, even by the churches of the same confessional family. This situation became more acute because in some countries there were more graduated theologians as the respective church could employ, while churches of the same confessional family in other countries were lacking candidates for their pastoral work. On the other side, in the same period of time, almost all theological institutions of higher education were under the pressure of the so-called Bologna process, promoted mainly by the ministries of education in European countries. Facing this challenge, the theological faculties were themselves very interested in working together with similar institutions across Europe. These were the two major reasons which lead to the initiation of the so-called Graz process.

The Graz process is mainly based on two consultations organised by the CEC in cooperation with the Catholic Theological Faculty of Karl Franzens University of Graz, Austria. The first of these consultations took place from 4-7 July 2002 in Graz and consisted first of all in a stock-taking of the situation of the different theological faculties in Europe. Some of them are only church related, others are related only to the respective state universities and finally there are also some theological faculties which are related to both the church and the state universities. The consultation considered further the possibility of an exchange of credit points as well as of joint research programmes. The statement adopted at this consultation emphasised that “the response from theological faculties and educational institutions of the European Christian churches, who came to Graz from almost everywhere in Europe in their ecclesiastical and confessional diversity”, was substantial and satisfying. Among the consultation’s recommendations was “that Europe-wide consultations should be convened regularly on issues of theology and theological education, every two to three years”. All the papers from this consultation, as well as a detailed report on the conference programme, have been published in English and German. This publication has been widely distributed throughout Europe.

The echo of the first Graz consultation motivated the organisers to plan a second one which took place from 6-9 July 2006, again in Graz. The total number of 75 representatives of faculties of different theological traditions, as well as representatives of churches and ecumenical organisations came from 23

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1 Part of this paper was originally presented to the the consultation: The Future of Ecumenical Theological Education in Eastern and Central Europe. Sambata de Sus, Romania, 24-28 September 2008, see: Full Report of the International Seminary for young lecturers and professors of theology, Sambata de Sus, Romania, 24-28 September 2008, Ed. by Viorel Ionita and Dietrich Werner, 103-110.

2 See: www.cec-kek.org/content/future_teo.shtml.


4 The Future of Theology in Europe. Report on the Consultation of the Theological Faculties in Europe, Graz, Austria, 4-7 July 2002, edited by Prof. Dr. Viorel Ionita, Prof. Dr. Gerhard Larcher and Prof. Dr. Grigorios Larentzakis, Geneva, 2003, 112.
countries in all. The main theme of the second consultation of theological faculties was: “The Challenges of Theology in a Pluralistic Europe”. The aims of the consultation were to consider:

1. the Bologna Process as an ecumenical challenge to new forms of cooperation; mutual recognition of academic achievement;
2. the significance of the confessional dimension in theological education for the ordained ministry;
3. points of orientation for cooperation between churches and faculties of theology;
4. links with various networks, such as the European Society for Theology, the European Society for Catholic Theology, Theological and Religious Education in Multicultural Europe (TRES), the Community of Protestant Churches in Europe (Leuenberg Church Fellowship), conferences of Catholic and Protestant faculties, Nordic Conference of Faculties etc.;
5. the founding of an ecumenical Conference of Theological Education, Faculties and Colleges in Europe.

One of the key note speakers at the second Graz consultation was Mr. Ján Figel, EU Commissioner for Education, Training, Culture, and Multilingualism, who spoke on “The Challenges for Higher Education from the European Union Perspective and the EU responses”. In his presentation, the EU Commissioner was very happy that issues like higher education and especially the Bologna Process were among the main topics of this consultation. The speaker also stated that the numbers of theological students attending lectures in most countries had been decreasing for years. The solution to these problems, according to Ján Figel, lies in a thorough reform of courses of study and their content. Theology has always been a part of the European universities. Change is part of the university since the very first ones were founded. The motto ecclesia semper reformanda is also valid in theology.

A central point in the EU Commissioner’s presentation was inevitably the question of the study of theology within the context of the Bologna Process. Here the speaker showed that the key words for Bologna curriculum reform are employability, interdisciplinarity and networking among institutions. The speaker was persuaded that courses of study in theology and religious education can greatly benefit from curriculum reforms with these concepts in mind. As in every other area of study, young people cannot be persuaded to choose theology simply by changes in course structures. The things that count are content, employability and personal development. In conclusion, Ján Figel encouraged all to make the goal of a Europe-wide space for higher education their own, so as to make it more attractive for students, teachers and scholars from Europe and from other parts of the world.

The second key speaker was Professor Georg Winckler, Rector of the University of Vienna and President of the European University Association. Prof. Winckler spoke first about the modern growth theory which also characterises the growth of European universities. Then he critically compared growth in European universities with North American universities on one hand, and with universities in China on the other. While the universities in the United States are elitist at the top and democratic at the ground level, the European universities are neither. To meet the challenge of a Europe of Knowledge, European universities need to grow especially in respect of the following three points:

1. liberate themselves from the shadow of government bureaucracy and become truly autonomous institutions, accountable only to the wider public;
2. liberate themselves from narrow national systems and work towards recognition of academic achievement in other countries, and also for mobility of students and teaching staff across national boundaries and between fields of study;
3. work for a better fundraising strategy, which should allow at least 2% of gross national product (GDP) to be available for education.

Prof. Winckler’s presentation clearly established the context for the future study of theology in European universities.
The main theme of the consultation was elaborated in three papers, given by three church leaders representing the Protestant, Catholic and Orthodox traditions respectively. The first speaker was Bishop Wolfgang Huber, Council President of the Evangelical Church in Germany, who spoke on *The Challenges of Theology in a Pluralistic Europe from an Ecumenical Perspective*, in his case from a Protestant viewpoint. The former professor of theology emphasised that Christian theology is always confronted with two challenges: it is asked what contribution it makes to the life of the church. And it must also ask itself, what its relationship to the world of scholarship is. In both of these aspects we are currently in the midst of thoroughgoing change. In a way, it is the first time since the Middle Ages that Europe is being consciously experienced as the space in which such change is taking place. To the question, “What are the challenges for theology in a pluralistic Europe?”, Bishop Huber offered four responses: 1) the self-understanding of Protestant theology; 2) the current challenges to higher education policy in Europe from a German viewpoint; 3) the possibilities and opportunities for ecumenical cooperation in the area of theology and especially theological education; 4) the current ecumenical situation and the challenges that go with it. In conclusion, Bishop Huber’s wish for the Second Consultation of Theological Faculties in Europe was that it might contribute to more exchanges and ecumenical agreements. To become aware of others in their ways of worshipping and being religious not only contributes to our knowledge but also helps us see where we stand ourselves. This is just the way we can succeed in overcoming false barriers between us and others, and to strengthen our common witness to the Christian faith.

The second main speaker was Archbishop Alois Kothgasser from Salzburg, who spoke on *Christian Theology’s Encounter with Recent Challenges in a Pluralistic Europe – the Mission and Ecumenical Orientation of Faculties of Theology*, from a Catholic viewpoint. The Archbishop discussed the following points: 1) a fruitful initiative; 2) awakening and crisis in the ecumenical movement; 3) provocative “signs of the times”; 4) how ecumenism serves Europe; 5) the challenge to Christian theology; 6) ecumenical responsibility in the study of theology; 7) “doing the truth in love together” (Ephesians 4:15-16). He closed with the observation that, knowing that there is no alternative to ecumenism and that it has been irreversible since its beginnings in the last century.

The third paper was written by Metropolitan Daniel Cibotea of Moldova and Bucovina, Romania, nowadays the Patriarch of the Romanian Orthodox Church. This Orthodox contribution discussed the following points:

1. the confessional pluralism of Christian theological faculties faced with a wider pluralism; the religious, cultural and philosophical pluralism of today’s Europe; the need for ecumenical cooperation among Christians and for co-existing socially with different kinds of religions and philosophies;
2. the pluralism of relationships which a faculty of theology has, and its efforts to promote its own identity within the academic context; new opportunities and challenges in its inner organising and activities,
3. the main challenges for European theology today: nihilistic secularisation, middle-class individualism, religious attacks by sects and the globalisation of the market for profit.

In this respect true theology must defend the traditional values of Christ’s gospel, which “is the same yesterday and today and for ever” (Hebrews 13:8). It is a theology which is critical of the self-satisfaction and ineffectiveness in mission of church institutions, and also critical of itself, that is, of theological faculties’ failure to fulfil their role in being the churches’ conscience reflecting on its mission. Each of these three main papers was followed by an intensive discussion, raising the issues of the relationship between the study of theology and the church governing bodies, or how the Bologna process can be carried out by the various faculties of theology in Europe; the attitude of today’s theology towards ecumenism was also discussed.
On Friday afternoon, continuing on Saturday, July 8, three sub-themes were discussed. The first of these was “Core Values for Theological Faculties in Europe Responding to the Evolving Needs of Churches and Society”, with papers presented by Prof. Vladimir Fedorov (Russia), from an Orthodox viewpoint; Prof. Antonio Autiero (Italy/Germany), from a Catholic viewpoint, and the Rev. Dr. Angela Shier-Jones (England), from a Methodist viewpoint. After a few questions for clarification in the plenary session, this theme was discussed in three working groups. The working groups reported, among other things, that it is important to study the question of relationship among church, theology and values. It was recognised that these three aspects belong together and must be treated as such. However, many of those in the discussion groups had trouble with the concept “values” that it is not without ambiguity and may have different meanings in different contexts. Nevertheless there was agreement that such a concept must exist.

There was also a great concern for promoting academic compatibility and mobility within Europe. Questions of compatibility include, among other things, the differing standards for biblical languages. On issues of mobility, again the motivation is uppermost to give students the enormous advantage offered, for example, by an Erasmus programme (without problems over the granting of credits, since these should be settled by an agreement before the student’s stay abroad). Another central point was setting up a coordinating office through which to share the results and emphases of research with the European faculties. There was unanimity that this is needed in order to carry out the Graz Process in a meaningful way.

It was also important to make clear once again that an area of “religious studies” should be promoted, even though it would not take the place of classical theology. Instead, the focus would be interdisciplinary, so that, for example, students of law or medicine could have access to this area of study. Also very important was the impulse that economics should not determine whether or not a course of study is offered. Areas of study such as theology or the humanities are an investment in the future, and should not be tied to short-term accounting; this was clearly the opinion of the participants in the discussion.

The second sub-theme was: “Challenges of the Bologna Process for the Theological Faculties and Churches in Europe”. In the plenary session, the way this process is put into practice in various contexts was described by Prof. Ivan Dimitrov (Bulgaria), Prof. Vidar L. Haanes (Norway); Prof. Wolfgang Weirer (Graz) and Dr. Bogdan Popescu (representing the European region of the World Student Christian Federation). With regard to this sub-theme, the working groups reported, among other things, that questions of mobility require transparency and uniformity, so that, for example, a person doing research for a dissertation will not be significantly hindered by additional examinations.

For master’s degree programmes there are already good possibilities for mobility and granting of credit. It was also suggested that faculties have special tutors to look after the needs of foreign students. These tutors should have had an ecumenical education and have studied abroad themselves, in order to be really competent in their role. Other points were that plenty of preparatory work can be done via the Internet, and that faculties can establish their own emphases which the tutors coordinate and make available to other faculties through a central coordination office.

A point which emerged as central is that a university lives by the interaction between teaching and research. Care should be taken not to have, from time to time, research professorships to bring in money and teaching professorships dedicated purely to teaching. Another important proposal was that of “ecumenical chairs”, not for professors concentrating on ecumenism as a subject, but to be occupied by professors from other confessions, which could raise the level of programmes considerably. Here faculties should benefit from the possibilities for mobility of the teaching staff offered by the Bologna Process. It would also be desirable that, just as each faculty has its emphasis which is communicated through the central coordinating office, individual professors might also do so. A “pool of experts” could thus be set up and coordinated. Finally, the enormous competence in the field of religion possessed by those who study
theology and its importance for interreligious dialogue was stressed. However, care should be taken not to let theology slide into religious studies.

The third sub-theme was “Building a Network of Faculties of Theology and Churches in Europe”. Speaking to this concern, Prof. Grigorias Larentzakis described the so-called Graz Process, which is the initiative to create a platform for cooperation among all the faculties of theology throughout Europe. Then, the following networks for cooperation among various faculties of theology were introduced: the European Society for Theology (by Prof. Susanne Heine); the European Society for Catholic Theology (by Prof. Albert Franz); the European Forum of Orthodox Schools of Theology (by Prof. Grigorias Papathomas); the work of the Community of Protestant Churches in Europe with regard to theological education (by Prof. Michael Beintker); Theological and Religious Education in Multicultural Europe (TRES) (by Prof. Erik Eynikel), and the World Conference of Associations of Theological Institutions (WOCATI) (by Prof. Petros Vassiliadis).

The presentations on these networks, as well as the discussion which followed, showed that these networks do not compete with one another, but rather complement one another very well. Finally it was proposed that Graz be the location of a coordinating office for the network connecting all the faculties of theology in Europe. At the conclusion of the Second Consultation of Faculties of Theology, a Final Statement was adopted, which emphasised among other things the role of theology as the bridge between society, the academic world and the church. The statement said further: “Theology not only serves the churches and Christian communities, it also makes a vital contribution in the social and political arena, helping people to understand human nature and all of creation.”

This Consultation “engendered a justifiable pride and confidence in theology as an academic discipline. There are, however, still questions that can provoke intense discussion amongst us: the relationship between church and faculty, questions about what to teach and how to teach, for example, the importance of research, interdisciplinary studies, theology versus religious studies, and how the faculties and the church understand and respond to modernity or postmodernity.” Finally, this Final Statement pointed out that progress still has to be made “to further the vision, aims, and objectives that have emerged out of the two consultations.” In this regard, it was proposed “that a permanent body be established called the Conference of Theological Education Faculties and Colleges in Europe, based at Graz.”

The two Graz consultations offered a good platform for exchange and cooperation between all theological faculties from all over Europe regardless their confessional profile. In Europe there are a considerable number of networks between theological faculties mainly on a confessional or regional level. The Graz process is the only network of all theological faculties from all Europe in a genuine ecumenical perspective. In the light of the second consultation in Graz the plans were discussed to establish a permanent office for the continuation of this consultation process. This office should coordinate regular consultations at the European level on specific matters. In this respect the theological faculties in Europe could better link to each other and respond together to the new challenges they have to face more and more in the secularised Europe.

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PART III

THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION FROM DENOMINATIONAL AND CONFESSIONAL PERSPECTIVES
THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION IN ORTHODOX CHURCHES

THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION IN THE ORTHODOX WORLD

Petros Vassiliadis, Eleni Kasseluri and Pantelis Kalaitzidis

The Theological Foundations of the Traditional Orthodox Theological Education

The overall approach to theological education in the Orthodox world is determined by its theology. The importance of theology, nevertheless, does not necessarily mean surrender to a ‘theology from above’ at the expense of a ‘theology from below’. As St. Maximos the Confessor clearly affirms, ‘a theology without action is a theology of the Devil.’ There are three distinctive characteristics of the Orthodox theology which have been instrumental in shaping the Orthodox theological education: the ecclesiological awareness of the Orthodox Church, the pneumatological dimension of her understanding of the Holy Trinity, and her anthropology, i.e. her peculiar teaching of theosis.

These theological foundations have resulted in the Orthodox Churches’ (both Eastern and Oriental) awareness that theological education is fundamental to the life and mission of the church. After all, from the very beginning of its life the church has never understood its existence, its life, and its activities without a reference to theology. Although all forms of theological education were shaped by the various religious, educational, social, political and historical conditions within which the church lived, it was within the liturgical framework that it was mainly practiced. Even in cases where educational institutions outside the liturgical framework, like the School of Alexandria (Clement, Origen etc.), became necessary to be developed, these have never lost sight of the heart of the church’s life, which was – and still is – the coming together in communion of the people of God, i.e. the eucharist.

Centered on the Eucharist and believing to be the “One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church”, the Orthodox Church utilizes theological education to witness to the whole gospel to the whole world. Without losing sight to the fundamental conviction that Jesus Christ is “the way, the truth and the life” (Jn 14:6), the theological education in the Orthodox world has for centuries insisted in the exposition of the apostolic tradition as it was explicated by the great theologians of their churches’ tradition. Always believing that their churches are not but simple servants in the “mission” of God, and basing their theology on “the economy of the Spirit” (side by side of course with the “economy of Christ/the Word”), the Orthodox theological institutions generally believe that God uses not only the church, but many other powers of the world for the salvation of humankind and the entire creation. After all, it is the Holy Spirit, the “Spirit of Truth,” that leads us to the “whole truth,” (Jn 16:13) and “blows wherever He/She wills” (Jn 3:8), thus embracing the whole of cosmos.

This “ecclesiological” and “pneumatological” perception of theological education is also reinforced by a peculiar “anthropology” which in the Orthodox East is expressed by such terms as theosis or deification. Whereas in the post-Augustinian Western Christianity a clearly static dichotomy of “nature”-”grace” was developed, in the East a more inclusive and dynamic anthropology was theologically elaborated. In the Orthodox tradition the human nature was never a closed, autonomous, and static entity; its very existence was always determined by its relationship to God. Guided, therefore, by a vision of how to “know” God,

1 The first major part of this essay is written by Petros Vassiliadis, the second part on women in orthodox theological education is written by Eleni Kasseluri, the third part by Pantelis Kalaitzidis.
and “participate” in His life, theological education was closely connected with the notion of a synergetic soteriology, and also with the anthropology of theosis or deification. Human beings are “saved” neither by an extrinsic action of God (as e.g. the “irresistible grace” of Augustine) nor through the rational cognition of propositional truths (cf. the scholastic theology of Thomas Aquinas), but by “becoming God”. In addition to its “given” status at God’s creation of humans in His “image” (κατ’ έικόνα”), the Christian understood as their permanent task to achieve His “likeness” (καθ’ ομοιοσιν), restoring in other words their “nature” to its original status. Rooted in the normative biblical (Pauline) expressions of life “in Christ” and “in communion of the Holy Spirit”, and inextricably connected with Christology, as it was first articulated by St. Athanasius (“Christ became human, so that we may become Gods”), this later Orthodox (soteriological but at same time anthropological) notion of theosis is not to be confused with the neo-platonic return to an impersonal One. It is a true continuation of the “social” (Cappadocian) understanding of the Holy Trinity.

This relational and synergetic theology has resulted in a much more inclusive understanding of theological education than the conventional exclusivist one that has developed in the West.

The re-orientation of theological education in modernity

However, from the time of medieval scholasticism, and especially after the Enlightenment, theology (the central aspect of theological education) became an independent discipline using almost exclusively the methods of the Aristotelian logic. Rational knowledge was, and in some cases is still, considered as the only legitimate form of knowledge. Thus, theological education gradually shifted away from its eucharistic/liturgical framework, i.e. away from its ecclesial, community, local context. The rational understanding of God and humanity had in fact led to a knowledge-centered and, especially in the West, to a mission-oriented theological education. Even today most theological institutions around the globe and across denominational boundaries, the Orthodox ones included, have been structured in such a way as to educate church ‘leaders’, not the entire people of God; to equip priests, pastors or missionaries with the necessary means to preserve and propagate certain Christian truths or ethical norms, and in some cases even to defend old-fashioned institutions, not to build up local eucharistic communities. They lost, in other words, the community-oriented and liturgically/eschatologically-centered dimension of theological education.

Naturally, therefore, all those engaged in the planning of theological education unconsciously lost sight of the most significant parameter that really makes theology viable: the very often forgotten truth that theology is the real conscience of the living church, constantly reminding the world of their need to restore communion with God; that theology is first and foremost the voice of the – sometimes voiceless – Christian community and one of its most fundamental tasks; even further, that theology is neither a discipline for young people at the end of adolescence, nor a prerogative of the professionals, be it clergy or academics, but the task of the entire Christian community, the whole of λαός τοῦ Θεοῦ (people of God), who is the only guardian of the Christian faith (cf. the famous and frequently quoted 1848 encyclical of the Orthodox Patriarchs to the Pope).

Consequently, little – if any – attention has been given to the fact that theological education is a worldwide enterprise fundamental to the mission of the church, but not in its institutional form but in its eschatological awareness of being a proleptic manifestation, a glimpse and foretaste, of the Kingdom of God. The church, understood mainly in its institutional dimension, gave rise to justified criticism and to a pressing demand to disconnect the theology from church (cf. Moltmann and others), the argument being that theology is accountable and related not to the church but only to the Kingdom of God. Of course none can deny the negative consequences for theological education of an institutional understanding of the church. But in the East, where by and large the church was understood in ecclesial (i.e. eucharistical) rather than in institutional terms, a clear-cut distinction between kingdom and church has never been developed.
Theological education and contextuality

This vision of the kingdom, which is so prominent in the Orthodox liturgical tradition, was unquestionably rediscovered and reinforced in modern times through sound theological reflections within the ecumenical movement. This awareness created for a moment an unprecedented enthusiasm among the deeply divided Christianity that the centuries-long divisions of the church might find some sort of an agreed solution; that the given by the triune God unity of the church might be restored. Unfortunately the momentum, created with the establishment of WCC and reaching its climax in the 1960s with the historic event of Vatican II, did not have an equally optimistic follow-up. Ironically, the ecumenical optimism and enthusiasm towards the goal of the visible unity of the church was interrupted at the very moment an important achievement in the field of theological hermeneutics was reached with the affirmation at a world level, and a wide application as a method from the 1970s onwards, of contextuality, i.e. with the recognition of the contextual character of theology.

This great achievement has in fact created a psychological gulf between the traditional churches and the new and most vibrant younger Christian communities, especially from the global South. The main reason for this unexpected, and at the same time unfortunate, development in the ecumenical movement was the complete negation of any stable point of reference. In the post-Uppsala period, culminating at Canberra, and finally coming to the “tension” in WCC-Orthodox relations in Harare, all authentic criteria in the search for unity and the ultimate truth were practically abandoned.

There is no question, of course, that it is impossible to make a case for the unity of the church, while being indifferent to the unity of humankind. Today, it is a widely held view in the ecumenical circles that one can definitely speak of “differing, but legitimate, interpretations of one and the same gospel”. It has become a slogan that “every text has a context”, a context that is not merely something external to the text (theological position, theological tradition etc.) that simply modifies it, but something that constitutes an integral part of it. None can any longer deny that all traditions are inseparably linked to a specific historical, social-cultural, political, and even economic and psychological context. All these mean that the traditional data can no longer be used as a rationale for an abstract universal theology that carries absolute and unlimited authority. Finally, through contextuality, in contrast to classical approach to theology, we are no longer concerned whether and to what extent the theological positions we have to take today, and the affirmations we are asked to make, are in agreement with the uninterrupted tradition of the church, but whether these positions have any dynamic reference and relation at all to the given contemporary conditions. All these achievements were further reinforced in postmodernity, which focuses attention on the particulars, the peripherals, the minorities etc., completely disregarding the unifying elements in all considerations, the theological ones, of course, included.

At this point, a parenthesis should be opened with regard to the real causes of the crisis, which contemporary Orthodoxy experiences vis-à-vis the WCC and the ecumenical movement in general. Perhaps not all theologians in the West engaged in ecumenical dialogue are aware that the real theological rift – after almost a generation of positive contribution of renowned Orthodox theologians to the ecumenical discussions – occurred early in the 1970s, when the late Fr. John Meyendorff, President of Faith and Order at that time, warned against the danger of the ecumenical movement loosing the momentum and coherence and its determination for the quest of the visible unity, if contextuality were to be adopted in ecumenical discussions, and become the guiding principle in future theological education. His reservations, we must confess, were proved right, despite the fact that twenty years later an Orthodox Theological Institution, the Theological Department of the University of Thessaloniki, in cooperation with the Ecumenical Institute of Bossey, has attempted to clarify the relationship between Orthodox theology and contextuality, and, in fact, positively assessed the somewhat contextual character of theology.


Contextuality and coherence in theological education

The future of ecumenical theological education lies in reconciling these two currents of modern ecumenism. Orthodox theological institutions must immediately start a process in order to soften the existing antithesis between contextuality and catholicity; for there is not a single Orthodox Theological Institution that takes contextuality seriously into consideration. The future of the ecumenical movement depends to some extent on the willingness of the ecumenical partners to work towards a synthesis between the legitimacy of all contemporary local/contextual theologies on the one hand, and the necessity – in fact an imperative, and not simply an option – of a core of the apostolic faith on the other. For theological education, in order to be able to survive, but also to give life and to lead the church and the society at large to renewal, must have a common point of reference. One cannot exclude the possibility of a universally and fully authoritative theology, perhaps even on the basis of the transcendent anthropology of contextual theology (Nissiotis). Otherwise, we run the danger to view any local context and experience as authentic expressions of our Christian faith.

To make the long story short, the most important and necessary perspectives in contemporary theological education are both catholicity and contextuality: catholicity, in the sense of the search for a coherent, ecumenical, global, and catholic awareness of the theological task, and contextuality as the unique expression of it in the various particular contexts. Coherence is important in that it expresses the authenticity and distinctiveness of different contextual theologies, as well as the need to bring these contextual theologies into inter-relationship with others.

Of course, the way in which this coherent, ecumenical, global, and catholic perspective is to be achieved, is not an easy task. And central in this respect is the concept of unity. In other words, for theology to seek for a coherent, ecumenical global perspective requires the recognition that Christian theology, no matter how many and varied be its expressions, must have a common point of reference, a unifying element within all forms of ecumenical theological education and ministerial formation. It is necessary to focus upon the issue of unity in both general terms and in the specific ecclesiological use of the term as the on-going search to restore the given unity of the church. This includes consideration of the unifying and saving nature of the Christ event, continually re-enacted through his body, the church, in the life-giving and communion-restoring Holy Spirit. After all, it must be repeated, theological education is a worldwide enterprise fundamental to the mission of the church.

Theological education and the unity of the church

This given unity of the church does not necessarily mean a strict unified structure, but it is given expression to a broad understanding of Christian tradition. Such an understanding affirms not only the centrality of Christology, but also the constitutive nature of pneumatology, i.e. the normative nature of a Trinitarian understanding of Christian revelation. This Trinitarian understanding affirms the ultimate goal of the divine economy, not only in terms of Christ becoming all in all both in an anthropological, i.e. soteriological, and in a cosmological way, but also in terms of the Holy Spirit constituting authentic communion and restoring the union of all.

The communion God seeks and initiates is not only with the church in the conventional sense, but with the whole cosmos. Thus, the unity of divine revelation, as represented in the broad understanding of Christian tradition, is for the entire created world, not only for believers. This understanding of unity is important to keep in mind as it challenges a potential distortion wherein unity is identified with the maintenance of denominational loyalty. This in turn can be an exercise of oppression, excluding the suffering people from salvation and from the community of the people of God, insisting in most cases on strict juridical boundaries.

This understanding of unity in Orthodox and ecumenical theological education informs and challenges all expressions of contextual theology. It does not locate the unity inherent within Christian theology with
any ecclesiastical or doctrinal system, and recognizes the varied forms of human and social existence. In this way, it is congruent with the methodologies and goals of contextual theology. However, it also challenges these theologies in pointing out the indispensability of the Christian tradition as that which gives expression to the given unity of the church. This is usually referred to as unity in time.

Criteria of truth in theological education

The main reason of the inability of modern world Christianity to overcome the existing divisions and “theological misunderstandings” is the issue of the criteria of truth. And this is due to the inability to reconcile contextuality with the text/logos syndrome of modern Christian theology. The time has come to distance ourselves as much as possible from the dominant to modern scholarship syndrome of the priority of the texts over the experience, of theology over ecclesiology, of kerygma and mission over the eucharist. There are many scholars who cling to the dogma, imposed by the post-Enlightenment and post-Reformation hegemony over all scholarly theological outlook (and not only in the field of biblical scholarship or of western and in particular Protestant theology), which can be summarized as follows: what constitutes the core of our Christian faith, should be extracted exclusively from a certain depositum fidei, be it the Bible, the writings of the fathers, the canons and certain decisions of the Councils, denominational declarations etc.; very rarely is there any serious reference to the eucharistic communion event, which after all has been responsible and produced this depositum fidei.

The importance of eucharistical ecclesiology in the ecumenical debate has only recently been rediscovered and realized. The proper understanding of the eucharist has been always a stumbling block in Christian theology and life; not only at the start of the Christian community, when the church had to struggle against a multitude of mystery cults, but also much later, even within the ecumenical era. In vain, distinguished theologians (mainly in the East) attempted to redefine the Christian sacramental theology on the basis of the Trinitarian theology. Seen from a modern theological perspective, this was a desperate attempt to reject certain tendencies, which overemphasized the importance of Christology at the expense of the importance of the role of the Holy Spirit. The theological issues of filioque and the epiclesis have no doubt thoroughly discussed and a great progress has been achieved in recent years through initiatives commonly undertaken by the WCC and the Roman Catholic Church, but their real consequences to the meaning of the sacramental theology of the church, and consequently to theological education, have yet to be fully and systematically examined. Theological education should no longer treat the church either as a cultic religion or as a proclaiming/confessing institution.

Eucharist, interpreted from the perspective of the “Trinitarian theology,” is not only the mystery of church, but also a projection of the inner dynamics (love, communion, equality, diaconia, sharing etc.) of the Holy Trinity into the world and cosmic realities. Ecumenical theological education, therefore, and ministerial formation in particular, should focus not so much on a doctrinal accommodation or only on organization and structure (Faith and Order), or even only on a common and effective mission of the church(es), but also on a diaconal witness with a clear eschatological orientation. In order words, theological education should always have a “costly eucharistical vision”, which dares challenge the present economic system that leads to poverty and ecological destruction. Theological education in order to be authentic has to be determined by “Liturgy after the Liturgy”.

With such a costly eucharistical vision, which of course has to undergo a radical liturgical renewal, our future theological education will definitely develop gender sensitivity. It will also articulate a new paradigm to equip the whole people of God. And it will allow an innovative, experimental, people-centered approach to knowledge and education. Finally, it will ensure that the processes of formation be relevant and renewing to individuals and communities of faith.

After all, Christian theological education can no longer be conducted in abstracto, as if its object, God (cf. theo-logia= logos/word about God), was a solitary ultimate being. It should always refer to a triune
God, the perfect expression of communion, and a direct result of the eucharistic eschatological experience; an experience which is closely related to the vision of the Kingdom, and which is centred around the communion (koinonia), thus resulting in justice, peace, abundance of life and respect to the entire created world.

The relational aspect of theological education
What comes out of such an affirmation is self-evident: theological education should always refer to communion as an ultimate constitutive element of being; in other words it should always guided by the relational dimension of life, and therefore be in a continuous and dynamic dialogue, not only in the form of theological conversation among churches or Christian communities in order to promote the visible unity of the one body of Christ, but also with people of other faiths, even with the secular world.

Paulo Freire, in his celebrated book Pedagogy of the Oppressed, 1971, has rightly criticized the traditional forms of pedagogy, the “banking” concept of education as he called it, because it became a powerful agent in preserving the status quo, which many underprivileged people experience as oppressive and dehumanizing. Freire suggested a new form of education, the “problem-posing” concept, which is dialogical in nature, whereby both the educator and the educated become partners on the journey of searching for the truth. These observations, provided that they also address the inner life, can fully subscribed by the Orthodox, not to mention of course that a dialogical approach promises an atmosphere of creativity, and above all liberates humankind from all kinds of oppression, spiritual and physical.

In view of all the above, theological education, seen from an Orthodox perspective, can only survive, it can only be of some real service to the church, if it decides to deal with current issues; if it focuses attention in a substantial way on history, without denying its eschatological orientation. Christian theology, after all, is about the right balance between history and eschatology. It is about the struggle to apply the eschatological vision of the church to the historical realities and to the social and cosmic life. Theology and the church exist not for themselves but for the world. These issues are global in their impact, impinge upon most particular societies, and are of central importance to the mission of the church: a. Spirituality, human rights, especially the rights of women; b. Globalized neo-liberal economy vis-a-vis the Divine economy; c. The growth of materialism and the consequent marginalization of religious values; d. Intolerance coupled with the increasing ethnic and religious conflict; e. Bio-ethics, AIDS epidemic etc.; f. The integrity of creation in view of the ecological crisis; g. Issues associated with the fullness and future of human life and human communities. Needless to say, that the list is indicative and by no means complete.

Ecumenical theological education and the present situation in the Orthodox world
All the above developments in theological education have convinced the Christian communities around the globe for a shift from a “confessional” to an “ecumenical” perspective in theological education. Nevertheless, to be honest in some theological institutions, especially in the Orthodox world, there is no such thing as ecumenical theological education. There is no doubt that the Orthodox Churches, with the initiative of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, have played an important role in the ecumenical endeavours of the past; there is no doubt that their participation in the WCC, the principal forum of multilateral ecumenical dialogue, have been vital in almost all areas of its activities; and above all, their ecumenical commitment has now been officially, and I would dare add synodically, pronounced on a pan-Orthodox level by such high-ranking fora as the 1986 3rd Preconciliar Consultation and all four Meetings of the Primates of the Orthodox Churches, initiated by Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomeos. However, what George Florovsky, a leading Orthodox ecumenist, believed more than 50 years ago can hardly be subscribed by all the Orthodox. On the occasion of the establishment of WCC in the 1st General Assembly of WCC in Amsterdam, Florovsky made the following bold statement: “It is not enough to be moved towards ecumenical reconciliation by some sort of strategy, be it missionary, evangelistic, social or other,
unless the Christian conscience has already become aware of the greater challenge, by the Divine challenge itself. We must seek unity or reunion not because it might make us more efficient or better equipped...but because unity is the Divine imperative, the Divine purpose and design, because it belongs to the very essence of Christianity”. Today, with the rise of nationalism, fundamentalism and confessionalism, Orthodoxy’s ecumenical commitment is seriously challenged by small but vocal minority groups. Theological educators, therefore, should unite their forces to protect the ecumenical character of Orthodoxy.

There are, of course, quite a number of excuses: the growing dissatisfaction from the results of the ecumenical dialogue so far; the necessity for Orthodoxy – which has come out of the ashes in Eastern and Central Europe, where the bulk of her faithful traditionally live – for a time of recollection and search for identity. What, however, cannot be tolerated is the dangerous shift towards fundamentalism, to such an extent that some circles within Orthodoxy seriously consider, and even press in the direction of, abandoning any ecumenical effort, even withdrawing from all multilateral and bilateral fora of ecumenical dialogue. Even the term “ecumenism” arouses reactions and suspicions among many Orthodox, not to mention that even the official theological dialogue between families of Orthodox Christianity, namely between the Eastern and Oriental Orthodox Churches, in some circles is still questioned and even disapproved, at least failed proper “reception”. All these are mainly due to a number of inherent perennial problems, which obviously need to be openly addressed. And this is exactly the task of the Orthodox theological education in the 3rd millennium.

Areas of special concern in Orthodox theological education

Orthodox theology in the last fifty years or so, produced mainly in academic theological institutions, has positively contributed to a “paradigm change” in mission theology. It played a catalytic role in helping the (ecumenically oriented) world Christian mission move towards a martyrria-witness and inter-faith dialogue, and away from an imperialistic and proclamation only missional ethos. In other words it adamantly insists on a holistic understanding of mission. Mission as reconciliation, or to put it in better (biblical) terms as “a ministry of reconciliation”, provides a more authentic and spiritual sense of the church’s witness, which starting from the primary significance of metanoia and conversion actually aims at the ultimate reality of the kingdom of God, at the reinforcement on earth “as it is in heaven” of the reality of the “oikos” or “household of God”. It will be a catastrophic development if the blooming development of missionary zeal in recent years within Orthodoxy ends up with the adoption of aggressive and proselytistic towards western Christianity missionary methods, in some cases full of nationalistic flavour, and alien to the spirit of “common Christian witness”. And to take the argument even further, it will be a contradiction in terms to avoid inter-religious initiatives, to accuse them as symptoms of syncretism, especially in view of the fact that the Orthodox theology on the “economy of the Spirit” contributed to the importance of the inter-faith dialogue program within the WCC.

One should not forget that the Orthodox faithful for centuries lived peacefully with people of other living faiths, avoiding as much as possible counter-reconciliatory practices. And if one goes back in history, the Byzantines were even accused by the crusaders of being too tolerant towards the Muslims! The case of the Malankara Oriental Orthodox Church in India is even more telling: there a peaceful co-existence and good relations between Christianity and other major religions of Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism, has always been an example to be imitated. Indian Christianity while maintaining the uniqueness of its Orthodox faith, it was fully inculturated in the indigenous social and cultural Indian context. Nowadays all these theologies and traditional missionary practices tend to be forgotten, unless the ecumenical vision is strongly reinforced in contemporary Orthodox theological education.

Orthodox theology has time and again insisted on the paramount importance of the eschatological identity and vision of the church. Of course, the tension between eschatology and history, or – to put it
more sharply – the relationship between the ecclesial community and our pluralistic, postmodern, post-colonial, post-industrial etc. society, is one of the most challenging chapters of our witness. In order to overcome today’s real challenges of economic globalization some Orthodox seem to retreat to their glorious past. By doing this, they automatically become vulnerable at best to a kind of traditionalism and at worst to an anti-ecumenical, nationalistic, and intolerant fundamentalism, attitudes of course totally alien and unacceptable to the traditional Orthodox ethos. The emphasis on theology does not necessarily mean that a “theology from above” neglects the importance of a “theology from below”. As St. Maximos the Confessor has stated: “a theology without action is a theology of the Devil.” The challenge for contemporary Orthodoxy is to develop a new martyria, and respond in a creative way to the tension between history and the eschatology. And this can be achieved only with a proper ecumenical theological education.

Last, but not least, the most serious challenge for an Orthodox ecumenical witness is the inconsistency with what is set as a priority of the Orthodox identity, i.e. the eucharistic self-consciousness, the liturgical understanding of the church, as well as the prayerful substance of human beings (homo orans). For centuries Orthodox theologians have been underlining the Western Churches’ rational stance to faith, as well as the insufficient liturgical dimension in both bilateral and multilateral dialogues. Now that the Pentecostals enter dynamically into the ecumenical field, now that pneumatology is seriously re-imposed in almost all theological reflections, now that almost all Christians rediscover the liturgy, most Orthodox still feel uncomfortable when they come face to face with the “common Christian witness”. In most ecumenical meetings, the Orthodox presence in common prayer is regrettably minimal. What, however, is still more inexcusable, is that after their insistence that WCC addresses the issue of the Orthodox participation in this privileged ecumenical forum, after the establishment of the Special Commission, after their endorsement of its radical decisions, especially on matters of common prayer, to the Central Committee, most of the WCC member churches still have reservations whether the Orthodox should pray at all together with non Orthodox! Despite the serious challenge the Orthodox faced by some fundamentalist minorities, and despite the ambiguity of the official position of some Orthodox Churches, the contribution of Orthodox theological education is of paramount importance. Its ecumenical orientation and determination on all these issues must be unconditioned.

Women in Orthodox Theological Education – Eleni Kasselouri-Hatzivassiliadi

Gender issues and Orthodox theological education.

Theological education, in an ecumenical perspective, has been defined as the task to motivate, equip, and enable the people of God-individuals and communities- to develop their gifts and offer their lives in meaningful service. It has been affirmed as “theological” in the term that it involves people in a certain commitment and ministry, a commitment to the Study of God in the sense of God’s revelation in the life of Jesus Christ and God’s continuous working through the Holy Spirit. ...Speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped..., promotes the body’s growth in building itself up in love (Eph. 4:14-16).

Two significant questions raised often regarding the purpose and the meaning of the theological education nowadays: 1) who is and ought to be doing theology today and 2) what is and ought to be the perspective for doing theology today. The historical, social and cultural situation of the past fifty years has pressed theology to under-go several large-scale or paradigm changes. In other words, the ways in which theology understands its tasks, presuppositions, sources and methods have shifted; moreover, the ways in which it arrives at metaphysical, logical and existential judgments about truth have changed in many
contexts as well. For the Orthodox, theological education is a continuous struggle, in the words of Dimitru Staniloe, to “make theology what it is, penetrating beyond dogmatic definitions to the reality itself by our direct and living contact with Christ as a person and with the Holy Trinity as a communion of persons”, that is a theology which ‘has always been pastoral, missionary and prophetic’ (Alexander Schmemann).

Among the various perspectives and trends of theology and theological education, the one that comes from women theologians and feminists sounds quite interesting, especially in the following areas: 1) Theological education should be seen in an ecumenical and pluralist perspective. Pluralism is meant in terms of tradition, context, ethnic background, gender etc. 2) Theological education cannot be a clergymen-based education. It is offered to facilitate theological production and make the latter as relevant as possible, relevant to the community’s faith and relevant to the community’s traditions and to the situation in which the community is living. 3) The epistemological foundations of theology should be questioned. Rather than learning historical facts, this involves learning to analyze and reconstruct history; rather than accepting biblical and traditional testimonies without suspicion, re-examining the Scripture and the written tradition and discovering their anocentric elements. 4) The theory – practice relationship should be reinforced. According to Ofelia Ortega: “the experience of the ‘excluded’ teach us that we need to work for a permanent integration between theology and life. This involves true integration between theory and praxis and between discourse and pastoral ministry.”

A feminist understanding of theology and education reminds that the theological methods and processes are full of stereotypes, i.e. standardized mental images that are based on prejudiced attitudes or lack of critical judgment. An example of such beliefs would be stereotypes of women as weak, passive, irrational and men as strong, active and rational. Stereotypes such as these are used to support claims – in theology and in the church as well – that women are inferior to men and thus legitimate relations of male domination and female subordination.

In the Orthodox Theological context gender issues and questions related to the subordination of women is a relatively recent field of research. The debate most often takes place outside the Orthodox context, that is, Orthodox women in ecumenical relationships rather than within the Orthodox communities. The WCC Decade, the consultations and the Bossey seminars were catalysts for a few progressive minded Orthodox women across the various jurisdictions. But still, feminist theology and feminist history are not, as yet, active and recognized academic fields for Orthodox men and women scholars. While some feminist theological research has been undertaken by few women scholars, for example in USA, France and Greece, the main focus is biblical exegesis and their work is seldom available in English, with the exception of occasional papers in international journals. Scholars as Eva Katafygiotou-Topping, Sister Nonna Harrison, Kyriaki Karidoyannes-FitzGerland, Dee Jaque-Velissarios, Teva Regule (USA), Elisabeth Behr-Sigel (France), Evanthis Adamtziloglou, Eleni Kasselouri – Hatzivassiliadi, Denia Athanasopoulou Kypriou (Greece), Leonie Liveris (Australia) etc. write with an understanding and in some cases awareness of feminist perspectives.

There is a kind of ‘resistance’ to the ‘women’s questions’ and the feminist movement in Orthodoxy, which both perceived as the province of secular feminism that is destructive of tradition and family. It is well known that in some quarters of Orthodoxy, the term “modernism” is commonly understood as an attempt to promote dogmatic heresy in the church. In this frame, women theologians who are seeking contemporary expressions of the ancient faith in their own lives are readily labeled as “feminists” and therefore, automatically also modernists, in the most destructive sense of these words. Such ideas are widespread not only among the clergy but among academicians as well. It is important to take, also, into

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consideration that women in many Orthodox contexts were not allowed to go to the seminaries or theological faculties since recently.

In Eastern Europe and the Middle East, where Orthodoxy constitutes the traditional form of Christianity, and in the diaspora where, during the twentieth century Orthodox communities were formed and inculturated in West, Orthodox women continue to take an active role in the life of the church. Their role in the transmission of faith in the heart of the family, as mothers and educators, has always been essential. But today it largely extends beyond this familial framework. Women either alone or in equal partnership with male catechists, work in religious education. They sing in the choir, a role so important in Orthodox worship and sometimes even direct it. They are members (at least in the church which originated with the Russian emigration) of the parish and the diocesan councils, like the diocesan assembly that elects the bishop. In some traditionally Orthodox countries- Greece for example- the lesson of religion is obligatory. Orthodox pupils are taught the main principles of their orthodox faith from the third class of the elementary school till the last class of high school (10 years). The same curriculum is followed by both public and private schools. Most of the teachers of religion in Greece are women. Many of them are over qualified, holding a Master or a Ph.D. on theology or pedagogic. But, the directors and the advisors of theology in the secondary educational system (positions that they are better paid and earn a higher respect) are mainly men and women are few, less than 25%.

Similar is the situation in the universities. In a revealing article, written by Pr. Dimitra Koukoura in 2001, a realistic description of the contradictory situation is given (seven years later, the situation has improved but not sufficiently changed). Female students are the majority in the theological faculties. Statistics show that they are better and more consistent students. They continue their studies for a Master or a Ph.D. degree. Although they are well qualified, only few of them succeed finally to find a job as a staff of a Theological Faculty. Women lecturers or professors are less than 30% of the staff, most of them teach pedagogy, history, arts, foreign or ancient languages and only few teach systematic theology, patristics, biblical hermeneutics, that are the core lessons of theology. Additionally, women are very slowly promoted. They remain for many years at the low levels of the hierarchical structure and, as a result, are away from the decision making bodies. The situation is similar in other Orthodox contexts, sometimes even in the West.

Another challenging characteristic of the Orthodox faculties and seminaries is the structure, the philosophy and the content of the curricula. Most of the curricula give the impression that theology means “the erudite transmission of a set of information about God and his work in the world, backed by arguments from the Holy Scriptures and the church tradition. All too often the height of theological knowledge was the memorization of texts instead of the meeting with the living personal God.” They seldom include the modern trends, methods, approaches of theology and an ecumenical perspective. The reason for such an absence is connected with the fact that the theological education in many orthodox contexts is still under the umbrella or the influence of some conservative clerical elements. Since the theological faculties prepare “church” leaders and teachers of religion they cannot sometimes avoid this influence.

But if the orthodox deny to dialogue with the present, then they ‘lock’ theology in a specific era. The church and its theology cannot be locked into a specific era, because they demonstrate in every way the immutable truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ. This means that church and its theology are dynamic and alive, not static and lifeless. Theology can and should respond to the issues of any time and place courageously, and this means change. Are the Orthodox eternally bound to the tyranny of the argument that because it has never been done before it must never been considered? The Cappadocians did not fear to

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utilize the language of Hellenism to transmit the faith in a Hellenistic world. How is that the Orthodox today so often fear to tread in their footsteps? It is important to stress here that in each Orthodox context, two trends can be distinguished: the one who defends “the traditional faith” and associates with a nationalistic understanding of Orthodoxy and the one which is open, ready to connect with the society at large, with members of the other Christian traditions and faiths.

It is important for Orthodox Theological Faculties and Seminaries to incorporate in their curricula lessons regarding the role of women in the church and society and the related questions raised in the ecumenical framework. It is important also these courses to be taught by female professors and to include male and female students in order not to end up as a course exclusively for a few female students.

How can Orthodox women contribute in the ecumenical theological education?

Orthodox women theologians can contribute in order “to make theology an essential belief and a creative function in the lives of all, to make the ecclesia a genuine deposit as well as an expression of love, sacrifice and an unselfish struggle for society” (A. Schmemann). They need to find their own model of doing theology and in doing so they can begin with one of the key mottos of feminist exegesis, coined by Judy Chicago: ‘Our heritage is our power.’ The ‘female face’ of Orthodox tradition is largely unknown and is still to be explored in both orthodox and ecumenical context.

The process of realizing that, despite the positive and optimistic ecclesiological vision of Orthodox Church about man and woman (anthropos), which goes beyond gender discriminations or other social divisions – and can be described as “a democracy of heavens” – this vision has been somewhat distorted in the practice, is something that has been already stressed by many orthodox theologians, men and women. As Lev Gillet, a great contemporary spiritual writer, points out:

the Orthodox church is somehow so strange… a church of contrasts, at one and the same time so traditional and so free, so ritualistic… and so lively. A church where the pearl of great price of the gospel is lovingly preserved, at times covered in dust.

The position of Orthodox women provides a particular striking illustration of the contrasts highlighted by Lev Jillet. The deep contradictions include the liberating message of the gospel which exists alongside outmoded taboos; they include both the spiritual and the personal theological doctrine of humanity which exist alongside stereotypes of gender inherited from patriarchal societies. The universally present icon of Mary, Mother of Jesus, radiates a tender and deep femininity, but the altar is barred to women. The women who brought the spices to the tomb on the first Easter morning were the first to announce that Jesus had risen and are honored in the Orthodox Churches as “apostles to the apostles”. But the reading of the gospel in the public worship is still limited to male ministers…

Eva Topping-Katafygiotou suggests that it is now time “to re-examine the androcentric prejudices in Orthodox tradition that have determined attitudes and praxis of the church even in these times” and she adds: “It is time for orthodox women to speak openly, to claim our history through research, writing and publication, to claim our equal rights in the church. Unlike Kassiane, there is no imperial crown at risk; rather we stand gain full participation and responsibility in the church and her mission”.

And Leonie Liveris points out: “in order Orthodox women to challenge the teaching of the church that recognize the ‘charisms’ of women but not their intellectual and spiritual equality with men, there is a demand for using “feminist hermeneutics of suspicion” of canon law and scriptural interpretation, and critical analysis of the practices of hierarchy and patriarchy”.

Numerous questions, related to the role of women in the church and society, remain unanswered within the ecumenical movement and they will not easily be addressed or answered. Women theologians are invited to express their visions, theological insights and hope for the church as a community of justice and solidarity. Women are in search of a dialogue and a synthesis between, what is called, the eastern and the
western Sophia. For Orthodox, even more important than listening to the words spoken in the west, is the willingness to take into account the experience of western women theologians, their joys and more particularly their sufferings and their open questions. This dynamic encounter will enrich the ecumenical process and will offer new perspectives for a creative and honest theological dialogue. However, the category of ‘gender’ alone is not sufficient in order to make evident the relationships of domination in which women are entangled. The theological dialogue should examine additional parameters which will be directed then at the praxis of overcoming the social, political and religious injustices.

Orthodox Theological Education in the Postmodernity Era: Challenges, Questions and Ambivalences – Pantelis Kalaitzidis

The “Return to the Fathers” as a dominant theological paradigm for Orthodox theological education

For most of the 20th century, the “return to the Fathers” seems to have been the dominant theological paradigm for Orthodox Theological Education, both in traditional Orthodox countries and the diaspora, in the East as well as in the West, transcending political and social systems, cultural and educational milieu. This theological trend was related to different renewal movements in the Orthodox world and among the schools of theology, crystallized in the First Orthodox Theological Conference, which was held in Athens in 1936. In this Conference, Fr. Georges Florovsky, perhaps the greatest Orthodox theologian of the 20th century and modern Orthodoxy’s most important ecumenical figure (being one of the co-founders of the World Council of Churches, and a distinguished member of and speaker for the Faith and Order Commission), proclaimed Orthodox theology’s need to “return to the Fathers” and to be released from its “Babylonian captivity” to Western theology in terms of its language, its presuppositions, and its thinking. Indeed, he would often return to this text with his use of the term “pseudomorphosis” to describe the long process of Latinization and Westernization of Russian theology. His call was quickly adopted and shared by many theologians of the Russian diaspora and gathered fervent supporters in traditionally Orthodox countries, such as Greece, Serbia, and Romania. The theological movement of the “return to the Fathers” became the hallmark of and the dominant “paradigm” for Orthodox theology for the better part of the 20th century, and for many its primary task, to such a degree that this celebrated “return to the Fathers” and the effort to “de-westernize” Orthodox theology overshadowed all other theological questions, as well as all the challenges the modern world had posed – and continues to pose – to Orthodox theology, while other Orthodox theological trends, such as the Russian school theology, faded from view. While the emblematic figure of this movement was, without question, Fr. Georges Florovsky, we must not ignore or underestimate the decisive contributions of other theologians in its crystallization – to such a degree, in fact, that many of the positions which ultimately prevailed stand in stark contrast to the known theological sensibilities of Florovsky himself (e.g. “ahead with the Fathers,” the openness of history, etc.), thus attributing even more conservative features to a movement that already by its very nature (“return,” etc.) included such elements.

The 20th century was, therefore, a time of renewal for Orthodox theology, which for the first time in many centuries, due to the influence of the Orthodox diaspora and the ecumenical dialogue, ventured out from its traditional strongholds and initiated a discussion with other Christian traditions. It thus attempted to move its identity and self-consciousness beyond the dominant academic scholasticism and pietism of the late 19th century by adopting the form of a “neo-patristic synthesis,” the distinctive mark of which was the “existential” character of theology, and the definition of which contrasts repetition or imitation to

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4 Parts of this paper are from the recent article: Pantelis Kalaitzidis, “From the ‘Return to the Fathers’ to the Need for a Modern Orthodox Theology”, published in issue 1, 2010 of St Vladimir’s Theological Quarterly.
synthesis, while combining fidelity to tradition with renewal. But, despite its innovative moments, it seems that the 20th century, precisely because of the way in which this “return to the fathers” was perceived and of the corresponding program to “de-westernize” Orthodox theology, was also for Orthodox theology a time of introversion, conservatism, and of a static or fundamentalist understanding of the concept of tradition, which very often came to be equated with traditionalism. Thus, just as some Protestant churches still suffer from a certain level of fundamentalism regarding the Bible or biblical texts, the Orthodox Church, for its part, often finds itself trapped and frozen in a “fundamentalism of tradition” or in a “fundamentalism of the Fathers,” which makes it hard for it to work out in practice its pneumatology and its charismatic dimension. This prevents it from being part of or in dialogue with the modern world, and discourages it from displaying its creative gifts and strengths.

Indeed, the particularly defensive way of understanding Florovsky’s “return to the Fathers” and the systematization of his theory about “Christian Hellenism,” which considers the latter to be “the eternal category of Christian existence,” and “something more than a passing stage” in the church, and which is integrally connected with Hellenism, patristics, and catholicity, eventually helped consolidate the idea that we needed to constantly take refuge in the church’s past – and the Fathers in particular in this case – so that we could be certain that we were within the limits of the truth. This version of the “return to the Fathers,” moreover, seems to never return to a focus on the future “together with Fathers” (as Florovsky himself advocated in both his writings and his talks), thus rendering Orthodox theology mute and uneasy in the face of the challenges of the modern world. Orthodox thus seem to be satisfied with the strong sense of tradition that distinguishes us, inasmuch as the Orthodox, more than any other Christian confession, have preserved the wholeness of the theology, spiritual inheritance, and piety of the undivided church. As a result of this perception, very often the Orthodox world is unable to see another mission and another function for theology today apart from the continual return to its sources and roots, or the repetition and “translation” into modern parlance of the writings of the Fathers of the church, which the past, guided by the Holy Spirit, has deposited into the treasury of the faith.

It is true that Florovsky always emphasized that the “return to the Fathers” did not mean the repetition or imitation of the past, confined to its various forms, or an escape from history, a denial of the present and history. On the contrary, what he continually stressed and highlighted was a creative return and meeting with the spirit of the Fathers, the acquisition of the mind of the Fathers (ad mentem patrum), and the creative fulfilment of the future.

Florovsky’s insistence, however, on the timelessness and eternalness of Christian Hellenism, i.e. in the necessity of Greek categories of thought for the formulation and expression of the eternal truth of the gospel in every time and place, as well as his refusal to examine – along with “back to the Fathers” and “ahead with the Fathers” – even the possibility of “beyond the Fathers,” largely negates his theology’s openness and orientation to the future. Florovsky thus could understand the “return to the fathers” in terms of creativity and renewal; he could also passionately proclaim “ahead with the Fathers”; however, what ultimately seems to prevail in his work, primarily in how it was understood and interpreted by his followers, is the element of “return.” The call to “return to the Fathers” did not simply offer an identity and a character with which Orthodox theologians could move through the terrible upheavals of the 20th century and survive spiritually and intellectually. He provided an easily digestible slogan and a sense of security and warmth amid a collapsing Christendom.

We should note here that the movement to “return to the Fathers” is not a unique phenomenon that has taken place only among the Orthodox. The starting point for every church “reform movement” has been a movement to “return to the sources,” and this is precisely what we see in the same period in the Protestant world with dialectical theology, and in the Catholic milieu with the biblical, patristic, and liturgical renewal movements. Moreover, just as these Western movements are inconceivable outside of the challenges posed by modernity, so were they basically efforts to respond to modernity also in the Orthodox diaspora, where
the movement to “return to the Fathers” first appeared, as well as its rival, the Russian school theology, which is represented primarily by the great Russian theologian and priest Fr. Sergei Bulgakov. The difference is that while the respective western theological movements were ultimately being created within the framework of modernity, the corresponding Orthodox movement of “return” that was represented by the neo-patristic school – which won out over the Russian school theology – served as a bulwark against modernity.

The two (Orthodox) theological schools pursued different, or even opposite, approaches to the modern world’s challenges to Orthodoxy’s self-consciousness. It seems that the Russian school theology held a world-affirmative stance which sought to open Orthodoxy to the conditions and demands of modernity, while the neo-patristic theology supported a more or less restrained and contemplative approach, calling for a “return to the Fathers” and for Orthodoxy’s liberation from the Western and modernist influences of the past centuries, thus preventing Orthodox theology from becoming really involved in modern issues. As some scholars suggest, the conflict between the two opposite schools was a debate between modernists and traditionalists, liberals and conservatives, and a confrontation over Orthodox theology’s orientation either “back to the Fathers” or “beyond the Fathers.”

The consequences of the theological movement to “Return to the Fathers”

The consequences of this “return to the fathers” and the subsequent over-emphasis on patristic studies were, among other things:

1) Within the Orthodox milieu, biblical studies had already suffered neglect; now there was a theoretical justification for it. Biblical studies were viewed as “Protestant,” while patristic studies and the rediscovery of the Orthodox ascetic and neptic tradition were considered the truly “Orthodox” subjects. In spite of the proliferation of patristic studies in the second half of the 20th century both in the Orthodox diaspora and in the traditionally Orthodox countries, and the subsequent strengthening of the characteristic theological features of Orthodox “identity,” the role of biblical studies in our theological bedrock was still an open question, such that, as is well known, we Orthodox continue to underestimate or even be suspicious of biblical studies and biblical research, even to the point that we regard the reading and study of the Bible as a Protestant practice that is at odds with the Orthodox patristic and neptic ethos. Indeed, imitating the old “Protestant” principle of the objective authority of the text, we often simply replace the authority of sola scriptura with the authority of the consensus patrum. Ultimately, in practice, the authority and the study of the patristic texts – the vast majority of which are essentially interpretive commentaries on the Bible – has acquired greater importance and gravitas than the biblical text itself. Thus, Orthodox theology overlooked the biblical foundations of the Christian faith, the indissoluble bond between the Bible and the Eucharist, the Bible and the Liturgy. And while we based our claims to be Orthodox on the Fathers, we ignored the fact that all the great Fathers were major interpreters of the Scriptures. It was forgotten that patristic theology is simultaneously unconfused and indivisible biblical theology, and Orthodox tradition, as well as Orthodox theology, are patristic and biblical at the same time; they are patristic and Orthodox only to the extent that they are also biblical.

2) Patristic theology was mythologized, removed from its historical context and approached a-historically, almost metaphysically. The particular historical circumstances in which the patristic works were written, the Fathers’ continuous interaction and dialogue with the philosophy and outside philosophical trends of their era, their study and free use of the hermeneutical methods of their time – all this was forgotten. And we have not yet adequately considered what appears to be the most characteristic example of the church taking up elements initially foreign to its own theological and ontological assumptions and fruitfully assimilating them into its life and theology. Today, we have come to regard that encounter as self-evident, forgetting the titanic battles that preceded it. Perhaps we are unaware or fail to notice how difficult and painful it was for primitive Christianity (with its Jewish and generally Semitic
roots and origins) to accept and incorporate Hellenic concepts and categories such as nature, essence, *homoousion*, *hypostasis*, person, *logos*, intellect, *nous*, meaning, cause, power, accident, energy, *kath’ holou*, cosmos, etc. But this a-historical approach to patristic theology is in fact a “betrayal” of the spirit of the Fathers inasmuch as it betrays and ignores the very core and essence of their thought, i.e. a continuous dialogue with the world, and an encounter with and assumption of the historical, social, cultural, and scientific context of their time, as is particularly well illustrated by the great fourth-century Fathers’ engagement with Hellenism. Today, in contrast to the boldness and breadth of the Fathers, the widespread propagation, popularization, and “necessity” of the call to “return to the Fathers” not only made the Fathers an integral part of an Orthodox “fad” and of the dominant Orthodox “establishment,” but has also come to characterize and accompany every kind of neo-conservative and fundamentalist version of Orthodox theology. And the constant invocation of the authority of the Fathers for every sort of problem – even those issues that could not have existed in the patristic age – led to the objectification of patristic theology and to a peculiar “patristic fundamentalism” not unlike the biblical fundamentalism of extremist Protestant groups. Finally, this a-historical approach to patristic thought led to the suppression of the contribution of western theology in the movement to rediscover the theology of the Greek Fathers and to liberate theology from scholasticism. In fact, as is well known, starting as early as the first half of the 20th century, Western theology in all its forms has been traveling its own path of repentance and self-critique, making its own attempt to be liberated from the confines of neo-scholastic and rationalistic theology; its most eminent representatives have been searching for the tradition of the undivided church, and seeking dialogue and contact with the modern world. The rediscovery of the eschatological identity of the church, primarily in the realm of German Protestantism, and the renewal movements within Roman Catholic theology, such as the movement to return to the Fathers (the most representative examples of which are Fourvière’s school in Lyons and the publication of the patristic works series “Sources Chrétiennes” by its preeminent collaborators), the liturgical renewal movement, the reconnection of the Bible with the Liturgy, as well as the church’s and theology’s social commitment, are only some of the aspects of Western theology’s attempt at liberation and self-critique, which were connected with the so-called “nouvelle théologie” movement, without which the Orthodox movement for the “return to the Fathers” would probably have been impossible.

3) Concerned as it was with the very serious matter of freeing itself from Western influence and “returning to the Fathers” – dealing, in other words, with issues of self-understanding and identity – Orthodox theology, with a few exceptions, was basically absent from the major theological discussions of the 20th century and had almost no influence in setting the theological agenda. Dialectical theology, existential and hermeneutical theology, the theology of history and culture, the theology of secularization and modernity, the “nouvelle théologie,” contextual theologies, the theology of hope and political theology, liberation theology, black theology, feminist theology, ecumenical theology, the theology of mission, the theology of religions and otherness – this whole revolution that occurred in the theological work of the 20th century barely touched Orthodox theology. Rather, during this period, Orthodox theology was concerned with its own “internal” problems; escaping “Western influence” had become one of its priorities. These theological trends, with the exception perhaps of ecumenical theology, the theology of mission, and the movement for patristic and liturgical renewal, do not appear to have been influenced by Orthodoxy, despite the fact that important Orthodox theologians actively participated in the ecumenical movement from its inception. Orthodox theology’s silence and absence from the contemporary theological discussions does not seem to have gone unnoticed by modern Western theologians, who have not failed to point out Orthodoxy’s inability to be expressed in contemporary terms and its continued invocation of the authority of the Fathers and of tradition.

4) Judging from the results, it can hardly be denied that the “return to the fathers” has contributed decisively – and negatively – to the polarization between East and West, to Orthodoxy’s total rejection of...
the West, and to the cultivation and consolidation of an anti-western and anti-ecumenical spirit. Here we run into a major paradox, which is worth stopping to analyze. Fr. Georges Florovsky, who was the main proponent of the “return to the Fathers,” and the most important theologian both within this movement and within Orthodoxy as a whole during the 20th century, was reared not only on patristic literature, hymnology, and even the Bible, but also by the great works of contemporary Western theology, which he took into consideration or with which he was in constant dialogue. Moreover, Florovsky never adopted the idea of a polarization between East and West; he utilized the Latin Fathers, such as Augustine, in his ecclesiological works; he wrote many of his classic studies for an ecumenical audience or as an Orthodox contribution to ecumenical meetings; and, above all, he was always quick to maintain that the catholicity of the church could not only not exist with only the West, but also that it could not exist with only the East, and that catholicity requires both lungs of the church, Western and Eastern, like Siamese twins. However, as we already noted above, the movement for a “return to the Fathers” was significantly influenced by the participation and the work of other theologians (Lossky, Staniloae, Popovic, et al.), while the positions and the general theological line of thought which ultimately prevailed was, in many places, at odds with Florovsky’s positions, such as, most notably, an intense anti-Westernism and anti-ecumenism. The Fathers and their theology were often seen as the unique characteristic and exclusive property of the East – thus blatantly ignoring the Christian West’s important contributions in rediscovering the Fathers – while more than a few times patristic theology was used to wage an outdated and illogical invective against the West. Thus Orthodoxy was seen as having the wealth and authenticity of the fathers’ thought, a rich liturgical experience, and mystical theology, while the spiritually emaciated West lacked all these things and instead was content with scholasticism and pietism, theological rationalism, and legalism. As a result, younger Orthodox theologians, particularly in traditionally Orthodox countries, learned not only the interpretive schema of an orthodox East versus a heretical West, but it also became commonplace to contrast, in a self-satisfied way, the “best version” of Orthodoxy (with the Cappadocian Fathers, Maximus the Confessor, so-called “mystical” theology, St. Gregory Palamas, the Russian theology of the diaspora, etc.) with the “long gone by” version represented by the West (with its scholastic theology, Thomas Aquinas, the Holy Inquisition, a theology of legalism and pietism, etc.). This is how the modern West remains understood today in many Orthodox countries. Despite the significant progress that has taken place in the fields of patristic studies, the theology of the local church, and eucharistical ecclesiology, the West is still seen through this distorted lens for reasons of convenience and simplicity or, more simply, from ignorance. This climate has abetted in depriving the newer Orthodox theological generation of the right and the possibility of becoming familiar and interacting with the fundamental works of Western theology, which remain, for the most part, untranslated or unknown in the Orthodox world.

What is beyond doubt, however, is the fact that both the Russian theology of the diaspora and other theological movements for renewal in other Orthodox countries flourished and developed in an environment of dialogue with the West, and not in an environment of zealotism and Orthodox introversion. And so, as strange or even scandalous as it may seem to some, it was the meeting and dialogue with the West that led to the renaissance of Orthodox theology in the 20th century and to its release from its “Babylonian captivity” to western scholastic and pietistic theology. The opportunities and fruitful challenges posed to the Orthodox by the ecumenical dialogue ultimately led Orthodox theology out of its parochial introversion and its insular self-sufficiency, and contributed decisively to the emergence of the great forms of the theology of the diaspora, and to the original syntheses of Greek-speaking theology, such as the theology of the person. Orthodox fundamentalism - that very often thrives in monastic or pro-monastic environments, and that considers anti-Westernism and anti-ecumenism as constitutive elements of the Orthodox self-consciousness and as the most defining characteristics of patristic theology - obscures and obstinately refuses to accept these truths.

5) In spite of the theological interests of Florovsky and other Orthodox theologians who followed him
(e.g. the incarnation, the historicity of theology and the openness of history, the contextualization of the word of gospel, the catholicity of the church, which includes both East and West, etc.), and their lasting concern for a creative and rejuvenating engagement with the spirit of the Fathers, i.e. for a neo-patristic synthesis and renaissance, we must admit that the “return to the Fathers” and “Christian Hellenism,” as a proposal for a theological agenda, is basically a conservative choice, inasmuch as they ultimately refer more to theology’s past than to the present and the future. And while this theological movements intention is to push Orthodoxy out of its inertia and into a dialogue with the contemporary world on the basis of the neo-patristic synthesis, the broader historical context of this dialogue, viz. modernity and late modernity, is essentially absent from its theological agenda. We should, of course, remember that, for primarily historical reasons, the Orthodox world did not organically participate in the phenomenon of modernity. It did not experience the Renaissance, the Reformation, or the Counter-Reformation, religious wars or the Enlightenment, the French or the Industrial revolution, the rise of the subject, human rights, or the religiously neutral nation-state. What has been recognized as the core of modernity seems to have remained alien to Orthodoxy, which continues to be suspicious of modernity. This uncertainty helps explain Orthodoxy’s difficulty in communicating with the contemporary (post-) modern world, and it raises at the same time the question of whether or not Orthodox Christianity and (neo-) patristic theology came to an end before modernity.

Indeed, if we consider the precedent of the Roman Catholic Church, we will see that scholastic philosophy and theology – when it was reinstated in the second half of the nineteenth century with Neo-Thomism at the forefront – was meant to be, among other things, a defence against the challenges that modernity posed to the inflexible theological establishment of the Roman Catholic Church at that time; therefore, mutatis mutandis, the crucial question in the present context is the following: has not the celebrated “return to the fathers,” as it has been understood and applied by several Orthodox theologians, served also as a bulwark against modernity and the challenges it posed, in spite of itself and contrary to its declared aim of renewal? Has it not thus hindered both the word of God in its incarnation and revelation within each particular social and cultural context, and the development, within Orthodox theology, of hermeneutics, biblical and historical research, systematic theology, anthropological and feminist studies, and political, liberation, and ecumenical theology? Has it not contributed in its own way to making the entire Orthodox ecclesial life a prisoner to pre-modern structures and practices and to a conservative mentality?

In any case, modernity and postmodernity (or late modernity) and the framework they provide constitute the broader historical, social, and cultural environment within which the Orthodox Church is called to live and carry out its mission; it is here that the church is called upon time and time again to incarnate the Christian truth about God, the world and humanity. Certainly, modern Orthodox theology, inspired mainly by the spirit of the fathers, reformulated during the 20th century an admirable theology of the Incarnation, of “assuming flesh.” However, its position on a series of issues revolving, essentially, around aspects of the modernist phenomenon, but also the core of its ecclesial self-understanding, has often left this otherwise remarkable theology of Incarnation in abeyance and socially inert. Such issues include human rights, the secularization of politics and institutions, the desacralization of politics and ethnicity, the overturning of established social hierarchies in the name of a fairer society, the affirmation of love and corporeality and the spiritual function of sexuality, the position of women, social and cultural anachronisms, and so forth. The typical Orthodox approach to such issues, sadly, confirms yet again the view that Orthodox people content themselves with theory, and make no progress or fall tragically short when it comes to practice; that we prefer to “contemplate” and “observe” rather than to act, forgetting or side-stepping the fundamentally antinomic and anti-conventional character of the ecclesial event and settling down in the safe confines of “tradition” and customs handed down from the past, and the comfort of the traditional society which, in the minds of many, is by its very nature identical to “tradition” itself. Yet theology at
least ought to be incarnate, to remind us constantly of the antinomic and idoloclastic character of the ecclesial event, but also to commit itself to the consequences and repercussions of the theology of the incarnation.

**The need for a new incarnation of the Word and the challenges of contextual theologies**

If every text always has a “con-text,” and if we agree that the specific and determinant context of patristic theology was the then-dominant Greek philosophy and culture, then we must seriously and honestly consider whether we are facing today the same context, and if we are living and creating in the framework of the same type of culture, or if we are facing the challenges of a post-Hellenic and consequently post-patristic era. And if we do, the next crucial question is if the duty and the task of theology is to defend or to preserve a certain era, a certain culture, a certain language, or, on the contrary, to serve the truth of the gospel and the people of God in every time, in every space, and through every culture or language. Because there is no such thing as a universal theology in abstract, a kind of ahistorical, unaltered, and timeless tradition and monolithic conception; theology occurs only in specific historical and cultural contexts and in response to specific questions and challenges. Accordingly, contextual theology refers to both a way of understanding the theological project and a methodological framework for “doing theology.” It is evident that the above analysis presupposes an approach, at once constructive and critical, of contextual theology. While it can sometimes go too far, contextual theology highlights the close link between the text and its context, and reminds us that we cannot do theology in a purely intellectual or academic way, abstracted from time, history and the socio-cultural context, from pastoral needs and from the myriad different forms of human culture and theological expression.

Therefore, theology, as the prophetic voice and expression of the church’s self-understanding, must function in reference to the antinomic and dual-natured character of the church. Just as the church is not of this world, so theology aims at expressing a charismatic experience and a transcendent reality, over and above either any words, concepts, or names. Just as the church lives and goes forth into the world, so theology seeks dialogue and communication with the historical present in every age, adopting the language, the flesh and the thought-world of each particular era, and of the historical and cultural present at any given time. Theology is not coextensive with history and cannot be identified with history; but neither can it function in the absence of history and, more importantly, it cannot keep ignoring the lessons of history. Without this process of unconfused osmosis and reception of the world and of history, without this gesture of dialogue, moving towards the world and “witnessing” to it, neither the church nor theology can exist, nor can God’s revelation, since the church does not exist for itself but for the world and for the benefit of the world: “for the life of the world.” After all, God’s Revelation has always taken place within creation and history, not in some unhistorical, timeless universe unrelated to the world.

It is imperative, then, for Orthodox theology to examine the possibility of devising, through the Holy Spirit, new terms and new names (“to coin new names,” in the words of St. Gregory the Theologian), correlated to today’s needs and challenges, just as the need for a new incarnation of the Word and the eternal truth of the gospel is also urgently necessary. A theology of repetition, a theology that is satisfied simply with a “return to the sources,” or that relies on the “return to the fathers” and the neo-patristic synthesis, cannot, by definition, respond to this need and the manifold challenges of the postmodern pluralistic world. What is therefore required is not a repetition and a perpetuation of the denial and the reticence often adopted by the Orthodox in their stance towards modernity and pluralism, but a creative encounter and a serious theological dialogue with whatever challenges modernity and postmodernity pose, a “re-orientation [of modernity] from inside,” to use the fine expression of His Beatitude Patriarch Ignatius IV of Antioch. Will the Orthodox Church be faithful to a renewed ‘theanthropism’ and an authentic theology of incarnation, and, inspired by the vision and the experience of the resurrection, internalize the tradition, the boldness, and the mind of the Fathers and the grand theological syntheses that they worked
out, mainly in the East? Will it enter into dialogue and even attempt (why not?) a new synthesis with the best in modernity, actualizing the encounter between East and West that we have been hearing about for decades?

From an Orthodox point of view, the key to addressing all the above topics and to answering all these questions can be found in eschatology. Eschatology introduces an element of active expectation accompanied by the dimension of the future and the renewing breeze of the Spirit, dimensions so definitive for the life and theology of the church and yet so lacking today. For, in response to the challenge of globalization, cosmopolitanism and internationalism, today the wind of traditionalism and fundamentalism is once again blowing violently through the life and theology of the church. Whereas fundamentalism is a flight into the past of pre-modernity and involves turning back the course of history, eschatology is an active and demanding expectation of the coming kingdom of God, the new world which we await; as such, it feeds into a dynamic commitment to the present, an affirmation and openness to the future of the kingdom in which the fullness and identity of the church is to be found. In other words, the church does not derive its substance principally from what it is, but rather from what it will become in the future, in the eschatological time which, since the resurrection of Christ and the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, has already begun to illuminate and influence the present and history.

In the light of eschatology, even the tradition of the church itself acquires a new meaning and a different dimension, an optimistic and hopeful perspective. Looked at from this angle, tradition is not the letter that kills, a nostalgic repetition or uncritical acceptance or continuation of the past, but a creative continuity in the Holy Spirit and an openness to the future, to the new world of the kingdom of God, which we actively await. Seen in this light, it seems that the patristic tradition with its various expressions acquires another meaning and another perspective, inasmuch as it, in turn, is judged and investigated in light of the Eschaton and the coming kingdom of God, while the celebrated “return to the fathers” is a mile-marker in a dynamic journey of the broader renewal, in the Holy Spirit, of Orthodox theology, a renewal that is not yet complete. And “Christian Hellenism” is a type or paradigm of the church’s relationship to the world and not an “eternal category of Christian existence,” or an unalterable and timeless paragon.

**Conclusions for orthodox theological education in dialogue with postmodernity**

The crucial and decisive question that naturally arises from all of the above is if there is a possibility for an Orthodox theology and tradition that is *not* patristic; if it is possible, in other words, for us to speak within Orthodoxy of a “post-patristic theology” (in both the temporal and normative sense of the term).

If the Orthodox theology of the last few decades was inspired and renewed by the call to “return to the Fathers” and the call of liberation from the captivity of academicism and scholastic theology – without, however, ever managing to avoid its identification with the caricature of traditionalism, patristic archaeology, and confessional entrenchment – today, in the globalized, postmodern pluralistic world, there is a clear and imperative need for a breath of fresh air, for the overcoming of a certain provincialism and a complacent introversion within Orthodox theology. There is a need for openness to the ecumenicity of Christianity, to the challenge of religious otherness, and the catholicity of human thought. Theology’s prophetic function calls it to continually transcend itself, to continually transform and renew every kind of established expression and creation – even those inherited from patristic thought – to make a new leap similar or perhaps even greater than what Greek patristic thought needed to make in relation to primitive Christian thought. Is it, perhaps, time for us to realize that fidelity to the patristic tradition, the “We, following the holy fathers,” does not mean simply the continuation, the update, or even the reinterpretation of this tradition, but rather – following the precedent set by the leaps made by primitive Christianity and the fathers – the transcendence of patristic thought when and where it is needed. The “return to the Fathers” was conceived during the 20th century as a “paradigm shift” for Orthodox theology. The question is whether we are now envisaging – or if we should envisage – a new “paradigm shift” for Orthodox theology.
today.\footnote{The above questions, and a numerous related issues, among them the searched synthesis between classical or patristic theology and contextual theologies, catholicity and contextuality, have been discussed and debated on the occasion of the international conference on: “Neo-patristic Synthesis or Post-patristic Theology: Can Orthodox Theology be Contextual?” which took place in June 3-6, 2010 in Volos (Greece). This conference was organized by the Volos Academy for Theological Studies in collaboration with the Chair of Orthodox Theology at the Centre of Religious Studies (CRS) of the University of Münster (Germany), the Orthodox Christian Studies Program of Fordham University (USA) and the Romanian Institute for Inter-Orthodox, Inter-Confessional and Inter-Religious Studies (INTER, Romania). For more information see: www.acadimia.gr/; English version: www.acadimia.gr/index.php?lang=en.}

What has been said above implies a series of changes and reconsiderations toward the future of orthodox theological education. We mention below just some of them, without claiming any exhaustive character or exclusivity:

- The curriculum and the programs of theological education in Orthodox state faculties and ecclesiastical academies have to be reconsidered and reorientated. While patristic and liturgical studies will continue to keep a privilege place, a special attention has to be paid to biblical theology and biblical studies, as well as to modern and contemporary theological and philosophical trends – especially those of the West. In addition, the study of the fathers has to be more historical, more hermeneutical, more contextual, while systematic theology seen from this perspective needs to be something more than a simple class of dogmatics.

- Theological reflection on and dialogue with contemporary issues in society needs to be increased and reinforced. The time has come that liberation, and political and gender theologies among other things, find their proper place within the Orthodox theological curricula. Research on anthropological and bioethical topics should gain a renewed interest in the Orthodox context, while the theological approach to modernity and postmodernity has to be an urgent priority for Orthodox schools and academies.

- The departments for teaching ecumenical theological education and promoting dialogue with other Christian denominations should be more supported. The new reality created by the religious otherness and diversity of our multicultural societies inevitably poses the challenge of the pluralism and leads to the necessity of a theology of religions.

- In other words, Orthodox Church and theology have to respond to the challenges and demands of the 21st century and abandon the “save” shelter where they used to live for decades, even after the famous and celebrated “return to the Fathers”.

Handbook of Theological Education in World Christianity
THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION IN THE ORIENTAL ORTHODOX TRADITION

Kondothra M. George

Two Families of Churches

A brief word of introduction to the Oriental Orthodox family of churches as such might be helpful for the reader at the beginning: In the WCC the Orthodox Churches are grouped into two families – the Eastern and the Oriental. It was in the 20th century ecumenical context that the expressions ‘Eastern’ and ‘Oriental’ were routinely used to distinguish these two families. “Eastern” refers to the family of churches in the Byzantine liturgical tradition in communion with the See of Constantinople (Ecumenical Patriarchate) – Patriarchates of Alexandria, Antioch, Jerusalem and Churches of Greece, Russia, Rumania, Bulgaria and such others. These are the Orthodox Churches which accept the seven Ecumenical Councils as of fundamental doctrinal and canonical importance. They share the same liturgical texts and practices. Sometimes these churches are referred to by the other family of Oriental Orthodox Churches as the Chalcedonian Orthodox since the Council of Chalcedon in 451, the fourth ecumenical council for the Eastern Orthodox, was the point of separation between the Eastern and the Oriental Orthodox.

The other family, namely the Oriental Orthodox, consists of the Armenian, the Coptic, the Ethiopian, the Indian (Malankara) and the Syrian Churches. Very recently, in the aftermath of the political division between Ethiopia and Eritrea, a separate church called the Eritrean Orthodox Church, formerly part of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, was created.

The main disagreement between the two families was in the area of Christology- how the divine and the human natures are united in the person of Jesus Christ. However, strong political, cultural and social factors also played a part. The differences resulted in the breach of communion between these two Eastern families which, in spite of separation, maintain to this day a remarkable unity in theological approach, liturgical-spiritual ethos and general church discipline.

The Christological differences between these two families were resolved in a series of unofficial and official dialogues between the two families since 1967. Both families now acknowledge each other as holding the same apostolic faith in spite of the Christological misunderstandings in the distant past. What is interesting to us is that these two families though separated for about 1500 years since Chalcedon maintained the same ecclesiology. In spite of the Christological disputes around the Chalcedonian definition the Oriental Orthodox have accepted the disciplinary canons of Chalcedon that pertained to ecclesiological issues.

As the result of the unofficial dialogue, a consensus emerged. Both sides could affirm together “the common tradition of the one church in all important matters – liturgy and spirituality, doctrine and canonical practice, in our understanding of the Holy Trinity, of the incarnation, of the person and work of the Holy Spirit, on the nature of the church as the communion of saints with its ministry and sacraments, and on the life of the world to come when our Lord and Saviour shall come in all his glory” (Geneva, 1970).

The official dialogue confirmed this: “We have inherited from our fathers in Christ the one apostolic faith and tradition, though as churches we have been separated from each other for centuries. As two families of Orthodox Churches long out for communion with each other, we now pray and trust in God to restore that communion on the basis of the apostolic faith of the undivided church of the first centuries which we confess in our common creed” (Egypt, 1989)
Theological Education and the Oriental Orthodox Churches

Any detailed study of the ways in which theological education is being carried out in these churches is a demanding task, and is not within the scope of this brief essay. Accepting, therefore, the limitations of space and scope, I wish simply to indicate some principles and major features of Oriental Orthodox theological education as well as some challenges it faces in today’s world. Here and there I take the example of one of the Oriental churches, namely the Malankara Orthodox Church in India, an ancient apostolic church deeply rooted in the Indian/Asian cultural matrix. It lives in one of the most pluralistic of contexts in the world with Hindu, Buddhist, Jain, Sikh and Islamic traditions as well as in a secular, democratic political system of a nation of one billion people.

Tradition and Theological Education: Some Major Features

The strong ascetic-monastic heritage of the Oriental Churches is quite influential in the theological education imparted to the priests and lay people. Training of priests in a monastic or semi monastic context is a general characteristic of the Oriental tradition. Even if they are going to be married priests later, the period of ministerial training is underscored by ascetic-monastic discipline. This is evident even in the modern ‘Seminary’ system in the Oriental Churches.

1) The Indian tradition of Guru-kula education gives us an interesting parallel here. In the Sanskrit language guru means teacher, and kula is family. Gurukula thus means ‘the family of the teacher’. In the ancient Indian system of general education, young boys, mostly in their teens, were sent to live in the family of the teacher, often a scholar-householder of distinguished learning and ascetic discipline. The students live in the large household for several years adopting the teacher and his wife as their parents, and learn the fundamental texts of grammar, sacred literature and mathematics. In advanced and specialized courses medicine, astronomy, architecture, performing arts and other special skills are also taught in the gurukula style.

The Orthodox Church in India had adopted the gurukula system for theological education. Candidates for priesthood (elected by parishes) were sent to the house of a well known teacher of scripture, theology, liturgy and canons. He was called a Malpan (Indian version of the Syriac Malphono meaning teacher). He was the Christian counterpart of the traditional Hindu guru, and could be a distinguished householder-priest of known academic and moral credentials, or a learned bishop whose diocesan house was considered to be a monastery. In India, during the Portuguese colonial period Jesuit missionaries introduced the Seminary system in the present state of Kerala. It was meant to train the Indians in the Roman ecclesiastical tradition. The Indian Christians of St. Thomas vehemently resisted such uniatist attempts though a large number of people finally succumbed to Portuguese-Roman power.

In the early 19th century (1815) the Orthodox Church started a Seminary (College) at Kottayam with the gracious support of the Queen of the Kingdom of Travancore and the assistance of British missionaries and colonial authorities. This is probably the first Orthodox Theological School in the whole of Asia.

This Seminary combined the traditional Indian Gurukula system and residential college system in English universities like Oxford and Cambridge. This is still followed in the present day Orthodox Theological Seminary at Kottayam, in the Indian state of Kerala, where priestly formation and academic theological education are carried out as one single activity.

A solid spiritual bond is established between the guru and the sishya (disciple) over the years of training. This traditional theological formation was practiced until the mid 20th century though the Seminary system came to be adopted by the church in the early 19th century. “Learning from the face of the teacher”, as it is said in India, imparted a profound spiritual character to any learning. In the monastic setting also the person of the teacher was sacred, and instruction happened between the spiritual father/teacher and the disciple, somewhat like what happened between Jesus and his twelve disciples.
2) In the Oriental Churches, there is no question of theology becoming purely academic confined to a university setting. In fact, the western academic distinctions, for instance, between dogmatic theology and pastoral theology or between biblical theology and systematic theology or between theology and spirituality are really alien to the traditional theological education of the Oriental Churches, though in modern times imitation of the western system has influenced the teaching of theology in their seminaries and institutions of pastoral training. For the Orient, theology is one and indivisible. It can be understood only holistically cutting across all insulated specializations. In India, for example, the Orthodox Seminaries have adopted a university curriculum of theology (in affiliation to Serampore University) keeping up with the contemporary intellectual and theological questions, though students are constantly reminded of the integral character of theology and its essentially pastoral nature.

3) In the Oriental Orthodox tradition liturgical worship forms the backbone of theological education. There is no theology without liturgy. In fact all theology arises from the matrix of liturgical celebration and experience according to Orthodox understanding. Although the well known maxim *Lex orandi est lex credendi et agendi* (The rule of prayer is the rule of belief and of action) is attributed to a western hierarch, namely Pope Celestine I (5th cent.), this is literally true in the Oriental Orthodox understanding of theology. In Indian Orthodox theological faculties, despite the heavy academic programme, no compromise is made on the liturgical life of the students and teachers.

4) The great emphasis placed on patristic tradition is a major trait of Oriental Orthodox theological education. The writings and hagiography of the ‘Fathers of the Church’ constitute an important foundational dimension and strongly underscore all theological reflection. The Council of Chalcedon (AD 451) sets a landmark since Greek and Latin Fathers who come after the 5th century are not generally well known to the Oriental students though advanced students are familiar with the writings of such figures as St. Maximus the confessor and St. John of Damascus. After dealing with the common fathers of the pre-Chalcedonian period (‘the undivided tradition’) like St Athanasius, the Cappadocians, St. Chrysostom, St Cyril of Alexandria the Oriental Churches rather continue with their most eminent local theologians and fathers. The theological-canonical authority of the fathers as a guiding beacon is not generally questioned.

Some of the well known works on the fathers produced by contemporary Oriental Orthodox include *The Cosmic Man: the Divine Presence* by Metropolitan Paulos Mar Gregorios of Delhi, and the *Council of Chalcedon Re-examined* by Fr. V. C. Samuel, both eminent theologians of the Malankara Church.

**Major Challenges: Interpreting Tradition:**

Oriental Orthodox theological education and ministerial formation are facing significant challenges in the 21st century. Interpreting the tradition of the church to our world and vice versa constitutes an overall challenge. In the understanding of these churches tradition is not any rigid conservatism or dead weight of the past as it is often interpreted in certain western denominational circles. Rooted in the Trinitarian worship and profoundly aware of the apophatic dimension of all theology the Oriental Churches understand tradition as living experience of the mystery of faith. Academic and intellectual articulation of the “articles of faith” is not the core of theology here. It is doxology in its depth dimension of worshipping and celebrating the triune mystery. The maxim ‘theology is doxology’ captures the ethos of the Oriental Orthodox Churches in the matter of theology and theological education.

**Challenge of Ecumenical Encounter:**

Since all the Oriental Orthodox Churches are members of the World Council of Churches (The Ethiopian and Indian Orthodox Churches are founding members since 1948), their theological schools and seminaries have been familiar with the major ecumenical questions. For example, theologians from these churches
have closely worked at various levels with colleagues from the Reformation and Roman Catholic traditions in the study process of Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry (BEM) as well as in the Justice, Peace and Creation project. Oriental theologians have been challenged to relate their sense of tradition to issues that did not arise in earlier periods of human history. Communicating and dialoguing with cultural zones outside the traditional Orthodox patristic and liturgical domain produced significant ecumenical results. The Bossey Ecumenical Institute and various programmes of the WCC certainly helped to create solid ecumenical encounters between the Orthodox theological thinking and contemporary issues. The Ecumenical Theological Education programme of the WCC has opened fresh areas of exchange and dialogue between the Oriental theological-spiritual heritage and various other traditions. For the Oriental Orthodox theological dialogue is easier when the partners concerned are respectful of the integrity of tradition and its reverent attitude to the question of God and the church, ‘the Body of Christ’.

Also the pastoral and spiritual dimensions of theological education are deeply underlined by the Oriental Orthodox, and they are rather hesitant to make theological education solely a matter of academic exercise at the university level-devoid of a ‘people’s touch’.

**Challenge of Women’s Ministries**

The ecumenical exposure of theological schools probably awakened the Oriental Church’s awareness of various women’s ministries. This led to such changes as the restoration of women’s diaconate and the active participation of women in theological education and at various levels of church life.

Oriental Orthodox women increasingly take leadership roles in ecumenical programmes and produce theological literature. The Oriental Orthodox Churches, however, take a firm position in not recognizing the priestly and episcopal ordination of women as incongruent with the tradition of the church.

**Challenge of Theological Education by Extension**

In addition to the traditional Sunday school and catechism classes, some of the Oriental Churches have launched theological study courses for the benefit of laymen and women. *Divya Bodhanam* (Divine Teaching), the well-known programme of theological education by extension started by the Orthodox Theological Seminary at Kottayam, India in 1984 is a good example. In the last 25 years some 2000 women and men (majority are still women) have taken this course in 3 cycles. Led by the professors at the seminary this has produced some 30 text books for a full theological curriculum, and has inspired many to enter into a serious Christian study of theology and to engage themselves in the various ministries of the church and challenges of contemporary ecological and social movements.

Theological education in the Oriental Churches is becoming more and more sensitive to the social and intellectual currents prevalent in our world. Theological schools naturally turn to the biblical-patristic resources for possible responses. One of the very first Orthodox responses to the ecological crisis was provided by the Indian theologian Paulos Mar Gregorios in his book *The Human Presence: an Orthodox Understanding of Nature* (1978).

Issues of justice, peace and human rights increasingly become part of discussion and research in the Seminaries. While positively responding to issues of gender discrimination, the Oriental Churches are solidly united in their strong opposition to make such as “gay rights” and “same sex marriage” part of human rights question. These churches consider homosexuality as a sin against the will of God for humanity on the basis of biblical-patristic evidence. In theological education too this uncompromising position is adopted.

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Challenge of Religious Pluralism

Compared to the Western Churches the Oriental Churches have a far longer experience of living with people of other faiths. While pluralism is a rather new word coined in the West, the experience of wide plurality in culture and religion has always been part of the churches in countries like India. Over the centuries these churches developed a certain *modus vivendi* with their neighbors of other faiths. While radical fundamentalist movements in Islam and Hinduism begin to change the traditional inter religious scenario of amity and conviviality, the mainstream still sticks to the principles of tolerance, hospitality and good neighborliness. Orthodox theological education in India, for example, offers solid courses on Hinduism and Islam, and encourages students to make advanced studies and doctoral level research in the faith and philosophy of such major religions. The seminaries also take initiatives for in depth inter religious encounter and exchange.

Challenge of New Technologies and Secularization

The globalization of the contemporary Western cultural paradigm with all its economic, technological and moral implications has affected the Oriental Churches in various ways. The Western Diaspora of these churches increasingly feels the pressure of being in between two worlds. Secularization has deeply threatened the traditional foundations of faith. New biotechnologies capable of manipulating life have raised unprecedented ethical questions for theologians. Theological schools are open to discussion on such issues though they would hold fast to the sanctity of life and God’s sovereignty as guiding principles for human freedom and creativity.

Challenge of Mission

The Oriental Churches are in general averse to the Western idea of “mission” since they themselves have been the victims of “mission” from Roman Catholic and various Protestant mission bodies. All the Oriental Churches have been sadly divided by Roman Catholic Uniatist missions. However, Oriental theological education takes the missionary task of the church as fundamental, without making it a conquering, converting, colonial mission as happened in the West. The Oriental Churches teach that the announcing of the Good News of Jesus Christ the Saviour can take many forms and ways rather than only one form. In Oriental Orthodox theological education the task of discerning and discovering such ways of the mission of love, peace and salvation to all in our world is crucial.

Conclusion

Holding on to the age-old traditions of faith and culture on the one hand and facing the fast lane of the contemporary world, the Oriental Orthodox theological education has an enormous task on hand. There is always the risk of sliding to the one or the other, that is, being ensconced in a blind traditionalism or disappearing without trace in the flux of modernity. The theological task of the Oriental Churches is to rediscover and reread the ancient scriptural-patristic resources providing insights into God’s creation while maintaining a deeply compassionate sensitivity to the ever changing world. Carrying out this task will be more rewarding though not always easier if it is done on a broad basis together with fellow Christians and all other people of good will in a truly ecumenical setting.

Part III: Theological Education from Denominational and Confessional Perspectives
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THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION IN THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

Teresa Francesca Rossi

Introduction

Purpose and methodology of this contribution

“Indeed one can speak of a new ‘tradition’ of ecumenical understanding, shared concerns, and common witness”: the Fifth Report of the Joint Working Group between the Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches formulates this fruitful concept of new ecumenical tradition, in order to recognize what has been achieved, while at the same time calling for a renewed effort to implement such tradition which still has to face difficulties and challenges, including: “the need for a continued effort of ecumenical awareness-building and formation of a new generation of young church members, who are less aware of the scandal of divisions”. The Fifth Report marked a new era of continued commitment on ecumenical formation as a common concern, and in 1993 a very important joint document was published. Ecumenical formation, however, is still addressed as a key priority in ecumenical dialogue; this is a warning pointing out the inadequacy or incompleteness of what has been done so far.

The present contribution aims, primarily, at presenting the position of the Catholic Church, while, at the same time, attempts at singling out problems and challenges. It is a demanding task, considering the complexity and variety of theological trends, educational paths, organizations/institutions involved in education, as well as the delicate dynamics of presenting a ‘common catholic voice’, expressed in the magisterial teaching, and its polychromatic echoes in the different local realities. Consequently, a selected itinerary will be presented, based on official catholic pronouncements issued by most competent and authoritative bodies. Links with other bodies of the Roman Curia and relative statements will be emphasized where a concern or an interesting potential for ecumenical formation is present. References to catechesis and teaching of religion in the school will be given as I believe that together with theological research, they are all ‘prophetic ministries’ – flourishing from the docendi baptismal gift– as they deal with the task of proclaiming the kingdom of God.

Important points of convergence with ecumenical documents will be highlighted.

**Snapshots on the Catholic Perspective**

*Snapshot n.1: Christian/theological education in catholic perspective*

**Common roots and emerging divisions**

The history of Christian education represents a common heritage since biblical times, throughout the Patristic period and up to the Middle Ages, when different approaches between East and West marked a shift, deepened by the Reformation period: theological education became a confessional issue, often a tool to sharpen divisions, until the rising of the Ecumenical Movement.

Catholic education was shaped by: a) the *pietas literata* of the Middle Ages, the liturgy being the main educational tool; b) the *humanistic model* of the Renaissance, with the spread of various catholic educational congregations; c) the reaction against the Enlightenment period; d) the birth of the national systems of education in the XVIII century; e) the rediscovery of the biblical, monastic models, and the dialogue with the contemporary culture distinctive of our times. The shaping of a specific catholic concept of theological education marked also the beginning of a catholic literature on the topic. The first specific document is the Encyclical *Divini illius Magistri* by Pope Pius XI in 1929. It includes some general principles, reaffirmed by following reflection: a) education “is essentially a social, not mere individual activity,” based on healthy interactions among family-state-church, b) the subject of education is the human person in his/her own integrity, c) the core of Christian education is to form the perfect Christian, able to cooperate with God’s grace.

**Vatican Council II**

The Council addressed specifically the question of education in two documents: *Gravissimum Educationis* on catholic education and *Optatam Totius* on priestly formation.

The declaration on Christian education encouraged educational agencies to get involved in dialogue with contemporary culture and society. Education is a need and a right, especially for children, and is aimed at developing harmoniously a ‘physical, moral and intellectual endowments’ in order to “acquire a mature sense of responsibility in striving endlessly to form their own lives properly and in pursuing true freedom as they surmount the vicissitudes of life with courage and constancy.” The mandate of the church, however, is more explicit when it comes to deal with Christian education, whose goal is to fully witness the mystery of salvation in this world, so that: “they develop into perfect manhood, to the mature measure of the fullness of Christ (cf. Eph 4: 13).”

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7 “In fact it must never be forgotten that the subject of Christian education is man whole and entire, soul united to body in unity of nature, with all his faculties natural and supernatural, such as right reason and revelation show him to be”, *DiM*, n.58.
8 “The proper and immediate end of Christian education is to cooperate with divine grace in forming the true and perfect Christian, that is, to form Christ Himself in those regenerated by Baptism, …education consists essentially in preparing man for what he must be and for what he must do here below, in order to attain the sublime end for which he was created”, *DiM*, nn.7.94.
10 *GE*, n.2. Beside the primary role of the family, religious institutions (parishes and catholic schools, institutes and universities...) are called to this task.

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The decree on priestly formation emphasized the renewal, both in content and in style, of the ministerial training. Though it recognizes the need to undertake programs locally-oriented, general principles are given on priestly formation as a process of becoming true shepherds, teachers and priests, a preparation on the doctrinal, pastoral, spiritual, moral and pedagogical level, a nurturing of faith, hope and charity, prayer, self-deny and service. Theological formation is integral part of the formative curriculum, to be enriched by humanistic and scientific training, by a ‘coherent knowledge of man, the world, and of God’ in order to be ‘duly prepared for dialogue with men of their time.’

It is worth noting that both documents converge in presenting the main features of every Christian formation process, which assume particular interest in ecumenical perspective: a) the focus on Christ, as every formation should orient towards Christ-conformation; b) the witness to the world as the fundamental task of education; and c) the process building up of an ethos, made up of three dimensions: spiritual, moral and intellectual.

New Contemporary Trends

The geo-political, cultural and religious shift of Post-postmodernism has deeply touched the understanding of teaching and learning. The articulate definition given to the process of education in a recent catholic document clearly shows the complexity of providing a good formative offer which has to be based on current bio-anthropological knowledge of men and women, sciences, the variety of cultural elements, the universality of religious, anthropological, and ethical values, information technology; also education should aim at the full development and promotion of the human person, the meaning of human dignity, the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms; it should promote understanding, friendship as well as knowledge, higher-order cognitive and it should develop a sense of justice, respect, tolerance, and compassion for others, finally it should promote values for the future, such as ecology.

The classical parameters of education have been questioned and churches are still attempting an answer to the new formative demands. This could constitute an area of common reflection and action.

Snapshot n.2: ecumenical formation in catholic perspective

Pre-Vatican Council II insights

It is not appropriate to talk about ecumenical formation in a technical sense before Vatican Council II; it is possible, however, to detect some elements pointing towards it. In the context of the “theology of return” to the Catholic Church, and in a language and style which might sound obsolete for today, many papal pronouncements of the XX century, call for a better knowledge of the doctrine and praxis of the other Christian traditions. Pope Leo XIII (1878-1903) addressed the need for a visible Christian unity by calling for a special prayer to the Holy Spirit; Benedict XV (1914-1922) strongly committed himself to build up new relations among Catholics and Orthodox, Pius XI (1922-1939), despite his prohibition to Catholics to

11 Vatican Council II, Decree on Priestly Training “Optatam Totius”, 1965, nn.8.15. [Hereafter OT].
12 Cfr. GE, nn.1.2; OT, nn.8.5.15.18.

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join in ecumenical initiatives and meetings\(^{16}\), affirmed the need to overcome prejudices and stereotypes when presenting other Christians\(^{17}\); finally, under the pontificate of Pope Pius XII (1939-1958) a document of the Office for the Faith, in 1949\(^{18}\), allowed catholic participation in ecumenical gatherings, under two conditions: the guidance of the local Bishop and the need to be trained in order to present the catholic position properly and to understand different theological concerns, a first step towards ecumenical formation.

**Vatican Council II guiding principles**

The theological principles of ecumenical commitment set by the Council offer a new framework for fostering a specific formation, and the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity published a *Directory on Higher Education* in 1970\(^{19}\). The common pilgrimage of all the churches towards Christ comes from the theological principle which calls for better knowledge, and a mutual cooperation for an authentic witness to the world.

**Post-Vatican II Developments**

An updated *Directory* was published in 1993 by the same body\(^{20}\), followed by an *Appendix* in 1997\(^{21}\); they present, in details, contents and methodologies for ecumenical programs, which are affirmed to be compulsory in the theological *curriculum*\(^{22}\). Both documents had binding force to improve principles and update norms on ecumenical formation, taking into consideration the fruits of dialogues, as well as the new *Code of Canon Law* published in 1983. The two *Directories* constitute a *unicum* in the panorama of ecumenical educational literature, as the Catholic Church is, up to now, the only one setting clear guidelines and normative directives for ecumenical formation at all levels. Obstacles and challenges, however, have been pointed out recently; according to an inquiry made by the Pontifical Council in 2004 on the *status* of ecumenism, ‘the ecumenical education of the laity, of religious, seminarians, priests and bishops’ is still a goal for the future, and “the need for a better ecumenical formation has been mentioned by practically all the ecumenical commissions responding to our inquiry. There should be a place in this training for the presence and contribution of representatives of the other churches and communities. Indeed, we hope that more and more such efforts will be cooperative.”\(^{23}\) Ecumenical formation could, also help to move from suspicion to cooperation, to foster the purification of memories, to overcome the lack of

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\(^{22}\) Cfr. *Dir. 1993*, nn.72,76,79; *ED*, nn.9,22.

\(^{23}\) Brian Farrell, ‘Ecumenism Today: the Situation in the Catholic Church’, *L’Osservatore Romano* 4 (26 January 2005), 6-7. A survey at the world level is being carried on by the PCPCU together with the Congregation for Catholic Education for monitoring the practice of ecumenical formation in universities and theological institutes.
motivation and enthusiasm, which have been described, in the same report, as feature of today’s ecumenical picture.

**Snapshot n.3: The content and context of ecumenical formation**

Ecumenical formation serves the fundamental Christian calling to witness unity and reconciliation, thus implying: embracing a common pilgrimage of conversion and repentance, understanding the different Christian traditions’ standpoints, doctrines and praxis and pointing out in a mutually enriching way convergences and divergences; working effectively together for the reconciliation of memories and for a just and sustainable society. It is, therefore, a holistic, integral journey. 

*The core of ecumenical formation*

The core of any theological education is the self-revelation of God in history, the economy of salvation, the communion of the Trinitarian life offered to us; such ‘essentially a Trinitarian Christocentricity’ is the focus of every catechesis, of the message shared by all Christians and therefore is, in itself, an ecumenical statement. Ecumenical formations help Christians to confess such a vital truth together and to keep focusing on the ‘hierarchy of truths’. In addition, ecumenical formation should investigate various areas: from the key-principles of ecclesiology to a theology of koinonia, from the history of the church to the canon law implications, from the results of dialogues to concrete principles and guidelines for ethical cooperation.

Biblical foundations and spiritual roots of ecumenism are to play a fundamental role in theological formation also in their *euristic* value. An area which is listed but still needs, I think, better consideration, is hermeneutics: the whole Ecumenical Movement is, finally, a *hermeneutical* movement in this attempt to discern, understand and authentically live out the interconnections between the tradition and the various traditions. Educators have to be patient and slowly introduce the students to a gradual pilgrimage towards...
the truthfulness of the many expressions of Christian life with pedagogical care and with flexibility in method.

**Spiritual and affective dimensions**

The affective and spiritual dimension are also integral part of the formation *iter*: “Catholics should also give value to certain elements and goods, sources of spiritual life, which are found in other churches and ecclesial communities, and which belong to the one church of Christ. This appreciation should not remain merely theoretical; in suitable particular conditions, it should be completed by the practical knowledge of other traditions of spirituality.”

Sharing the ecumenical journey produces an “affective and effective growth in communion”, it helps to nourish the ‘exchange of gifts’ and writing more pages of our ‘Book of unity’.

**Mutual cooperation in social issues**

The affirmation that Christian witness to the world is an integral part of the ecumenical mandate, is mirrored in the need to offer, in ecumenical training, courses and lived experiences on social and ethical concerns. The 1970 *Directory* already exhorted to take part to “meetings or associations for study, for joint work or for social welfare work which may provide occasion for ecumenical discussion, or for examining Christian principles of social action and aids to putting those principles into practice there is a wider field for joint witness in social and welfare work. Students should be prepared for this kind of cooperation and exhorted to take part in it.” The *New Directory* further develops this potential. Different theological approaches have sometimes constituted a hindrance to such cooperation, but this is precisely its ecumenical educational relevance.

**Experience and praxis as formative tools**

As education is a multidimensional process, the co-existence of the existential, the doctrinal as well as practical spheres in formation – knowing things, doing things, being trained to integrate both – are commonly recognized both at the scholarly and operative level. It is, indeed a deeply theological aspect

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28 Cfr. Dir. 1993, nn.56.57.82.

29 Dir. 1993, n.63. Cfr. also: Dir. 1970, nn.70.71; Dir. 1993, nn.58.87; ED, 4.17.28; EF where it is affirmed the “eschatological” (n.1), the *kenosis* (nn.10.15) and the *metanoia* (n.10) and the *communio* (nn.8.12.17.19.21.24) dimensions of ecumenical formation. Cfr. also Mary O’Driscoll, ‘The Importance of the Ecumenical Vision for Theological Education and Ministerial Formation. A Response to Konrad Raiser’ “The Need of the Ecumenical Vision for Ecumenical Education and Ministerial Formation”, in John Pobee (ed.), *Towards a Viable Theological Education. Ecumenical Imperative, Catalyst of Renewal* (Geneva: WCC Publications 1997), 61-65, where she calls for a “spiritual competence” as part of the formation training.


31 *UUS*, n.28; cfr. also Dir. 1993, n.87.

32 *UUS*, n.25.

33 Dir. 1970, n.69.


which challenges strongly theological education as it aims at displaying the self-revelation of God, which is a Dabar – words and deeds. Years of ecumenical commitment have proved the key role of practices such as praying together, meeting and working together; the New Directory emphasizes experience as part of the theological curriculum, not only for professionals but also for lay faithful and religious congregations.

**Pluridisciplinarity and interdisciplinarity**

The ability of integrating various theological, ecumenical and educational principles is as much important as the ability to expand the horizons of disciplines, methods and languages to be used as tools of formation. History, sociology, philosophy and canon law should increasingly become aspect of ecumenical formation, as well as the use of communication theories and anthropological insights, the courage to experiment new languages and new frontiers, or using artistic competence (painting, music, etc...) are to be considered relevant parts of ecumenical interdisciplinarity. More cooperation could be enhanced among Pontifical Institutions and Ecumenical Bodies.

**A network for ecumenical formation**

Ecumenical formation is, rather than a mere discipline, more a ‘system’ to be applied in its wholeness. The New Directory – in chapters II and III – presents a process of creating and nurturing structures and strategies of reception as well as providing ecumenical formation for every faithful, according to the statement of Unitatis Redintegratio: “Concern for restoring unity pertains to the whole church, faithful and clergy alike. It extends to everyone, according to the potential of each, whether it be exercised in daily Christian living or in theological and historical studies.”

Chapter II presents a map of structures at the service of Christian unity according to which at every level of church life – parishes, dioceses, lay groups and associations, religious and secular orders, Episcopal conferences and Synods of Oriental Churches, educational agencies – there should be a person/representative/delegate to function as an ecumenical liaison person, to inform about what ecumenism is and does, to concretely enhance guidelines and create occasions for ecumenical growth. Such a network should include the very local as well as the regional or national level.

Chapter III singles out settings and means for an education to dialogue: the family, the parish, the school, the religious associations and groups, and even the mass-media, should all be channels through which the faithful could be ecumenically formed, despite their status or age, through preaching, Bible studies, catechism, mission studies. Beside this basic formation, the New Directory re-affirms and widens the 1970 Directory: there is a need for a specific theological formation for priests, religious and lay charged with pastoral tasks and should be permanent. A very important statement is that Ecumenism is also necessarily a perspective that has to permeate all the other theological branches and courses.

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36 “To give adequate emphasis to the Catholic and apostolic character of the church, the ecumenical spiritual life of Catholics should also be nourished from the treasures of many traditions, past and present, which are alive in treasures found in the liturgy, monasticism, and mystical tradition of the Christian East; in Anglican [sic] worship and piety; in the evangelical prayer and spirituality of Protestants”, Dir. 1970, n. 71; cfr. also Dir. 1993, nn.82,85,86.

37 Such as the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences, the Pontifical Academy of Sciences, the Pontifical Academy Cultorum Martyrum, the Pontifical Institute of Sacred Music.

38 UR, n.5; cfr. also Dir. 1970, n.64; Dir. 1993, nn.55,58,83,84; ED, nn. 2.3.5; EF, nn. 13,14.


41 Cfr. Dir 1970, nn.75,76; Dir. 1993, nn.79,80,83,84.

42 Cfr. Dir. 1993, n.91.

43 Cfr. Dir. 1970, nn.72,74; Dir. 1993, nn.73-78; ED, nn.10-21.
Whenever possible, ecumenical theology should be a field of specialization itself\textsuperscript{44}. Candidates should be enriched by teaching of professors and experts of different confessional traditions, a still a largely unapplied advice, and therefore an area to be implemented.\textsuperscript{45}

A local setting
The application of the official guidelines is the priority at the local and grassroots level: “The particular local context will always provide the different characteristics of the ecumenical task”\textsuperscript{46} because ecumenical dialogue is about interacting with other Christians in: “their history, their spiritual and liturgical life, their religious psychology and general background”\textsuperscript{47} is an important operative principle.

Snapshot n.4: (semi)peripheral documents on ecumenical formation
The need for an ecumenical sensitivity has always been addressed by Vatican II documents\textsuperscript{48}, by many other pronouncements which articulate the ratio studiorum (the order of studies) for the catholic Academic Institutions, Seminaries and Houses of formation for religious and ordained ministries\textsuperscript{49}, as well as by documents regarding the educational style of catholic schools\textsuperscript{50} and catechetical teaching\textsuperscript{51}. These documents are peripheral as they are not addressing the subject extensively, and as their concern has not yet made enough impact; nevertheless they show the continuing call for ecumenical training by the catholic magisterium in all its forms, hopefully to be increased and become a central focus.

The real issue at stake here is the one of ad intra reception in the Catholic Church. The commitment to ecumenical formation and reception is clear, widely attested and binding in many documents; such a concern, however, is not echoed as frequently as it should or could in documents dealing with related subjects.

Zooms and Looms on Theological Formation in Ecumenical Perspective
The following “zooms” and “looms” – presented as personal remarks and views – aim at singling out some areas to be reflected upon for further implementation of the rich directives set forth in official documents.

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\textit{Handbook of Theological Education in World Christianity}
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Ecumenical formation: ‘method’ and ‘pedagogy’

An inspiring picture emerging from catholic guidelines is the idea of ecumenical formation as a ‘method’\textsuperscript{52}, in the etymological sense of a ‘way through’, paved by many factors mutually interacting, a ‘system’ where the ‘formative’ aspect – which includes nurturing a proper spirituality, receiving the other, educating ourselves ‘to be’ persons of dialogue, learning to think from a different standpoint – play a role as fundamental as the concrete theological ‘information’. Creating an ecumenical educational system requires, I think, the ability to activate as many interactions as possible among the three following steps: a) ‘knowing’ the others (avoiding prejudices and stereotypes, and telling each others’ stories anew), b) ‘sharing’ communalities (considering that what unites Christians is more than what divides them), and c) ‘

\textit{communioning}’ (grounding the convergences in the real \textit{koinonia} shared), with the three areas that every holistic education has to touch, namely the affective, the spiritual and the intellectual. Only in this multi-relational system, ecumenical formation would be able to fulfill its objectives and give justice to the wholeness of the ecumenical mandate. In my own proposal, ecumenical formation should be built on four methodological pillars reciprocally interacting: a) the Faith and Order Christological principle that ‘the more we come closer to Christ, the more we come closer to one another’\textsuperscript{53}; b) the Vatican II principle of the ‘hierarchy of truths’\textsuperscript{54}, c) and the difference between the content of faith and the way of expressing it\textsuperscript{55}; d) the Lund principle on cooperation: ‘the churches should act together in all the matters in which they can act together, and act separately only on those issues in which deep divergences compel them to act separately’\textsuperscript{56}.

Considering ecumenical formation as a method will also show its relevance as a pedagogical process: as any other formative and educational \textit{iter}, in fact, proceeds by breaking down previous mindsets and building up new ones, by widening our horizons and eventually allowing new insights to replace old ones, challenging our own parameters and securities, by integrating a \textit{novum} in a \textit{continuum} of awareness, understanding and interpretation, always searching for the truth. Such a pedagogical \textit{ethos} of is, in fact, a theological concern. The 1997 \textit{General Directory for Catechesis} offers a helpful insight on this regard, when it describes the “pedagogy of God” who “assumes the character of the persons, the individual and the community according to the conditions in which where they are found... causes the person to grow progressively and patiently... transforms events in the life of his people into lessons of wisdom, adapting himself to the diverse ages and life situations”, the “pedagogy of Jesus” which includes: “receiving others, especially the poor, the little one and sinners... a kind of delicate and strong love which liberates from evil and promotes life... the use of all resources of interpersonal communication, such as word, silence, metaphor, image, example and many diverse signs”\textsuperscript{57}. Every Christian can form and be formed according to such pedagogy because of the action of the Holy Spirit in personal life.

\textit{An important feedback from the grassroots level}

The grassroots level includes parishes as well as schools. The impact of catholic schools does not rely only on numbers\textsuperscript{58}: they are also present in almost all the countries (including situations of conflict and lack of

\textsuperscript{52} EF, n.17 describes it as “dynamism”.
\textsuperscript{53} WCC-Faith and Order, 3\textsuperscript{rd} World Conference at Lund, 1952 [Hereafter FO].
\textsuperscript{54} Cfr. UR, n.11. Cfr. also Dir.1993, n.74.
\textsuperscript{55} Cfr. UR, n.11.
\textsuperscript{56} WCC-FO, 3\textsuperscript{rd} World Conference at Lund, 1952.
\textsuperscript{57} \textit{Directory for Catechesis}, nn.139-142.
\textsuperscript{58} Catholic schools are about 250.000 for a total of about 42 millions students, with 3.5 millions teachers, not considering the inestimable number of catholic teachers in State-Schools. Statistics given by the \textit{Office international de l’enseignement catholique} (OIEC), quoted in: Zenon Grocholewski, \textit{Intervento dell’Em.mo Card. Zenon Grocholewski, Press Conference 20 November 2007}. 
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religious freedom), and welcome students of different confessional and religious traditions59. Teen-agers and children are almost never targeted by ecumenical agencies, while they constitute a formidable source and platform for the future of ecumenical formation, being very sensitive to the alphabet of peace, dialogue, and communion60.

The “ecumeni-call awareness” – the awareness of the ecumenical call– is “in the air” but not “on the ground”. It is a strange dynamics, though, in fact, on the parish level, the an sit of Ecumenism is not questioned, and everybody would promptly recognize its goodness and need, “but”, at the same time, they would register a long list of “more-priorities” to be addressed first, pastoral issues that constitute an urgent challenge. Maybe what is not yet perceived is that Ecumenism could reveal itself to be the best “therapy-maker” for pastoral problems caused by inner divisions among people, families, communities and countries...since, right because it sprang from divisions, and it aims at overcoming them, Ecumenism is the best “diagnosis-maker” of divisions.

An “in-progress” feedback from the academic world

Ut Unum sint affirms that ecumenism ‘is not just some sort of “appendix” which is added to the church’s traditional activity. Rather, ecumenism is an organic part of her life and work, and consequently must pervade all that she is and does’61. The “crash-test” of theological formation, on the opposite, attests that, while there has been a significant growth in many contexts, ecumenical formation seems still to be addressed, in many places, as an “appendix”.

Surveys data62 – though until now not complete– underline the flexible character of the teaching of ecumenism. There is an increasing awareness of the need of such formation, but the incidence of ecumenical teaching may range from a whole systematic course (or specialization) to a general ecumenical orientation of some ecclesiology or church history courses (sometimes taught by professors without a specific degrees). Some institutions are not equipped with appropriate library references, and ad hoc literature, more and more available through internet, is not always accessible. In terms of the topics covered, even within the specialized research institutes, the focus is more on ecclesiology, dialogues, criteriology and less on ethical-social issues or practical theology; in terms of the texts, a good variety and quality of reference texts is found, though they seem to cover mainly the intellectual/theoretical dimension and less the spiritual or methodological path.

Where a specific ecumenical formation is present, the feedback is very positive, as it is often acknowledged that ecumenism is not about “information but formation”, is not just knowledge but a forma mentis. A future task could be to make it also a forma cordis.63

60 Allow me to mention, as example, a personal experience, about a successful project of the Centro Pro Unione coordinated by Dr. Prof. James Puglisi, SA, and myself, called “Ecumenismo in erba”, aiming at educating children from 6 to 13 years old, to the reality of dialogue, ecumenical relations etc., through quiz, games etc... Cfr. Vidimus Dominum (19 November 2003); Catechisti nella città, 52 (September-October 2004), 7; Catalunya Cristiana (2 September 2004), 32.
61 UUS, n.20. Cfr. also UUS nn.3.9.16.31.49.99.
63 While the expression forma mentis has been applied to ecumenical formation by Jos E. Vercruysse, I am also using the expression forma cordis somehow following the suggestion given by Rev. Dr. Viorel Ionita – during an ecumenical meeting of the Edinburgh Study Group – to approach questions with a “heartstorming” as well as with a

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A problematic feedback from the houses of formation

The ecumenical dimension is an increasing reality also in religious and clergy formation: numberless Seminaries, Congregations, Religious formation houses etc. do include some ecumenical experiences and initiatives. Despite the efforts, “dichotomies” are there; people who have been trained in the ecumenical field, have not been assigned to pastoral ministries, while others may be called to a pastoral ministry in a delicate ecumenical context, and not be equipped for; Congregations which regularly pray for the unity among Christians are often not familiar with ecumenical documents; finally missionary or educational Congregations which live everyday ecumenical realities may not be sensitive to ecumenical prayers.

Despite such dichotomies, further problems are there: shaping “personalities” of authentic dialogue and mature relations is not easy, especially in these times. Candidates to religious life or priesthood are young people, children of our time, often carrying family crises, depression, fragility, low self-esteem, fears, unfaithfulness or lack of models of a long-term moral choice, no perseverance, tendencies to consider self-realization not passing through sacrifice or to escape sacrifice as opposed to self-realization or happiness. Personal maturity is intuitively a pre-requisite for priesthood, though often becomes the first part of priestly/religious formation; the most difficult path is to synthesize the conflicting attitudes: individual-community dimension, the isolation-integration attitude, pastoral versus intellectual duties, etc...

This crisis of the church in society (no active impact of values and culture), a crisis of the sense of belonging and commitment to the local community/parish, the problem of priests’ efficacy in facing the situations, the problem of formation for future generations: The ecumenical falling of such a feature is relevant.

Ecumenical echoes

I will mention just two different echoes, out of many. Firstly, documents on ecumenical formation often emphasize the need for students to consider ecumenical formation as a communitarian experience. Not so often the question of the community of educators is addressed, while I think, an integral aspect of the educational process.

A second aspect, which has not been sufficiently addressed, is the diversity of terminology used in ecumenical reflection. Formation, education, learning, and training, are not synonymous, as they convey a different meta-theory at the epistemological level, and, probably, different epistemological approaches mirror different theological standpoints. What is at stake is, therefore, not only the dynamics active/passive role of the candidate (emphasized respectively in formation/education) or the accent on the methodological/practical perspective (as could be described respectively learning/training): ultimately the core of the question is the emphasis on ecumenical concern as rooted primarily in diversity or in unity. Both have a value, but emphasis on either one has significance and should be re-addressed.

An upside-down perspective

Ecumenical formation is often described as an integral journey as it aims at forming the attitude of dialogue, openness, reciprocity, acceptance of the others, understanding and sharing, all attitudes which

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64 A sharp and exhaustive picture of the tensions and potentials involved is found in Michael Putney, ‘Viability of Ministerial Formation: A Roman Catholic Response’, Ministerial Formation 66 (July 1994), 8-13; cfr. also the whole Consultation organized by ETE in Oslo, 1996: Full Report of the Workshops are found in Ministerial Formation 75 (October 1996), monographic issue.

65 A good input to this reflection comes from the document: Educating together..., nn.39.44; cfr. also EF n.16 which defines ecumenical learning as a learning in community, nn.21-22.
require a human maturity, while at the same time, improve and enrich it. The settings of ecumenical formation are places of human as well as Christian growth\textsuperscript{66}, and this human integral perspective is to be fostered particularly in the formation process of candidates for priesthood or religious life\textsuperscript{67}. What is fascinating is that the human values described are all dialogue-oriented and communion-oriented, and this brings Ecumenism and ecumenical formation in a “leading” position. When Documents on priestly formation affirm that seminarians should be taught to build fraternal relationships and cultivate attitudes of service, common search of the truth, peace and communion; that they should be people able to listen patiently, to understand, to be trusted, is nothing else than calling for a good ecumenical formation\textsuperscript{68}.

No longer a need to struggle introducing ecumenical formation, but on the opposite, seminary formators turning to ecumenical formators in order to succeed in shaping trust-building personalities for the priests and religious: is this a possible scenario for tomorrow?

**Conclusion**

Ecumenical formation is certainly the main strategy the churches have to create in order to foster Christian unity, not only for purposes intrinsic to its dynamics, but also because theological education itself has been radically changed – and damaged – by Christian divisions. Making ecumenical formation a priority will also, somehow, restore the full dignity of theological education.

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\textsuperscript{66} Dir. 1993, n.65.
\textsuperscript{67} Dir. 1993, n.70.
\textsuperscript{68} Cfr.: OT, n.19; *Ratio Fundamentalis*, nn.14,51; *The Formation*, nn.4,24,29,33,35,37,39,48. Cfr. also *PdV*, nn.18, 43-44. The quotation “that they may all be one” (Jn 17, 21) is used to describe the aim of education to community life: Cfr. *Ratio fundamentalis*..., n.38; *The Formation*, n.29.
THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION IN THE ANGLICAN COMMUNION

Clare Amos

In 2008, in the run up to the Lambeth Conference of Anglican bishops, which takes place every ten years, the journal *Anglican Theological Review* devoted an entire issue to theological education in the Anglican Communion. That in itself was significant: it was intended as a statement that theological education needed to be at the forefront of the thinking of the communion as it prepared for the significant milestone in its life that the Lambeth Conference provides every ten years. There were contributions to the issue from a variety of Anglican geographical perspectives: United States, Canada, England, Africa, Korea, Aotearoa/New Zealand, Brazil. In my capacity as Secretary of TEAC (Theological Education for the Anglican Communion), the Working Party on Theological Education established by the Anglican Primates in 2002, I was invited to contribute a short overall reflection. Among other things I commented on the way that the concerns and challenges which theological education had to address seemed to act as a microcosm of the concerns and challenges facing the church, specifically in its Anglican expression, as a whole. I reflected, ‘[The] interplay between the heritage we share in common and the contextual needs and gifts of different geographical regions is not unique to the Anglican tradition, but is certainly one of the main Anglican distinctions. And just as the communion is wrestling in its whole life with the dialectic between received heritage and context, so Anglican theological education seems inevitably and rightly to act as a sort of prism which intensely refracts their engagement and tension.’

So it is probably no accident that the recent endeavours to foster and improve theological education in the Anglican Communion have coincided with threats to, discussion about and action to support the unity of the Anglican Communion. And it is interesting to note that the link between the need for better theological education and the health of Anglicanism seems to be a perception common across the current Anglican spectrum – although of course different parts of the spectrum may want to offer different remedies as far as the content and method of such theological education is concerned. The connection can be graphically demonstrated. At a meeting of the Anglican Primates in March, 2001 which had on its agenda the strains within the Anglican Communion, Canon Dr Dan Hardy, a consultant to the meeting, offered two papers exploring ‘Dimensions of Anglican Polity’ and ‘The Situation Today.’ However at the same meeting he also presented a paper entitled ‘Theological Education in the Mission of the Church’ in which he argued for the setting up of a Working Party to improve theological education in the Anglican Communion. Dr Hardy linked both issues – questions about Anglican polity in relation to the life of the communion and questions about theological education – to the missionary calling of Anglican churches throughout the world and the need for Anglicans to seek to live up to this vocation.

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2 The *Journal of Anglican Studies* also devoted its June 2008 (Vol 6.1 June 2008) to the topic of theological education. Articles in that journal were drawn from Africa (regionally), Ghana, Aotearoa/New Zealand, South Africa, Malaysia.
3 *The Anglican Theological Review* ibid 197.
4 In the Anglican tradition the ‘Primate’ is the leading Bishop or Archbishop in each of the 38 Anglican Churches.
5 These papers and others on linked themes were published by Daniel W Hardy, *Finding the Church*, SCM, 2001.
It was as a result of discussion at that March, 2001 meeting that an initial pilot working party on theological education was established, which reported to the Primates at their meeting a year later. In turn that led to the setting of a full scale Task Group, later referred as a Working Party, on theological education whose establishment was ratified at the Primates meeting in Brazil in May, 2003. It is this body that took the acronym TEAC (Theological Education in the Anglican Communion), and, as a Working Party of about 35 people, became quite widely known throughout the Anglican Communion under that title. In ratifying the work of TEAC the 2003 Primates meeting observed:

It is our conviction that all Anglican Christians should be theologically alert and sensitive to the call of God. We should all be thoughtful and prayerful in reading and hearing the Holy Scriptures, both in the light of the past and with an awareness of present and future needs.

We discussed what basic standards of theological education should be provided for and expected from all members of the church. All regions face major challenges in this area, particularly in the provision of resources in non-English speaking provinces, and we considered how these should be met.

We recognize that there is a distinctive Anglican approach to theological study. This is reflected not only in the way our worship and liturgical life express our belief, and in our attention to Scripture read in the light of tradition, but also in our respect for exploration and experiment.

Theological education in the Anglican Communion honours each local context and, at the same time, calls us together into communion and mutual accountability. Therefore, though we wish to develop common standards of theological education worldwide, we value the uniqueness of the work of the Holy Spirit in each place.

Supportive of the Archbishop of Canterbury and, with him, convinced of this need, we affirm and encourage the work of the Anglican Communion Task Group on Theological Education.

TEAC itself, fairly shortly after its establishment, set out a short Aim and a longer Rationale for its work, which were published on the Anglican Communion website.

The Aim of TEAC states the aim is:

- to deliver a well-focused challenge to be a communion of Christians who read the Bible together in the fullest awareness of who, when and where we are;
- to strengthen the sense of why we are Anglicans and what sort of church we want to be;
- to make clear suggestions as to how theological education can be delivered with appropriate professionalism and ecumenical alertness;
- to create a culture of teaching and learning in the faith community; because all Anglican Christians need some kind of theological education.

The Rationale reflects:

The mission of God has been committed to the servant people of God in Christ. It is the privilege and duty of Christian leaders to provide for the equipping of the church for this task. Central to equipping Christians for God’s mission is education in the Holy Scriptures, in the teaching of the church and in practical application of that education.

In the face of the countless tragedies facing the world today, the Christian commitment to God and his purposes for humanity is vital to being a reflective disciple. Theology is not simply an exercise for

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6 The report (ACNS 2959) can be found at www.anglicancommunion.org/acns/news.cfm/2002/4/17/ACNS2959.
8 TEAC has sought to make its documentation as widely available as possible, even when it is still work in progress. It has welcomed and taken seriously suggestions it has received as a result of this sharing.
9 www.anglicancommunion.org/ministry/theological/teac/docs/briefs.cfm#s3.
academics but the attempt by all Christian people to make sense of all God has given and revealed to us, in other people, in the world, in our place and time, in the Bible and, supremely, in our Lord Jesus Christ. It is the attempt to make connections between our daily life and the Christian experience of God, faith and life in the Spirit. It is the attempt to understand why trust in the Creator, Redeemer and Sanctifier makes a difference, and, in that knowledge, to be willing and eager to share God’s love with others.

In many places, existing, new and renewed ventures in theological education are bearing fruit, and these examples, together with the principles on which they are based, deserve to be made more widely known.

However, there are identifiable but not insurmountable difficulties facing the Anglican Communion in the area of theological education. The degree to which each may or may not be a problem varies from place to place. The difficulties may simply be defined as:

- a general lack of theological literacy – a challenge to spiritual life and mission in increasingly secular societies and a serious hindrance to Christians in telling the gospel story and making connections between faith and life;
- inadequate engagement with contemporary thinking, culture and society – a challenge of selecting and preparing a new generation to share Christ in a world of apparently competing faiths, secularism and postmodernism;
- some confusion about the particular callings of those involved in the church’s public ministry – a challenge particularly with the practice of *diakonia* in a range of ministries;
- inadequately or inappropriately trained priests – a challenge of relating theological and biblical understandings to practical situations in preaching, pastoral care, evangelism and ethics, and of refreshing theology and practice;
- inappropriate practice of the particular ministry of a bishop in changing contexts – a challenge of understanding the functions of apostle-missioner, teacher, encourager, team-leader, manager, pastor, disciplinarian, public figure, example and colleague; and
- a weak or selective commitment to Christians (even of Anglicans) of other traditions and perspectives – a challenge of appreciating the positive ethos of Anglicanism and what it can contribute to and learn from others in the Christian way.  

Within the text of the Primates’ statement and TEAC’s Aim and Rationale a range of issues are highlighted – some of which perhaps may relate more directly to theological education than do others. Some of the concerns are of course common to a wide range of churches, while others are more specifically Anglican. But they do provide a helpful snapshot of topics that Anglicans need to address in relation to theological education at the beginning of the 21st century. I will first offer a fairly brief historical survey, leading up to the present, and then explore some specific issues that are referred to in the documents I have quoted above.

The name ‘Anglican’ has implied a link with ‘England’. Most, though not all, churches of the Anglican Communion have developed directly or indirectly as a result of the British Empire. Either they were former British colonies, or in some cases, such as parts of the Middle East and Latin America, regions where diplomacy or trade led to a substantial expatriate British presence. It is arguable that some problems relating to theological education and indeed wider strains within the communion are, at least in part, a result of the end of Empire. It is interesting however to note that there is a group of churches within the communion where the historic links are not with imperial Britain but rather with imperial, or quasi-imperial, America. In a number of ways, dating back to experiences at the time of the American War of

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11 For example, the Philippines, Taiwan, Mexico, Central America, Brazil. There is also a historic link between the United States Church and the Episcopal Church of Scotland.
Independence in the late 18th century, the Episcopal Church (the expression of the Anglican Communion in the United States) feels institutionally a bit ‘different’ to other parts of the Anglican Communion.

However, as regards the parts of the Anglican Communion where British influence has been predominant, during the colonial period certain givens applied. During the 19th century in England a number of theological colleges or seminaries opened, offering a residential course to ‘young men’ that included elements of theological study, practical skills and spiritual formation. The atmosphere they engendered was a cross between minor Oxbridge college, a minor independent school and a monastery! That was the normal path of preparation for ministry in the Church of England, and it was a pattern that was exported, where possible, across the British Empire. However there was a considerable difference between parts of the Empire where the majority population was of European origin (e.g. Australia, Canada) and parts where the majority population was Asian or African. In the former there were attempts from an early date to set up theological colleges on the English model for the training of clergy, in the latter the normal assumption was that priesthood remained in European hands, and that the most that local Anglicans could normally aspire to was the non-ordained role of ‘catechist’. There was an implicit ‘colour bar’ in relation to ordination. So, for example, in the West Indies, although West Indians were ordained in the 19th century, these were usually white members of the local plantocracy and middle classes.

The ‘established’ role of the Church of England had as state church in the ‘mother country’ also affected church life in the colonies. The Anglican Church in most colonies was the church of the colonial elite. For example, the British-born bishop in Ghana in the 1940s won over members of other churches by using the slogan, ‘Join your King’s Church.’ The perception of bishops themselves was delineated by their close proximity to the ruling colonial authorities – as well as by the model for episcopacy that had been imported from England. And a side-effect of the Anglican Church being identified in many countries as a de facto ‘state church’ was that Anglicanism was seen as possessing as much a political as a theological rationale. With the exception perhaps of regions where a distinctive form of the Anglican tradition was strong (such as the Anglo-Catholic UMCA missionary areas of Tanganyika), there was not, as indeed there also was not in England itself, a strong sense of what made Anglicans theologically distinct within the wider Christian church. It was the church of a place rather than a theological position – even if that ‘place’ was in some ways far away. It was only in 1981, for example, that the Anglican Church in Australia ceased to be known by the title ‘the Church of England in Australia.’

With the Second World War and the pressure for independence in many parts of the Empire things had to change. It became apparent that Europeans could not reserve the leadership of the church for themselves and that ways of ensuring an appropriately trained indigenous clergy had to be found. It is well known that Trinity Theological College in Singapore was initially envisaged as the result of conversations between a number of expatriates from different churches, including Anglicans, interned by the Japanese in Changi Jail, who had reflected on the future needs of the Churches in East Asia for national leadership. In the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s, Anglicans were involved in a number of such ‘ecumenical’ discussions, both as regards united theological institutions and united churches. Additionally with the approach of political

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12 Although as it happens the very first residential Anglican theological college was General Theological Seminary in New York in 1830, closely followed by Codrington College in Barbados in 1832. However over the next decades several colleges were then opened in England.

13 There were of course exceptions. Philip Quaque from West Africa was the first African Anglican priest in the mid 18th century. He was sent to England for training and ordination. The situation in India was complicated and this was one part of the Empire where some bishops (themselves Englishmen) were anxious to support the development of a ‘native’ clergy, which was facilitated by the opening of Bishop’s College, Calcutta in 1815, although Bishop’s College originally offered studies in a broader range of subjects than simply theology.

independence in parts of Africa a number of specifically Anglican theological colleges were founded or developed to train a greater number of local men for ordained ministry. The model adopted was very much on the lines of English colleges – perhaps with minor cultural adaptations e.g. in some cases students were given plots of land to till to help support their families during their studies.

When political independence arrived in Asia and Africa, in most cases ecclesiastical independence followed swiftly. The Anglican institutional presence in these countries which had been previously been formally dependent on the Archbishop of Canterbury as ‘metropolitan’, or overall leader, changed into newly constituted independent Provinces or Anglican Churches (or as in the case of the Indian sub-continent moved fairly quickly into being part of united Churches). Within the following decade the expatriate Englishmen who had served as bishops up till this point were replaced by indigenous leadership. But what did ecclesiastical independence mean for theological education?

One clear concern was resourcing. In spite of the fact that the international Toronto Anglican Congress of 1963 spoke of ‘Mutual Responsibility and Interdependence’ external funding for many newly created Provinces, particularly in Africa, quickly diminished, not helped by the reality that the British-based mission agencies, such as CMS and USPG which had hitherto provided substantial support for the ‘church overseas’ were themselves having to cope with a changed environment. So a number of newly established Provinces could not afford to sustain (at least for most ordination candidates) the ‘traditional’ model of priestly formation in residential colleges which had been seen as the normative ideal for Anglicans. Political instability was another factor. In Sudan, for example, the premises of the well respected Bishop Gwynne College at Mundri were attacked during the civil war. In some cases, particularly in regions where Anglicans were a minority church, Anglicans were involved in an interdenominational college or a college or ‘Bible School’ belonging to another church. TEE (Theological Education by Extension) was also used in a number of areas as a means of training, but on the whole Anglicans tend to have been less positive than many other denominations about TEE regarding it, perhaps unfairly, as a second best method of training, certainly for those preparing for full time priesthood.

It is however interesting that, certainly in the last decade, the issue of resourcing has increasingly become a concern for theological education also in the so-called affluent West. The cost of full-time residential training, and the different profiles of candidates offering for ordination (in terms of age, marital status, gender, academic background) has meant that a number of residential training institutions have had to close, merge or diversify. In most parts of the Anglican Communion there is now considerable encouragement of part-time models of training, which while not necessarily full scale TEE projects, normally include an aspect of distance learning.

It is against this backcloth that the issues identified in the Primates’ statement, and TEAC’s Aim and Rationale need to be viewed. Quoting from these documents, I comment on five pointers from them below:

‘Strengthen the Sense of Why we are Anglicans’

This is a clear priority for TEAC. In spite of the rich treasure of Anglican liturgy, spirituality, poetry and theological reflection which is cherished by those who take trouble to explore their Anglican heritage, the particular church/state and colonial history of many Anglican churches has meant that in some parts of the world Anglicans do not have a very clear ‘theological’ idea of why they are Anglicans. In England itself, for example, even in the twenty-first century, to be a member of the Church of England is still in many ways a ‘default’ position for those who identify themselves in any way as Christians. Similarly in some former British colonies the main reason for people to describe themselves as Anglican is often due to factors that are historical or quasi-political rather than theological. Although the 1662 Book of Common

15 Bishop Gwynne College has continued ‘in exile’ in Uganda.
Prayer is a common inheritance of most Anglican churches throughout the world, it is perhaps characteristically ‘Anglican’ not to have worked out doctrinal statements of Anglican belief and practice. It is however notable that a deep attachment to Anglican identity is perhaps stronger in the Episcopal Church (of the USA) and the churches in Latin America which it parented than in other parts of the Anglican Communion. Certainly in predominantly Roman Catholic countries (e.g. Mexico, Brazil) most of those who identify as Anglicans possess a strong sense of having consciously chosen a church which is both liturgical but also offers more individual freedom than the majority Roman Catholic Church is believed to allow.

‘Distinctive Anglican Approach to Theological Study’

Although in all churches preparation for ministry includes an element of personal and spiritual formation as well as academic learning and practical skills, Anglicans have traditionally placed a higher priority on personal formational aspects than most other churches of the Reformation. Participation in regular structured daily worship, traditionally both morning and evening, is an Anglican ideal for all clergy, and so practice and preparation for this is regarded as an important part of ministerial training. There is a real sense in which Anglican theology and doctrine is ‘shaped through worship’, or as Archbishop Rowan Williams once described it, we ‘inhabit our doctrine.’ In terms of theological education such a focus on common worship has been one reason some Anglicans have expressed hesitation about TEE and non-residential models of training, though with good will and creative thinking this is not an insuperable problem. It has also led to hesitancy in some countries about participation in ecumenical or interdenominational training institutions, particularly institutions in which Anglicans are a small minority. There is the feeling that however good the academic resources of the institution may be, if it does not give adequate attention to common worship and individual spiritual formation then it does not offer a completely adequate pattern of training for future Anglican ministers. Such a concern has led to Anglicans pulling out of well established ecumenical institutions and setting up their own separate colleges (e.g. in Malawi and Zambia). An alternative pattern, which seems to work quite well, involves Anglican participation in an ecumenical institution, supported by an Anglican ‘hall of residence’ at which the Anglican students can live and develop a common discipline of life and worship (for example, Trinity Theological College and St Peter’s Hall in Singapore). A further pattern, particularly in locations where there are substantial academic resources, involves training in an Anglican college, which is linked to a number of institutions of other denominations in a federation or consortium.

However, the Primates’ statement which spoke of a ‘distinctive Anglican approach to theological study’ mentioned not about worship and liturgical life but also ‘our attention to Scripture read in the light of tradition’. As the work of TEAC has developed over it became very obvious that issues about the way Scripture is read and the use that is made of it in the life of the church, are in many ways the nub of debates and discussions about theological education. If theological education acts as a ‘prism’ for the wider Anglican Communion then biblical study is surely a similar prism for theological education itself. Within the wider parameters of theological education, the tension between the contextual and the traditional seems to be particularly apparent in relation to the Bible – both how the Bible is studied and how it is used in the

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16 Whether it is still used directly in English or in translation, or indirectly through having inspired liturgical revision which normally takes ‘1662’ as its baseline.
17 Unlike for example churches of the Reformed tradition with the ‘Westminster Confession’. One of the issues for some Anglicans about the ‘Anglican covenant’ which is currently being developed is that it provides a more explicit doctrinal statement than many Anglicans would welcome.
18 For example the Cambridge (UK) Theological Federation, the Melbourne College of Divinity, and a number of US institutions, particularly in California.
wider life of the church. Ultimately any serious engagement with theological education is forced ‘back to the Bible’ – and conversely attitudes to the Bible influence other dimensions of theological education, both in their content and their methodology. In a number of the controversies that the Anglican Communion is facing today e.g. questions of sexuality, Christian attitudes to other religions etc, the reality is that underneath such ‘presenting issues’, the key matter for discussion is the attitude to biblical authority and the nature of biblical hermeneutics. The revolution in biblical studies of the last 40 years, with traditional historical-critical methods being challenged by techniques of reading the Bible which claim to draw on the insights of ‘reader response criticism’ and/or ‘experiential Bible study’, still needs to be properly reflected on and absorbed into the life of the church. In some circles and contexts these recently popularized methodologies have been called into service to invalidate critical study of the Bible – although that would not necessarily have been the aim of those who originally developed these techniques. Ideally biblical study needs to take seriously ‘the world of the text’, ‘the world behind the text’ and ‘the world in front of the text’ and enable all three ‘worlds’ to continue a dialogue with each other. Yet this dialogue seems to be quite difficult to sustain, and in most cases one ‘world’ seems to predominate. Another feature of recent biblical scholarship has been interest in the ‘whole’ – how a particular biblical book should be read in its entirety, or even the question of the nature and function of canon. However the reality is that rarely does this understanding of the ‘whole’ get drawn upon when the Bible is called into service for the life of the church, which still engages to a considerable degree in ‘proof-texting’: to take seriously a ‘wholistic’ hermeneutic of the Bible is an ongoing task for theological education. To address such issues the Anglican Communion is developing a major project on ‘the Bible in the Life of Church’, which will be organized in liaison with theological education institutions in various parts of the Anglican Communion.

‘Resources in Non-English Speaking Provinces’

History has meant that in most Anglican Provinces the primary ‘academic’ language is English, even in countries where English is not the language of worship or daily living. In Provinces where English is an ‘academic’ language, theological education may take place either in the vernacular, or in English. Normally there would be a shift to English at least for degree level training courses. This can be problematic – to train people to think theologically in a language which is different from the one in which they are going to minister can be alienating for minister and congregation. There is however a paucity of theological materials, particularly materials relating to specifically Anglican concerns, available in many vernacular languages. This is even more the case in Anglican Provinces where the academic language is not English – such as the Spanish or Portuguese speaking Provinces of Latin America, and French speaking Provinces (e.g. Burundi Rwanda, Congo). One of the tasks of TEAC has been to organize the translation of a key text on Anglican studies, ‘Something in Common’, into French, Spanish Portuguese and Swahili, and it is hoped that this may be the first of similar projects.

‘All Anglican Christians Need Theological Education’

It is of course a generalization, but Anglicans probably have not been committed to systematic theological education for ‘all the people of God’ to the extent that is found in some other churches. It is notable that the historical survey I gave above focused largely on training for ordained ministry, and that probably reflects the reality. In part this is due to the ‘high view’ of ordination, and the dominance of the clerical class within Anglican structures. There is of course training for specific lay ministries, such as Reader, but this is patchy – although in some countries, such as England, it is now of quite a high standard, moderated by central church authorities and often given university accreditation. But theological (or ‘Christian’) education for ‘ordinary’ lay people has until recently, in many parts of the Anglican world, not
been seen as a priority. It tends to be another reason that Anglicans ‘know’ their faith less well than Christians of another denomination, or perhaps than adherents of other faiths. And so a number of Anglican churches are making the improvement of theological literacy for all people a priority. During the past year I have been shown examples of good resources which have recently been developed in Jamaica, Singapore and Malaysia. Of longer (and well regarded) standing is the EfM (Education for Ministry) course, originally developed at the University of the South, Sewanee, in 1975, and now used widely in the United States and also in a number of other countries, such as Canada and the United Kingdom. This is a four year, quite challenging college level programme that aims to develop an ‘active, theologically literate laity’ with an underlying philosophy that all baptized Christians have a ministry19. One of the ongoing tasks of TEAC is to share examples of good practice and resources between the different Anglican Provinces. Perhaps the work of TEAC can also assist in helping to value the varied ministries of lay people.20

In some parts of the Anglican world, particularly in churches where women cannot yet be ordained to priestly ministry, there is a clear gender bias in terms of access to theological education. A conference for women theological educators held in March, 2009 identified the question of women’s access to theological education as an issue of justice which needed addressing21. (It is also notable that outside the Western world there are probably proportionately less Anglican women in theological education roles than women in many other Christian churches.)

‘The Particular Ministry of a Bishop’

One of the principles with which TEAC is working is that theological education is life-long. It should not cease at the point of ordination. This also applies to bishops. It is vital for the church to inculcate into new and potential bishops the realization that requesting training to help them exercise effective episcopal ministry is not an admission of failure. It is also important for the Anglican Communion as a whole to continue to reflect on the nature of episcopal ministry within the Anglican tradition. The pattern of prelacy that accompanied the British Empire – with bishops exercising some aspects of colonial power – still leaves its mark in some parts of the Anglican Communion, and there is a genuine degree of uncertainty about appropriate Anglican models for episcopacy in the 21st century. In part the problem lies in the very different contexts in which episcopacy needs to be exercised. These are not simply geographical, but also reflect considerable difference of size, both in terms of number of clergy and spread of terrain. Inevitably such differences affect how episcopal ministry should be carried out. The training of bishops is a special concern in Provinces and regions where travel difficulties or other factors mean that bishops tend to be isolated from each other and where the ‘college’ of bishops has few if any opportunities to meet together for peer learning. A number of Provinces do have a regular training programme for bishops, particularly in the early stage of their episcopal ministry. However these tend to be the Provinces that are wealthier and better resourced. An exciting initiative has been the development of a regional training course for bishops by CAPA (the Council for Anglican Provinces in Africa). This complements other international programmes such as the course for new bishops run by the International Study Centre in Canterbury, England. Such international programmes are not only important for the training of the individual bishops concerned. They also help to foster a sense of mutual ‘Communion’. A paper produced by the International

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19 See the Education for Ministry website at www.sewanee.edu/EFM.
20 There are a number of specific lay ministries such as ‘Reader’ or ‘Catechist’ for which people are licensed by a bishop. There is however an ongoing tension in Anglicanism as to whether such ministries should be valued primarily for their ‘lay’ nature and the contribution, or whether they should be seen rather as stepping stones to ordination. There is also a separate and ongoing debate, linked partly to the exploration by John Collins of the word ‘diakonia’ as to whether it is appropriate to talk about ‘ministry’ or ‘discipleship’ in relation to lay people.
21 See the report of this meeting at www.anglicancommunion.org/acns/news.cfm/2009/3/3/ACNS4584
Anglican Theological and Doctrinal Commission in October, 2006 reflected on ‘The Anglican Way: The Significance of the Episcopal Office for the Communion of the Church’\(^{22}\) makes clear the significant role bishops have in relation to this. So opportunities for bishops from different Provinces to meet each other are important – and the ten yearly Lambeth Conference of Anglican bishops has a dual, but linked, role – both offering training to bishops and fostering Communion. In the 1950s and early 1960s, St. Augustine’s College at Canterbury acted as a sort of a staff college for the Anglican Communion of the time. Potential future leaders from various Provinces were identified and spent a whole year at Canterbury. As well as assisting with the theological education of the Communion’s future leaders, the course provided an ideal meeting place for younger Anglican clergy to meet their peers from other parts of the Anglican Communion. The friendships developed through their common year at St Augustine’s endured, in many cases, throughout their later ministries, and in an unquantifiable way helped nurture the communion. Financial and other pressures forced the closure of St. Augustine’s College – but the question of how to provide in an appropriate form for today for what St. Augustine’s College offered 50 years ago still needs a fuller answer.

One particular issue for Anglicans in relation to theological education is the ambiguous role that bishops can play – sometimes unwittingly. Because of the role and power of bishops within Anglican structures, this can mean that talented theological educators are undervalued in some parts of the communion. Rather than staying in theological education and developing their skills as educators still further they are under pressure, either self-imposed or from outside, to become a bishop themselves. Conversely the control that bishops may be perceived to exercise in relation to theological institutions, may lead to some principals and staff not feeling they have the freedom of ‘exploration and experiment’ (see below) and can inhibit the valuing of the role of theological educators within the wider church.

There are of course a number of other issues raised by the 2002 Primates’ communique and the TEAC Rationale document. The Primates assert that ‘Theological education in the Anglican Communion honours each local context’. Ideally this is true, and there are a number of exciting ongoing initiatives in relation to working contextually. However the reality is probably that the contextual dimension is not honoured as much as it should be in certain parts of the Communion where resourcing or other issues mean that there is a lack of self confidence and an unwillingness to take one’s own context seriously. Similarly the comment about Anglican willingness to engage in ‘exploration and experiment’ is not really a complete picture of the story of theological education throughout the Communion.

Over the last five years TEAC has framed its work around three questions:

- Why is theological education important?
- What is the framework within which theological education needs to be developed, and what are the ideal outcomes of theological education?
- How can we meet the needs and facilitate more effective theological education around the Anglican Communion?

Its suggested answers to the ‘Why’ question can be found via the TEAC section of the Anglican Communion website\(^{23}\) and include the Rationale document quoted earlier in this article. The ‘What’ question has been partially answered by the publication by TEAC of a series of ‘ministry grids’, again available on the TEAC website. Drawing on the ‘outcomes based’ format which has become increasingly influential in educational circles in recent years\(^ {24}\) seven grids were produced\(^ {25}\). Five focused on specific

\(^{24}\) For example in South Africa, which is actually where TEAC met and worked on these grids in January 2006. In South Africa, to meet the needs of the post-apartheid era all educational courses are required to be devised in an ‘outcomes based’ formula.
\(^{25}\) Available at www.anglicancommunion.org/ministry/theological/teac/grids/index.cfm.
ministries: that of bishops, priests, permanent deacons, catechists and lay ministers, the laity. These five grids set out in tabular form the qualities, skills knowledge and competencies needed by practitioners of these ministries at particular stages e.g. in the case of the priests’ grid at time of selection, at time of ordination, after a number of years in ministries. The other two grids focus on the Anglican Way, exploring it as a kind of traversal in relation to the first five grids. One of these latter two grids asks what elements of the Anglican Way are important in relation to each particular form of ministry or lay discipleship, the other asks how such teaching and learning about the Anglican Way is best carried out. The grids which have now been presented to a number of Anglican Communion meetings (the Bishops’ grid was used at the Lambeth Conference) are now quite widely known, and are being used in a variety of ways in different regions of the Anglican Communion. Though they can be critiqued – an interesting article by Dr. Eileen Scully in the Spring 2008 issue of the Anglican Theological Review asks pertinent questions about ‘outcomes’ based framework’ on which they are based, they do at least provide an important ‘baseline’ to facilitate the development of ‘common standards of theological education’ to which the Primates May 2002 statement refers.

A different kind of baseline was drawn through the publication in summer 2007 of the statement The Anglican Way: Signposts on a Common Journey (popularly known as ‘the Signposts statement’) which was developed at the TEAC meeting in Singapore in May, 2007. This seeks to set out in a succinct and straightforward way the core essentials of the Anglican tradition – particularly in relation to what needs to be learned in the course of theological education. One of the features of the ‘Signposts statement’ is the way that it seeks to create a ‘flow chart’ for the Anglican Way, beginning with a section headed ‘Formed through Scripture’, moving into ‘Shaped by Worship’ followed by ‘Ordered for Communion’ and concluding with a section headed ‘Directed by God’s Mission’.

The third question that TEAC has sought to address, the ‘How’ question, is very much an ongoing process. It involves the provision of resources, particularly in relation to Anglican studies, for areas of the Communion where these are scarce, the exploration of issues such as accreditation of theological education, and the explicit support in a variety of ways of those involved in theological education. A priority must be the supporting of regional work and networks in the Anglican Communion where possible, such as the theological education initiatives of CAPA the Council of Anglican Provinces in Africa) and ANITEPAM. In liaison with the Centre for the Study of Christianity in Asia, TEAC supported a valuable conference in November, 2008 which drew together theological educators representing all East Asian Anglican Churches. This was the first event of its kind for almost 20 years in East Asia. There is also considerable theological education work being developed regionally by the Latin American Anglican Provinces – via the body known as CETALC. TEAC’s Regional Associates, though working on a very part-time basis, have helped to support such programmes, particularly in Africa and Latin America. One problem that TEAC has continually to live with is the provision (or lack of provision) of resources for its

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27 Available at www.anglicancommunion.org/ministry/theological/signposts/english.cfm. It is also available in French, Spanish and Swahili.
28 These have included the provision of a basic library of books on Anglican studies to theological colleges in Africa and Asia; the translation into Spanish, Portuguese, French and Swahili of a core text for Anglican Studies, the development of a series of booklets, ‘the Signposts series’, which expound aspects of the ‘Signposts statement.’
29 ANITEPAM stands for The African Network of Institutions of Theological Education Preparing Anglicans for Ministry. Its website (including an electronic bulletin) is found at www.anglicancommunion.org/ministry/theological/signposts/english.cfm.
30 See note on this at www.anglicancommunion.org/acns/news.cfm/2008/11/14/ACNS4540.
own work, especially given the enormity of the challenge, particularly in some parts of the Anglican Communion. Realistically the financial resources available are unlikely to increase any time soon.

TEAC itself was reconstituted with a renewed mandate at the May, 2009 meeting of the Anglican Consultative Council. This new mandate encourages it to focus particularly on theological education in relation to the Anglican Way, and the support of theological educators.

In spite of the current tensions in the life of the Anglican Communion all seem to be agreed that theological education is of primary importance for the life and well-being of the Communion. Indeed, as I have suggested in my opening paragraphs, many would argue (from different or even conflicting perspectives) that the lack of good theological education in recent decades has been a root cause of present difficulties. Perhaps one of the features of theological education today for many churches (Anglicans included) is a kind of built in series of tensions. Such tensions can be constructive and creative, and valuable for the life and well-being of a Communion whose motto is ‘The truth shall set you free’ (John 8.32). However some writers have also observed that in the current debates of the Anglican Communion theological education is itself in danger of becoming a weapon or a battleground. That would be tragic if that becomes the case. A powerful article written by the South African Anglican missiologist and theological educator Mike McCoy, reminds us that of the fact that we need to restore mission to the heart of theological education: McCoy writes:

But I think we can say that the old way of studying theology ... is dead. It is now being raised to new life in an integrated, cross-disciplinary approach – one that stands or falls on the conviction that it is the mission of God that gives coherence, direction, and purpose to all Christian ministry. I love the ecclesiological image used by the Orthodox theologian John Zizioulas, who pictures the church as a tree with its roots in the future and its branches in the present. Even as we deal with the day-to-day realities of designing courses and learning new skills and serving our learners, we must keep our vision fixed on what is yet to come – and be ready for it. We must be rooted in God’s future, because, as we equip God’s people to serve God’s mission in the world, and as we seek the fulfilment of the basileia that Jesus proclaimed and embodied, we need to be nourished by the life-giving Spirit who both journeys with us into that future, and beckons us towards it.

It is a challenge for TEAC to hold such a vision before our sisters and brothers in the life of the Anglican Communion.

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31 Bishop Michael Doe, General Secretary of the Anglican world mission agency USPG contributed an important paper to a theological education conference held at the Queens Foundation Birmingham in March 2009. He referred in detail to five sets of tensions in Anglican theological education: Leadership versus Ministry; Residential versus Non-residential; Ecumenical versus Anglican; Global versus Domestic; Ecclesial versus Prophetic. He also lists more briefly the potential tension in theological education between ‘simple faith’ and ‘intellectual enquiry’. The article can be found at www.rethinkingmission.org/article_doe0609.html.


The Lutheran Tradition in Theological Education Amid Today’s Global Realities

In 16th century Germany, Martin Luther insisted that being able to read, interpret and understand the Bible was crucial for all Christians, and for living out their vocation in the world; in this sense and rather remarkable for that time, education for all was considered an obligation.¹ This has carried over into the importance Lutheran churches long have given to education, and correlatively, to the importance of having pastors and other church leaders who are well-educated, in theological disciplines as well as conversant with other disciplines.

From its beginning, the reformation movement associated with Martin Luther has been rooted in the university, where theological inquiry can be pursued in relation to other disciplines. This tradition continues particularly in Europe, as well as in some other places around the world, where theological faculties are part of longstanding universities; these institutions are where those interested in pursuing theological studies as well as those who feel called to become pastors typically go. Yet especially in areas of the world where Lutheran churches are growing, such university-based theological education often is not available. Furthermore, as universities increasingly focus on religious studies rather than in relation to faith commitments, questions are raised as to whether such education will actually serve the needs of the churches.

In 2004, at the beginning of the Lutheran World Federation program, “Theology in the Life of Lutheran Churches: Revisiting Its Critical Role,” the following tendencies were noted:

- a big gap between academic theology and theology as lived out in the actual life of churches; the former is often inaccessible even to church leaders
- in many churches, theology is increasingly sidelined, with attention focused instead (even by many pastors) on what will work, is practical or popular
- sometimes theology is used to legitimize or justify but not critique or challenge what churches say and do
- in the face of rapid social changes, people are attracted to fundamentalist or charismatic appeals that seemingly preclude further theological reflection
- interacting with those of other faith traditions provokes new theological questions and horizons that urgently need to be dealt with in an increasingly inter-religious world.

In short, theology may be at risk of losing its essential role in the life of Lutheran churches, and as guiding what churches teach, practice and live out in the world, and challenging such when this compromises what is central to the church’s identity, confession, witness, ecumenical and interfaith relationships.

The concern here is not only with the importance of institutions and programs responsible for theological education and formation in relation to Lutheran churches, but also and more importantly, that

such programs effectively engage the real challenges Lutheran churches face in their respective contexts today. This is consistent with a central awareness emerging at least from the time of the Reformation, namely, that all theology needs to be contextual -- engaging with the real questions and challenges confronting people in a given time and place -- in ways such that the inherited answers and approaches are put to the test, challenged and re-conceptualized.

In that sense, Martin Luther can be seen as one who inspires what is central in contextual theologies today. He was not a systematic theologian (and did not look kindly on those who were wedded to philosophical systems of the day), but was committed to the gospel of God’s grace being communicated, in words and actions, in relation to the existential and social realities facing people in his day. This was at the heart of Luther’s theological intent, and still should be considered the intended purpose of theological education in Lutheran churches today.

Surveying Theological Education in Lutheran Churches

For the purpose of this article, a brief survey was sent to Lutheran churches around the world, to which approximately 40 churches responded. The following draws selectively from what was shared, as well as from examples of what the Lutheran World Federation has done over the years.

Pre-requisites and time spans for theological education

The prerequisites needed before beginning a program of theological study vary. Some require potential theological students to have studied Hebrew and Greek, and even Latin, or to spend their first year acquiring such, as well as having already studied some theology as undergraduates; others prefer that students begin the theological education after having studied in other fields.

This traditional pattern of academic theological formation, however, is no longer realistic in the increasing number of situations today where persons enter theological studies after working in other fields, or in cases where the necessary academic preparation is lacking. Perhaps the sharpest contrast is between those who choose to or end up studying theology out of a personal interest, often with little active connection with the institutional church, in contrast to those who cannot expect to receive the necessary support and endorsement even to begin theological studies without having demonstrated commitment to the faith and thus a “call” to prepare for professional ministry in a given church. Sometimes rigorous and extended processes of endorsement are required. A period of intentional vocational discernment, often under the care and direction of a synod or diocesan committee is becoming increasingly important in many settings.

The time span of theological education required for those preparing for ordained and other ministries in Lutheran churches varies. In some contexts, what is required is only a certificate after a period of study (e.g., two or three years), in others a baccalaureate degree of four or five years, in others, a masters-level degree following a baccalaureate degree, and in still others, a continuous period of university-based academic theological study for six or more years. In an increasing number of situations around the world, such theological education is pursued while working in a church-related or other kind of job, and thus, as a part-time student, which significantly increases the length of time needed to complete these studies.

In addition to, or sometimes included in the above time for academic study, practical experience in a parish through a vicarage or internship usually is required, which can range from as little as six months to as much as four years. Some require mentoring or continuing education courses for a period of time after a pastor is ordained.

Those who pursue their theological education in a university faculty, and who seek to be ordained, then must spend additional time in a program where practical ministerial training is offered, or in some
churches, are required to spend a year studying at a Lutheran Seminary. Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) is also a requirement in many situations where this is available.

Although in most cases where education for diaconal ministry is offered the time spent in study is less that for those preparing to be pastors, this is not the case in the Evangelical Church of the Lutheran Confession in Brazil, which considers ordained and diaconal ministries to be shared ministries and provides comparable education for both. Furthermore, in some settings special courses, retreats and other programs are offered for the theological education of laity who do not intend to become professional church workers. Such programs may focus, as have long-standing Evangelical Academies in Germany, on theological or ethical questions in daily life or in relation to wider secular disciplines. Many theological institutions are increasingly offering non-credit courses which are open to all based on their interest.

Distinctive Lutheran emphases
When asked what distinctively Lutheran emphases or understandings churches expect candidates for ministry to be familiar with, in addition to the predicable kinds of biblical, historical and systematic courses, what typically were mentioned were courses in the Lutheran confessions (especially the Small and Large Catechisms), Lutheran theology (especially key writings of Luther), Lutheran church history, and Lutheran understandings and practices of worship. Some of these, along with homiletics, pastoral (or soul) care, education and parish administration are covered in programs, institutes, or Predigerseminars which candidates for ordination are required to attend after the completion of university-based theological studies.

Some point out that the Lutheran relation of law and gospel is important in how homiletics is taught; the Lutheran Church in Australia emphasizes that all courses are taught with a Lutheran accent. Although familiarity with the Lutheran Confessions is mentioned by most, in some cases outside of Germany it is specified that this needs to be in the original language. In the case of the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod, two courses on the Confessions are required, and at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, a course on “The Lutheran Mind.” United churches mention the importance of gaining familiarity with both Reformed and Lutheran traditions. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Hungary explicitly emphasizes “knowledge of ecumenical and evangelical-Lutheran understandings.”

In their responses to the survey, some Asian churches (Hong Kong-China, Indonesia, Korea, Taiwan) emphasized the importance of the doctrine of justification for Lutheran identity in contexts where they are. In Indonesia, the consequences of the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification between the Lutheran and Catholic churches were discussed among the church members, especially in contexts where the Catholic Church is a significant presence.

It is striking that in most of the other responses to the survey, although mention is made of the need to be familiar with the history of Lutheranism and, in many cases, with the particular history and mission roots of the Lutheran church in a given context, no mention is made of the importance of understanding churches outside their own context, whether they be Lutheran or of other Christian traditions, not to mention of other faiths. This was not explicitly asked in the survey, and in fact may be occurring, but that it is not identified by the respondents as essential in theological education for Lutheran churches, is itself a matter of concern in light of what today is the ecumenical and global profile of Lutheranism.

Distinctive Lutheran understandings and practices of worship are seen as important, although the practices can vary widely, even in one country because of different historical mission influences. For example, students at a Lutheran seminary in Namibia must take different worship courses depending on whether they are preparing for ministry in churches with either Finnish or German roots. One of the Lutheran churches in Hong Kong pointed out that students are expected to have a clear understanding of the rationale for infant baptism as well as a consubstantiation understanding of the Lord’s Supper.

Danish respondent noted that worship practices in Lutheran churches beyond Denmark are not considered, which probably also could be said of most others. In light of Lutherans growing together in the LWF as a global communion, which is grounded in sharing in Word and Sacrament, this somewhat provincial horizon of Lutheran worship is a cause of concern.

It is important that Lutheran emphases not be turned into superficial slogans that lack the nuances or dialectical sense that Lutheran theology has tried to convey, e.g., in understanding *sola Scriptura*. The further danger is that of a Lutheran triumphalism, in contrast to a theology of the cross, as well as an anti-ecumenical spirit, a set apartness rather than as being part of the One Holy Catholic Apostolic Church.

There clearly are differences in how deeply churches have incorporated these recognizable Lutheran traditions and understandings, which in some places in Europe go back to the earliest times of the Reformation, but in many other parts of the world, to less than a century. What really is constitutive or formative for many in these other contexts continue to be much older indigenous cultural worldviews and expressions of spirituality. Some of these can readily be incorporated into and transform expressions of Lutheranism, whereas practices based, for example, on moralistic tendencies in a culture, clash with and need to be transformed by the central Lutheran tenet of “grace alone.” Theological education needs to equip leaders for this important discerning, transforming, and renewing process in cultures.

Some Lutheran churches are quite explicit about the purposes of theological education. For example, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), in which 90% of future pastors attend its seminaries, states that the purpose of theological education is:

To foster faithful and informed discourse on God’s saving activity in the world and to equip lay and ordained leaders who, by the power of the Holy Spirit and through the gifts of grace:

1. Know and believe the gospel of Jesus Christ, as revealed in the Holy Scriptures and proclaimed in the ecumenical creeds and the Lutheran confessions;
2. Witness to the gospel by word and deed;
3. Reflect theologically on the mission of God’s people in a pluralistic and secularized society;
4. Understand and creatively appropriate the various expressions of the gospel by diverse cultures across the centuries and around the world;
5. Empower all the baptized members of this church to express the gospel in their daily lives of witness and service in the world.3

Note that here theological education explicitly is for lay as well as ordained leaders, and that mission in a pluralistic, multicultural society and world is at the heart of the purpose it serves. For example, in most ELCA seminaries for some time this has included required cross-cultural exposures and training.

Today there are at least three kinds of institutions which most theological students from Lutheran churches attend for theological education: (1) theological faculties that are a part of universities, (2) set-apart seminaries or theological colleges/universities that have been established by Lutheran churches, and (3) seminaries or theological schools that are intentionally ecumenical in how they have been established or how they cooperate. For example, many Lutheran seminaries are a part of ecumenical clusters, where students can cross-register for courses from not only various Protestant but also Roman Catholic seminaries. Often there are different options, such as in the Church of Norway where theological students can go to either the University of Oslo or more church-oriented institutions such as the Norwegian School of Theology.

On the one hand, theological education as lodged in universities tends to emphasize the development of critical, analytical skills, in ways that are conversant with other disciplinary perspectives and accountabilities, but in ways that tend to be somewhat removed from the actual realities in the churches. On the other hand, denominationally-related seminaries (which may also focus on the above critical, analytical skills) tend to be more responsive to their related churches, especially for practical skills necessary in ministry and for nurturing the faith; in some settings, however, they may not feel free to critique what is occurring in the churches. In some situations, theological faculties have too little time to develop critical capacities in students, given the need to equip them in a short time with the necessary skills for ministry, not to mention educational deficits of students who come to them. A combination of both kinds of theological education is important for enriching churches in both the global South and the global North.

If Lutheran theological insights are to have a dynamic, living future and actually “connect” with the people of God, as Luther himself was committed to in his day, then discussing and testing that out cannot only occur in academic settings such as universities, but must have grounding in and be accountable to the questions and challenges facing local communities of faith (congregations), in settings where faith rather than unfaith is the presupposition, i.e., in societies that are not secular but highly religious. At the same time, drawing on other disciplines, such as those needed for effective management of churches, is increasingly important if church leaders are to acquire the multiple skills needed today. The settings where theological education occurs, and the accountabilities and personal interactions there, can make a difference as to who the future leaders of congregations will be most able to relate or minister to. It is crucial that theological understandings be developed and made accessible to all the people of God.

Increasingly, programs are being developed to provide theological education for those who are not able to be fulltime residential students at a seminary or theological faculty. These may be “theology by extension” (TEE) programs, with online courses, or concentrated modules of “theological education for emerging ministries” (TEEM), such as non-degree programs that prepare those from other churches or countries to serve in the ministry of a particular Lutheran church.

**Significant trends or changes in recent years**

Probably the most obvious change in recent decades is the growing number of women in theological education, both as students and increasingly as teachers, which has significantly changed the character and flavor of Lutheran theological education. In some seminaries, over the majority are now women. Ironically, with this change has come decreasing attention to feminist or gender-based studies in some places where this had been emphasized previously.

Many students pursue theological education after working in other fields, and thus are older and/or part-time students. Some churches now have begun making intentional efforts to attract younger students to study theology. In some settings of the global South, where theological education previously was one of the few fields open to promising students, and with other fields now open to them, fewer are studying theology.

A huge challenge is that of adequate financial support for theological institutions, for theological students (who are becoming heavily indebted if they have to pay for their education), and for those who enter professional church work after their theological studies. It is disturbing that many who have been theologically educated face bleak financial futures if they seek employment in the church, and thus go instead into jobs where they at least are able to support themselves and their families.

Some surmise that students today, at least in the global North, are less open to global and ecumenical work than they were some years ago. In settings where females have equal opportunities to study theology and prepare for professional ministry, male students seem less likely to seek out these global and ecumenical opportunities.

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Interfaith relations is becoming an increasingly important focus in Lutheran theological education, although in many places in Africa and Asia, people of other faiths are still seen as people to convert rather than with whom to dialogue, especially in situations where those of other faiths are experienced as threats. Yet dialogue, whether ecumenical or interfaith, compels us to know who we are and what we believe or stand for. From this perspective, Lutheran identity becomes more important, not for the purposes of being set apart but in order to enter more deeply into significant ecumenical and interfaith relationships.

Supporting and Encouraging Theological Education and Formation Globally

Carrying forth this tradition of concern for theological education in Lutheran churches, the Lutheran World Federation, which today includes about 68 million members in 140 member churches around the world, has long been involved in supporting and encouraging theological education.

For example, the LWF gathered the financial support for establishing strategic theological seminaries in Africa, Asia and Latin America. The LWF has also supported Lutheran faculty positions at a few theological institutions around the world. In 1956 the LWF convened the first International Congress for Luther Research (the “Luther Congress”), which has continued to meet every five years. Below are some examples of what has been emphasized in recent decades.

1970-1980 The emphasis on contextual theological formation in the World Council of Churches and elsewhere also inspired LWF programs on theological education during this decade. From 1971-1976 ten consultations were held by the LWF to support member churches and theological institutions in developing creative ways of doing contextual theology.4

Two of the major questions were: (1) What are some of the essential demands on theological education in a world where human survival is increasingly being endangered daily, and where clear spiritual values that can be put into daily practice are intensely needed? (2) What are to be the new features of a learning community in the context of a particular situation or of society as whole? The answer to these questions disclosed how far theological education was able to give meaning and insight to churches, both Lutheran and ecumenically, as well as promoting transformation in society. Also implied was the need to give attention to learning processes and methodologies.

Lutheran identity became a central issue during this decade that, theologically speaking, is also an ecumenical matter. What are decisive truths for Lutherans which are also shared with the whole Christian family? Furthermore, God’s mission in this world should be pursued ecumenically. It was said that, “As we consider our task in God’s mission today, we find our Lutheran identity in tension between the responsibility for common Christian witness, and faithfulness to our denominational heritage.” 5 In light of such a tension, Lutheran theological formation becomes a dynamic and open task. The task of Lutheran theological formation is to translate its confessional heritage into the common ecumenical horizon and the challenges there. One need is to interpret Lutheran theological understandings (e.g., of law and gospel) in ways that can more readily engage cultural and contextual life. How does God work through culture, and also transform culture? Being justified, how do we participate in social transformation?

Besides such theological questions, institutional and methodological issues were also considered. The most pressing recommendation was for theological institutions to become more self-reliant. Especially in the global South, support needs to be provided to produce theological studies locally. The Lutheran


heritage should also be translated and connected to the living faith in local contexts. In this light, the LWF Asia Program for Advanced Studies (APAS) was developed, to encourage the development of Luther studies for local reception and reception and reflection.⁶

Another measure was to build up and equip churches for further theological training, i.e. Theological Education by Extension (TEE) programs, continuing education for pastors as well as the co-operative theological education along with ecumenical partners and resources. Here some creative, local examples were developed in contexts where most ministries were being carried out by lay deacons and elders.

The need to become less dependent on foreign resources was another important institutional issue. Theological formation began to be understood as an aspect of wider church learning processes. Communication skills to connect theological formation with the life of the churches became one of the programs supported by the LWF. The LWF was one of the only ecumenical organizations to have a staff position explicitly focused on theological education.

1980-1990 Continuing the contextual emphasis, LWF held a conference on “The Third World Lutheran Theological Educators Conference” in Sao Lepoldo, Brazil, 1988. The purpose was to re-think Luther’s theology in relation to “third world” contextual theologies, which had begun to flourish.⁷ This conference reflected the on-going contextual theology being developed within the Lutheran family, with emphasis being given here to the political context of theological formation. Critical perspectives were raised regarding Luther’s position on women, peasants, Jews and Muslims. Furthermore, it was asked “to what extent can Lutheran values and insights be transformed into instruments that promote human liberation?”⁸ Here, theological formation is connected with committed social engagement. In this regard, the ecumenical concern for liberation became more important in Lutheran theological formation.

The emphasis on human liberation opened up new concern for the participation of women in theological education, a concern that had grown since the 1970s. In 1984, the LWF adopted a position favoring the ordination of women, and encouraging member churches to ordain women; although many had already been doing so for some time, today still a minority does not ordain women. It was urged that opportunities be increased for women, including on theological faculties. In 1991, an international consultation of Lutheran women theologians was convened.

1990-2000 During this time, the International Network in Advanced Theological Education (INATE) was begun, involving a few mostly Lutheran-related theological institutions in Europe, Latin America, Asia and Africa.

At the LWF consultation, “Revisioning Theological Education” (Rome, August 23-27, 1999)⁹ teaching theologians from Lutheran and ecumenical theological institutions in 33 countries gathered, especially to focus on the new challenges posed by globalization. Here, the foci were on feminist and other liberation theologies, theological education for social transformation, ecumenical formation, interfaith work, revising the theological curriculum, interfaith relations, spirituality and faith formation, and the need for collaboration and networking.

As a follow through to this, regional and global consultations were held on “Engendering Theological Education,” which were intended to affect curriculum development and emphases in light of gender concerns. The concern was not so much with incorporating feminist perspectives, but to provoke changes in theological education that are relevant and life affirming for both men and women.

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⁸ Ibid., 137.
⁹ See, Revisioning Theological Education, LWF Global Consultation on Theological Education (Department for Mission and Development, Geneva, 1999).
Continuing support for theological education today

Over many years, the LWF has encouraged and supported regional advisory groups on theological education in Africa and Asia, provided support for acquisitions by theological libraries, and encouraged intentional exchanges and sharing among institutions, particularly in the global South. For example, in 2008 a consultation on theological education in Africa was held, in which attention was given to theological formation of leadership for responding to HIV and AIDS and other economic and political challenges, to curriculum development, and to the sustainability of theological context in African contexts.

The theological capacities of member churches have been enhanced by providing funding for hundreds of students who have been endorsed by LWF member churches to pursue theological studies. Between 1975 and 2008, well over 1000 students, mostly from the global South, have been supported in this way. Also, since 2005, an annual two-week course on “The Ecumenical Church in a Globalized World” has been held in Geneva for theological students, thus furthering their ecumenical formation.

Theologians from throughout the world have been convened through the years by the LWF for consultations on many different methodological, disciplinary and topical foci, and articles they have written have been published in many different LWF books, which in turn are made available to theological faculties and libraries.

Similar commitments to supporting and strengthening theological education have also been demonstrated by other Lutheran churches who are not members of the Lutheran World Federation, such as the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod and related churches who cooperate as the International Lutheran Council (ILC). In a number of cases, theological education in Lutheran churches is supported by both the LWF and the ILC, even though this can evoke tensions over different policies (e.g., ILC churches generally do not ordain women), biblical interpretations, what is emphasized in the Lutheran confessional documents and how they are interpreted, and involvement in ecumenical relationships.

In a Lutheran communion, theological education and formation are increasingly important

Since 1990, the LWF has grown in its understanding and identity as a communion of churches, sharing in pulpit and altar fellowship, and engaged in joint work in areas such as mission and diakonia. Yet furthering theological understandings and implications of being a communion of churches, with their many differences, remains an ongoing challenge that requires extensive involvement of those engaged in theological education. As proposed in the 2009 report of the Renewal Committee to the LWF Council:

The future of the communion will depend on its capacity to develop appropriate Lutheran, contextual and ecumenically engaged theological work….The communion also should help the churches to move beyond their individual ethnic and cultural identities toward a communion companionship where human boundaries are transcended. Cooperation among member churches and theological institutions is stimulated in the areas of worship, spiritual life, other faiths, social ethics and issues of Lutheran and ecumenical self-understanding. For this task, the LWF benefits from the work of Lutheran and other schools of theology in the different regions, but it profits especially from the engagement with ecumenical theology, and theology more generally, within the structures of the LWF itself.

There is an immediate need for nurturing the theological formation (formal and informal), Lutheran identity, perspectives and practices (worship, pastoral care, advocacy for justice, the care for creation) of the members in the communion, especially at the congregational level.
Lutheran identity is an urgent concern in many parts of the communion and therefore the renewed LWF needs to focus more on theological formation, education and capacity building.¹⁰

Challenges that Still Need to be Addressed

Trans-contextual theological formation

Although genuinely contextual theologies are essential, a danger is that these can become too captive to their own setting or realities. Yet, contextual theologies do create new conditions for trans-contextual interpretations of the Christian faith, for the sake of more extensive validity in a global society of many cultures. What remains the same, despite obvious changes in historical and cultural conditions, is that which has the ability to trans-contextualize itself.¹¹

Trans-contextual here refers to a movement in the present, across spaces or defined contexts. Its undergirding is not only incarnate, but Trinitarian, communicative, interactive. It dares to cross boundaries, inspired by the many ways in which Jesus was always crossing boundaries, mingling with those he shouldn’t have. It is in crossing over from one context to another that we may be graced with intimations of what transcends each of our contexts, glimpses of how the Spirit of God is active between and among us.

Trans-contextual theology is the real challenge -- and opportunity – this is where the liberation or transformation begins to occur, not in spite of but through the differences. Immersion in particular contextual realities, and how they challenge and inspire us, provoke the need for theological interpretation, and are potentially transformative. We seek to understand the context more deeply, not so that theology can fit, correspond or “be relevant” to what is going on (although that is not unimportant) but so that the transcendent sense of how God is active can be sensed. This occurs through trans-contextual ways that no one contextual perspective can own, and that can inspire, motivate, energize what needs to be done to change what is in bondage, broken, in need of transformation. It involves an incarnate vulnerability that is inherent in a theology of the cross, a power in interactivity that empowers.¹²

Transfiguring Lutheran theology and theological education

More is needed than only passing on or imparting inherited Lutheran theological understandings and practices. “Transfiguration” as it is being used here, has to do with what happens to traditions such as Lutheran theological traditions that have been passed down through time. It is far more than just translation or application, but involves creative re-envisioning and making new connections. Transfiguration refers to how figures rooted in concrete historical circumstances migrate across time and space and emerge in new situations, catalyzing new associations and meanings, through surprising or unexpected connections.¹³

Is Lutheran theology and theological education inevitably European, and especially Germanic in its logic, conceptualizations and traditions, which of course, others can participate in, but on terms that remain foreign to them and their contexts? With the ongoing, postmodern de-centering of universals, especially of European discourses, what does that this imply? Is there an ethos or grammar or dynamic that “transcends” the particularity of its founding context? How can others participate in a set of assumptions, ways of being, anthropology or worldview that are not their own, and will continue to feel in some ways as “foreign”? At

¹⁰ “Being and Living as a Communion of Churches: Taking the Next Steps,” Renewal Committee Report to the LWF Council, October 2009.
the same time, in the Bible are not those who are seen as “foreign” often the very means through which God’s intentions are glimpsed? Furthermore, is there not a central dynamic in a Lutheran theology of the cross which continually is upsetting, challenging and provoking us to think beyond our categories, familiarities and domestications of the faith?

**Theological formation that is transformational**

“Transformation” has to do with how we individually and our social realities are changed. Lutheran theological education should strive to be transformational. The indwelling God empowers us through different kinds of relationships, ways of living, and what we attend to theologically. As Luther put it, through the power of God in the Eucharist, we are changed into one another: “…through the interchange of his blessing and our misfortunes, we become one loaf, one bread, one body, one drink, and have all things in common….In this way we are changed into one another and are made into a community by love.”\(^{14}\) i.e., we become the body of Christ in the world. Thus, our contexts become shared contexts, not through our efforts, but because of the transformative power that transforms us all in the interchange. We discover the transformative potential of Lutheran theology “at the intersections of God’s one world.” There we find not just a morass of postmodern relativism, but fragile yet reliant threads that do hold us together, or a Lutheran “grammar.”\(^ {15} \)

In today’s world, it is not sufficient to pursue theological work mono-culturally. It must be done interactively with others – open to what they bring to us rather than only preoccupied with our realities. We must not deceive ourselves into assuming our ways or concepts are absolute, even if they have been passed on to us in such ways. Rather than relativism, this involves testing and struggling to find common ground or what is normative. This is enriched and nurtured through our diversity -- not in spite of but because of our diversity. We come together not through the imposition of universals but dialogically, through our interactions, in an incarnate, perichoretic, embodied conversation, anchored in basic convictions and insights of the Reformation. Perhaps this is a foretaste of what might unfold during the second 500 years of theological education inspired by the Reformation.

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\(^{15}\) This was the experience of a team of ethicists from around the world, as they dialogued together across vast cultural differences in writing the book, *Lutheran Ethics at the Intersections of God’s One World*, op cit.
THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION IN REFORMED CHURCHES

Reformed Theological Education – A General Introduction (Douwe Visser)

It may not be of a surprise that Reformed theological education shows worldwide a very diverse pattern. The Reformed world is itself of a very diverse nature. There are about 750 different Reformed Churches\(^1\). Of these churches 215 are members of the largest global Reformed organization, the World Alliance of Reformed Churches. It looks as if this is just a minority of the Reformed Churches, which in fact is the case, but all of the largest Reformed and Presbyterian Churches are members of the WARC. The number of Christians in the member churches of the WARC is 75 million.

However, the churches are very diverse, from very conservative to very liberal. Many of the WARC churches are involved in the covenanting for justice process. Following the Accra Confession, adopted in 2004, the WARC took a radical stand against the neoliberal global economy with its devastating effects on people and creation.

Theological education also shows this diverse pattern from conservative to liberal. It is also very diverse in academic level: some of the top theological schools come out of the Reformed tradition, and some training for Reformed ministry is at a very basic level.

In many locations, Reformed theological education is offered not in a denominationally restricted environments but via interdenominational and interreligious cooperation within seminaries or theological faculties\(^2\).

Only with a certain level of generalization can we offer a systematic description of the challenges and trends in the field of Reformed Theological education. The following themes may be helpful: Reformed identity, ecumenical outreach, interreligious contexts, ministerial training, context of society, and gospel and culture.

Reformed identity

The year 2009 was an important year for the Reformed family worldwide: the 500\(^{th}\) anniversary of John Calvin’s birth. Of course even in the celebration of this anniversary the Reformed division was made visible since the total of the Reformed world could not be brought together in its festivities. However, many articles, lectures and books were produced – stimulating the rethinking of Calvin’s theology, Reformed tradition, and identity. The diversity of the Reformed family was obvious, but one could say that there is at least some shared opinion on what is essential for Reformed identity. The German theologian Eberhard Busch mentions these basics for Reformed identity\(^3\):

- “The unconditional subordination of their own tradition and doctrine to the holy scripture
- The assignment of their own denomination to the one, ecumenical church

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\(^2\) This is the case for the theological faculty of the Free University in Amsterdam where there is theological education from orthodox Reformed to Muslims.

Theological Education in Reformed Churches

- The arrangement of their own denomination in the travel of God’s people
- The continuing importance of the first commandment
- The powerful claim of God to our whole life
- The common character of the Christian life under the one Head.”

It is clear that what Busch considers as fundamental for Reformed identity is both descriptive and challenging. Reformed identity has often been worked out theologically as a sort of a fortress. The clearer Reformed identity was, the more closed the circle. Reformed theology should see it as its greatest challenge to give clarity to the understanding of Reformed identity with at the same time being open and self-critical. The dialectical tension between Reformed and Ecumenical, between Scripture and Doctrine, between Sovereignty of God over life and liberty should be made fruitful.

It is of great significance that Reformed theology is no longer something only for the global North. More and more essential contributions come from the global South. More and more Reformed theology is not something only for men; the number of advanced female theologians has been growing over the years in the Reformed world. Because of these developments, Reformed theology has a new stimulus with a fruitful tension between tradition and renewal.

Ecumenical outreach

Notwithstanding the fact that Reformed theology has often been developed and is still sometimes being developed from the perspective that truth can only be found in the Reformed Church, traditionally in the line of John Calvin there should be awareness that the true church can only be the universal church of all ages and all places. Calvin always sought for a balance between truth and unity. He was very critical of the Church of Rome and was not able to foresee concrete unity of the whole church in his time. Reformed theologians have for a long time been in the forefront of the ecumenical movement. They have seen themselves to be in the line of Calvin regarding his desire for the unity of the church. Regarding the aspect of truth they were certainly not always going in the footsteps of Calvin. This needs not to be a point of critique in itself. Calvin is no saint in the sense that he should always be respected. It is however more fruitful to work out the relation between the perspectives of ecumenicity and truth than to make a choice for one of these and to give up any balance. This could be the ongoing challenge for Reformed theological education.

Interreligious contexts

Theological education today must recognize the interreligious context of the world, and that this context varies from place to place. Sometimes there are deep tensions, sometimes there is silent animosity, sometimes we see an unbalanced openness and sometimes an enriching dialogue. The patterns are very diverse. Reformed theology is part of these patterns. It is often heard in the Reformed world that the inter-confessional dialogue is of less importance than the interreligious dialogue. This is especially understandable where churches are in a frontline situation, for example in Pakistan. In that context there is sometimes a critique of the ‘soft’ attitude in more liberal theological circles where a too optimistic view of e.g. Islam is manifest. On the other hand, especially in Indonesia where there is a long tradition of dialogue, there is a strong plea to rethink Christian tradition so that openness to interfaith dialogue will be a fundamental part of Christianity.

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4 Most famous in this sense are the words of John Calvin in a letter of 1552 to the Archbishop of Canterbury Thomas Cranmer that he would like to cross ten seas in order to promote the unity of the church.
5 See Bernard Williams, Truth and truthfulness, Princeton 2002, 8 for what happens when the search for truth is being given up because then “we are indeed left with a space structured only by power”.
6 It is worth noticing here that many Protestant Churches in Indonesia who have a Reformed background do not call themselves ‘Reformed’ and that in many of their theological schools there is no longer teaching of a subject being
It is difficult to find something in Calvin’s writings that might be considered as direct statements about interfaith matters.\(^7\) There is however in the Reformed world great awareness of the fact that Calvin’s theme of God’s sovereignty over all life can also be a helpful starting point for interfaith dialogue.

**Ministerial training**

In Reformed theological education there has often been a critical tension regarding academic institutions as the place where future ministers of the church are taught. This is not unique to the Reformed tradition. Ministers of Reformed churches are sometimes trained in seminaries that have a very close relation to one or more Reformed churches and sometimes they receive their training at a theological faculty that is part of a (state) university. There has been and there will always be criticism of the academic distance between the church and the institution where ministers are trained. However, this academic distance is also often appreciated as guaranteeing the self-critical development of academic theology that enriches the training of future ministers. It has already been said that Reformed theological education today is often undertaken in ecumenical settings which are open to other confessions and traditions. In many ways this is changing the perspective from which theological education is being done. It is also important that, as with church life, we see here a shift from the global North to the global South, though we are not yet able to see the full effects of this shift.

**Context of society**

In Reformed tradition the relation between theology and society has always been a vital part of theological education, which has sometimes been criticized for being too much part of ‘this world’ and lacking spirituality. This has not changed with the shift of importance from North to South. On the contrary, matters of social justice, politics, and economics are regarded more and more as theological issues. This may also be a reason why in the global South there is within the Reformed world sometimes less interest in traditional Western theological issues – which are sometimes denounced as things of interest only for ‘male German theologians over sixty’\(^8\) Here Reformed theological education is really at a crossroads because it may cause a paradigm shift in doing theology and the related important questions. Are the poor and marginalized the lens through which the analysis has to be made? Can a word like ‘sin’ be used to characterize an economic system? Is a political or economic statement in itself also a theological statement? There is in the Reformed theological world much debate about these questions, not least because of the Accra Confession, a declaration about the state of affairs in world economy. The Accra Confession speaks clearly about the evil of the neoliberal economy. In order to be concrete about this evil, the word ‘empire’ is used. With this term the Accra Confession means “the coming together of economic, cultural, political and military power that constitutes a system of domination led by powerful nations to protect and defend their own interests.”\(^9\) ‘The Accra Confession has caused much debate, and has both deep support and critical disagreement. It has also given a new impetus to rethinking the relation between faith and society, especially from the perspective of the Reformed tradition. It has lead to a rethinking of what it means to be a confessing church. Within the World Alliance of Reformed Churches the confessing character of the Accra Declaration is seen to be in line with the ‘Barmer Thesen’ and the ‘Belhar called ‘systematic theology’ let alone ‘dogmatics’. These churches regard themselves almost as post-denominational.

\(^7\) Here there is a difference with Luther. See Adam S. Francisco, *Martin Luther and Islam: A study in sixteenth-century polemics and apologetics*, Leiden 2007.

\(^8\) This is also much behind the debate over the Accra Confession adopted by the World Alliance of Reformed Churches in 2004. See for a critical reaction Ulrich H.J. Körtner, *Calvin and Capitalism* in Marzin Ernst Hirzel and Martin Sallmann (ed.) *John Calvin’s impact on Church and Society*, Grand Rapids/Cambridge 2009.

\(^9\) See *That all may have life in fullness*, World Alliance of Reformed Churches 24th General Council Proceedings, Geneva 2005, 155.
Confession’. In part of the Reformed community it has lead to a deeper sense of togetherness and a desire for a Reformed communion. This is behind the expected merger in 2010 of the Reformed Ecumenical Council and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches in the formation of a new body, the World Communion of Reformed Churches.

For Reformed theology the whole process of being outspoken in (Reformed) ecumenical circles is important because the position of theological reflection itself is at stake. What is the relationship between economic analysis and theological vision? Is there any separation possible? The influence of liberation theology is very strong though, in many cases it is a critical dynamic process. We can see at this point a paradigm shift within ‘classical’ Reformed theology.

**Gospel and culture**

It is often said that the Reformed tradition with its ‘low church’ type of worship and its lack of hierarchical church governance had from its start an intrinsic inclination to secularization. The Reformation in general did away with the distinction between the clerical and the secular world. It “made all secular life into a vocation of God.”¹⁰ In Reformed theology there has often been a natural openness towards the wider cultural context. On the other hand in part of Reformed theology there has been a strong sense of condemnation of especially moral aspects of culture. Supportive or critical, there has been a strong focus on the dominant cultural context.

Reformed theology is done today in a context of secularization wherein church and theology are marginal aspects of cultural life – a situation which is true not only in the Western world. If theology is still taught at a university, it is no longer the ‘Regina Scientiarum’, the Queen of Sciences. It has to fight for its position. At times the Faculty of Theology has been changed into a Department of Religious Studies. Sometimes this has had a paralyzing effect, not the least on the missionary outreach of the church. The triumphant feelings that may have been felt in 1910 by representatives of the Reformed world present at Edinburgh are no longer there, at least not in the Western world.

But this is precisely the point. Reformed theology is no longer something of the male Western world. It is something of women and men worldwide. This has maybe caused the greatest paradigm shift in Reformed theology. Reformed theology is deeply rooted in culture. The challenges are overwhelming, but the fact that so many bright women and men from all over the world are still interested in ‘doing theology’ is a very hopeful sign for the future. The situation compared with Edinburgh 1910 is very different. But it is a difference for the better.

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institutions, and in particular on the relationship between theological schools and the life and witness of the churches.

The Mission in Unity Project for two reasons had important implications for the area of theological education, both within the Reformed family and ecumenically. The first reason is, that mission in unity discussions in countries like Uganda, Angola and Bolivia have invariably highlighted theological training as a priority area for cooperation. There is a great need for theological formation in various forms and for various levels of the churches. Hereby it is recognized that the system of each church maintaining its own bible college or theological school is simply not feasible, especially not for smaller churches. Given that differences in theological understanding and ecclesial practice are often minimal or at least less essential than what the churches have in common, joint training is the logical solution. As the Ugandan churches at their 2001 MIU meeting stated:

“As we met, we realized how close we are in our teaching, in our understanding of the life and mission of the church and in the forms of church government. Though we may differ in certain perspectives, we are one in confessing Jesus Christ as God and Saviour” … “There is urgent need for a constructive collaboration among the Reformed theological schools in Uganda.”

Moreover, it is increasingly realized that even if there are differences, or rather, precisely because of their differences, theological schools need to dialogue and cooperate, as the different emphases and insights will be enriching. This idea is also very much behind a number of joint training courses for immigrant and mainline churches in Europe. We need each other as people from different cultures and churches – and this often goes well beyond the Reformed tradition – in order to identify “what does the Lord require of us” here in this context today, to jointly carry out that mission and ministry, and to engage in theological reflection upon that common mission.

But beyond this practical reason of efficient stewardship and complementarity, there is a second reason why the MIU Project has theological education on its agenda. It has long been recognized that theological schools can in fact be a hindrance for cooperation in mission. Therefore the MIU project from its inception raised fundamental questions about the role of theological schools. Of course it is not possible to ask churches directly whether their theological school is a help or a hindrance for mission in unity. But evidence suggests that there are in fact training institutes where narrow confessionalism and an expansionist understanding of mission nurture leaders who consider their understanding of faith and church as the “only right one”, are more passionate about preserving the “purity” of their church than the unity of the body of Christ, seek to export their brand of church to other countries and are generally more easily “enraged” than “enriched” by different opinions, expressions of faith or liturgical practices. The MIU Project has therefore opened up questions of college curriculum, ethos and cooperation with other training institutes in a variety of ways. As part of this endeavour in 2003 a major consultation on “Transforming Theological Education in Mission” was held with the Council for World Mission in South Africa.11

The MIU Project also participated in the WCC’s interactive process of critical self-assessment and evaluation of training for church leadership in Africa. The aim of the process was to assess methods and formats of theological education, ministerial formation and general church leadership training over the past five decades in order to identity what has, and what has not, made a difference to the life and mission of the church in Africa. Participation of WARC and the MIU project in this process links the Reformed family to the wider ecumenical search for theological education and formation which equips people for relevant Christian ministry in a context of plurality, whereby a grasp of denominational identity is as essential as a basic openness to other confessions and faith traditions. All Mission in Unity consultations between 1999

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and 2005 identified theological schools and colleges as key structures for working more closely together in order to a) use resources more efficiently; and b) help students to catch the vision of being the one ‘body of Christ’ in their particular context.

Reformed Theological Education and the Unity of the Church (Lukas Vischer)

Theological education held in high esteem by Reformed churches

Reformed churches attach great importance to theological reflection, theological education and to education generally. The number of theological schools and educational institutions run by Reformed churches is impressive. Even small churches regard the foundation of theological schools as one of the first priorities. The – incomplete – list of theological schools published in Bauswein/Vischer, ‘The Reformed Family Word-wide’ bears witness to this characteristic of the Reformed tradition.

The emphasis on theological education has roots in the Reformation of the 16th century. Since the Reformers insisted on the preaching of true Christian doctrine, they had to make sure that people were trained for the ministry of the word. Preachers needed to be familiar with the content and meaning of the gospel. To establish the truth in Geneva, Calvin set an example by interpreting himself, in sermons and lectures, almost all books of the Bible. But he also took the initiative in 1559 to found the Geneva Academy, a school to train pastors – to minister not only in Geneva but in other places as well. The Académie soon developed into an important centre of Reformed theology. It is interesting to note that Calvin promoted the idea of a special ministry of ‘teachers’ (docteurs). In his eyes four ministries are essential for the life and mission of the church – the pasteurs, the anciens, the diacres and the docteurs. The function of the docteurs is to study and to interpret the Bible and Christian doctrine. While the pastors are involved in all kinds of daily duties, they should be free to devote their time entirely to study and teaching. In Reformed theology, especially in the period of Reformed orthodoxy, the value of the ministry of docteur was strongly affirmed.

When Reformed churches engaged in mission work, they normally gave high priority to theological education. At an early stage, indigenous people were trained and ordained to the ministry. This was, for instance, the case in Korea; many attribute the phenomenal rise of the Christian movement in Korea to this fact. Moçambique can be cited as another example. When the country became independent in 1974, the number of ordained pastors in the small Presbyterian Church was higher than the number of priests in the Roman Catholic majority church. In many countries, Reformed missions decided to offer opportunities of general education – as a way to communicate the gospel to society. In several Latin American countries, for instance, Presbyterian missions concentrated efforts on the missionary ‘tool’ of schools; the expectation was that educated people would see the light of the gospel and serve both the church and the country.

The double role of theological schools

The multitude of theological schools represents no doubt an enormous potential. In hundreds of places, theologians – docteurs – reflect on the meaning of God’s word and seek to communicate the gospel to a new generation of ministers and lay people. The schools are the expression of an impressive theological zeal. Often, they give birth to constructive new insights and theological perspectives.

But the multitude of theological schools also represents a threat to the coherence of Reformed theological thinking. On the whole, there is little communication among the various centres of theological learning. Schools tend to be self-sufficient and develop their thinking and their activities along separate

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lines. Often, both in past and present, theological schools have been the cause of splits, or have at least contributed to maintain divisions within the Reformed family.

A few examples may serve as illustration:

- In the 18th and 19th centuries, with the rise of liberal theology, the authority of the historical Reformed confessions of faith and even the ancient creeds was called into question in the Swiss churches. In response, theological schools were founded to maintain the traditional teaching of the church. A similar initiative was taken in the 20th century with the foundation of the Freie Evangelische Theologische Akademie (FETA) in Riehen/Basel.

- In 1953 a major split occurred in the Presbyterian Church of Korea. The cause was a dispute over the authority of Scripture. The issue was the use of the historical-critical method in interpreting the Bible. As the Assembly decided against the innovation, a group of professors decided to establish a new seminary. Eventually the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea (PROK) was formed.

- Often, especially in Korea, theological seminaries were established with a view to the outreach of the church. Pastors were trained to become missionaries and to found new congregations. Theological schools have been the source and centre of several separate Presbyterian churches in Korea. Korean missionaries often apply the same method abroad. In many countries, Bible schools, theological academies, even universities, have been founded, to advance the missionary cause (Bolivia, Uganda, and Russia). Often, little attention was paid to the relationship with existing educational institutions.

- Theological schools can easily develop into a symbol of identity of an individual church. In order to overcome separation, an agreement needs therefore to be reached on the role of each theological school in the united church. Hostility and competitiveness need to be replaced by complementarity and collaboration. In the union negotiations in the Netherlands between the Hervormde Kerk, the Gereformeerde Kerken and the Lutheran Church, for instance, the future place and function of the schools proved to be an extremely important item. How will the various schools serve the life of the united church?

**Freedom and communion**

How can theological schools effectively serve the communion and the common mission of the church? The basic thesis of this paper is the following: If Reformed theological schools are to contribute to the unification of Reformed churches, a clearer understanding of the nature of theological reflection is required: both of its freedom and of its roots in the communion of Christ’s church. In many schools, theology is expected simply to confirm and to defend the teaching and the positions held by the church. Other schools consider theological research and thinking as an exercise which is to be carried out in complete independence from the church. Thus, theology is exposed to two temptations. Either it confirms and solidifies the status quo and moves in narrow circles, or it develops theological insights without regard of the communion of the church. Freedom and responsibility towards the communion of Christ’s church must be brought into a constructive relationship. The relationship must not be allowed to develop into an either-or. Freedom is to serve the communion of the church.

In the first place, the vocation of theological reflection is to lift up Biblical truth. By doing so it is bound to challenge the status quo and point beyond the church in its present form. Theology is called to address issues which have so far not been clarified by the church. Theological schools just confirming the status quo fail to live up to their vocation. In order to fulfil their vocation, theological schools, need to be free to develop their research, their thinking and their teaching.

At the same time, the other side needs to be stressed. Theological reflection always takes place within the communion of the church. Theology seeks to interpret the faith confessed by the church. It has its roots in the praise and prayers offered by the church. Both teachers and students are members of the church.
They are called to serve a community, not the abstract vision of a church not yet existing, but an actual community with its strengths and weaknesses. As members of this community they are also servants of the church universal in all places.

What are the implications of this double commitment?

1. Theologians and teachers are accountable to the church. Theology is not an individual performance. In the Reformed tradition, church authorities are not entitled to exercise any control on the soundness of theological reflection. No imprimatur is required. Rather, theologians are expected to exercise self-control. Several old books of order contain the rule that no pastor should publish any book without previously having consulted at least two of his colleagues.

2. To combine creativity with respect for communion, a culture of dialogue is called for. A theological discourse needs to be developed which is characterised by both clarity and the will to understand and appreciate divergent positions. There is room at theological schools for different theological perspectives. Departing from the general line, is no reason for expulsion or secession. There are, of course, limits to diversity. Teaching needs to remain within the boundaries of the confession of the church. But theological schools will not seek uniformity of teaching; it will promote theological thinking through a diversity of approaches.

3. Often, Reformed theologians adopt an aggressive and polemical style. They seem to believe that authentic theology requires the effort to demolish theological adversaries. Unfortunately, the Reformers, including Calvin, have set the model of this style. In their writings they often attack, caricature and denigrate their opponents. Often, they use scathing language. There is no doubt a legitimate place in theology for fair polemics. But there is a difference between clear straightforward criticism and the rabies theologorum which creates bitterness and antagonism. Calvin has also been exemplary for another effort – to formulate common perspectives going beyond apparently irreconcilable positions.

4. Sound theology will always take place in an atmosphere of prayer and worship. It is a rigorous intellectual exercise. But theological reflection is carried out in front of God – prayer is the framework of all theological activities. This is not a matter of course in Reformed theology. Often, the dimension of prayer in theology is neglected. Often, the effort to interpret the Biblical message is regarded as such to be a sufficient act of worship. Reformed theology has often a touch of intellectualism.

5. As theologians are members of a specific community, they will reflect on behalf of this community: What is its context? What form should its witness take? What are the issues calling for a theological answer? Theology is bound to be contextual and should not be ashamed of being contextual. Reformed doctrine is not a system giving the answers to all issues in all contexts. At the same there is an increasing need for common reflection on the global challenges which the church faces today. Even more than in the past, theological reflection has become a common task. An interaction needs to take place between contextual and inter-contextual reflection. So far, Reformed theology is relatively weak in this regard.

Training of ministers

The same two dimensions of freedom and communion also apply to the training of ministers. The training of ministers must take place in an atmosphere of both freedom and commitment to the church – to its tradition, to its calling and its witness. Students are to become free and responsible persons. They should learn to think and interpret the Bible and the Reformed tradition on their own. They are not to become copies of their teachers, and any inclination to ‘cloning’ on the part of teachers should be resisted. True education enables students to discover themselves and interpret their calling.

But clearly, theological schools must also be places where students are made aware of the church, the ‘mother of all the faithful’ (Calvin). They are to learn what it means to be part of Christ’s church.
Theological schools need to introduce students into the service of the church. Ideally, theological education leads to a passion for the church, the fulfilment of its calling, its unity and its mission.

Through the act of ordination, normally after the successful conclusion of theological studies, students are accepted as ministers by the church. Ordination is an act of the church – recognising the vocation of the candidate, the church includes him or her into the company of ministers of Word and Sacrament; while the candidate commits himself or herself to the service of the church, the church agrees to recognise and to honour his or her service. The crucial question is in what way the prospect of this act is present in the course of theological training. Is theological training an end in itself? Does it lead to service in the church expressed through the act of ordination? Often ordination is treated as if it were a mere appendix to final examinations.

What are the implications for theological training?
1. In addition to conveying the theological knowledge which is required for responsible theological thinking, students need to be made familiar with the history, the present situation and the witness of the church they belong to, as well as with the life of the Reformed churches of their country and indeed worldwide. Reformed Christians have on the whole only a limited knowledge of their own church. Theological teaching tends to overlook the reality of the Reformed churches as they actually exist today. In order to participate in the reform of the Reformed tradition, accurate knowledge of the churches involved is required.
2. The time spent at a theological school also should include an experience of shared Christian life. Students must be given the opportunity to learn what it means to members of Christ’s body.
3. The theological school – teachers and students – need to form a worshipping community.
4. At an early stage of studies, opportunities should be offered to discuss with students the vocation to the ministry. The issue should not be postponed until the eve of ordination. Theological schools need to be place where pastoral care is exercised.

Theological schools and the authority of the church and its leadership

The relationship between theological schools and the church has often been the cause of tensions. To advance the cause of the gospel, ways of mutual affirmation and constructive collaboration must be found.

Theological schools need to enjoy a certain degree of independence from the church. They are to challenge the church. Calvin’s insistence on the ministry of docteurs is significant in this respect. They are freed from daily obligations in order to be able to devote themselves entirely to the interpretation of the Word. The same freedom is to be granted to theological schools. It is in the self-interest of the church to respect this freedom. On the other hand, theological schools have to respect the fact that they do not represent the voice of the church. They are the theological conscience of the church but they do not speak on its behalf. The ultimate authority lies with synods and assemblies. This implies that synods and assemblies can intervene in extreme cases of false teaching or mismanagement.

There is then a double temptation: for the church, to treat theological schools as simple ‘tools’ or, for theological schools, to claim entire independence from the life and witness of the church. A sound relationship can only be established if both sides commit themselves to partnership – reminding themselves through dialogue of their respective functions.

Some implications:
1. Training ministers is not the only function of theological faculties. They are to be places of theological research. They are to contribute to the theological inspiration of the church. Each individual member has his or her function. But there is also a function of the faculty as a whole. Through combined efforts new issues can be clarified and new perspective offered to the church.
2. To achieve this, there is need for an interdisciplinary approach within the faculty. The various disciplines of theology – Old Testament, New Testament, History, Systematic Theology, Pastoral Theology etc. – must not be allowed to be pursued and taught in isolation from one another.
3. Theological schools must seek to promote theological thinking in the church generally. Very easily, theology can develop into an esoteric enterprise. Often, the language used at theological schools can no more be understood by a wider public. Schools and synods use different discourses. Mutual understanding becomes difficult. There is need for a permanent theological debate within the church. Theological schools must seek opportunities to promote it, e.g. by visits to congregations, by vacation courses etc.

**Institutional dimensions**

Theological schools are institutional realities. It is important that they are aware of their particular institutional identity and its impact on their understanding of the gospel, their teaching, the relation to the church and its eventual renewal.

There are differing types of schools, e.g.

- schools which have been founded, and are financed, by churches
- schools which are independent from the church and are financed by endowment or by an association of friends.
- schools which depend on mission agencies, and are financed, totally or in part, by money coming from abroad.
- theological faculties which are part of an university, and are financed either by the state or by endowment.

Each type has its strengths and weaknesses. Each type has an influence on the ways and methods of teaching. To each type corresponds a style of doing theology. To overcome the limitations inherent in each institutional type, conscious efforts are required. In order to contribute to the unification process of Reformed churches special attention needs to be given to the weaknesses going with each type.

Institutions tend to be self-sufficient. They represent a small world and are not open, as a matter of course, to the wider world. There is, with all institutions, a certain degree of inertia.

By what kind of steps can they contribute to the unification process?

1. Ideally, Reformed theological schools within the same country should *relate to one another and seek to collaborate*. They can exchange teachers and students. They can launch common initiatives, e.g. student encounters, courses to prepare for ordination etc. They can possibly form a national association of Reformed schools. Through joining forces they can contribute to form a generation of pastors prepared for a ministry in a united church.

2. Instead of competing with one another, theological schools can seek to develop *complementary roles*. While one school concentrates on higher education, another can give more room to lay training. One school may be entrusted with the pursuit of a special project. The vocation of another school may be to serve a particular language group etc.

3. At the same time theological schools need to regard themselves as part of the *international Reformed ‘theological community’* and actively participate in international contacts. Much already happens in this regard – exchange of students, meetings of international theological association (Calvin-Congress, IRTI etc.). But in order to develop a concerted approach to global issues, additional efforts are required. The World Alliance of Reformed Churches has an important role to fulfil in this regard. Through its activities (offering focus for a network of theological schools, consultations on crucial issues, leadership training courses etc) it can create the framework within which Reformed theological thinking can develop in new ways – in more deliberate exchange and dialogue, in mutual affirmation and critique, in the perspective of the church universal.
Reformed Theological Education Networks (Allan Sell)

The subject of this section seems more straightforward than it actually is. It is first necessary to observe that there are those—Anglicans and Baptists among them—who espouse Reformed doctrine and are committed to Reformed theological pursuits, but are not members of Reformed churches. Some of these, as well as those of other traditions, may work in specifically Reformed educational institutions, or alongside Reformed scholars in institutions which are not Reformed foundations. Conversely, there are those who work in Reformed theological institutions, and are themselves ecclesiastically Reformed, whose theology is at some distance from classical confessionalism: a distance that can be travelled either in a ‘liberal’ or a ‘conservative’ direction (to use notoriously slippery terms). Furthermore, since the nature and objectives of theological institutions vary considerably ‘Reformed theological education’ and its accompanying networks come in many forms. Nor are networks necessarily absolutely independent of one another. On the contrary their memberships frequently overlap, and particular individuals may be found in more than one of them.

There would appear to be four main spheres in which Reformed theological education, in one form or another, is given. First, we have the teaching of Reformed theology in secular universities and liberal arts colleges. This may be done in departments of theology/divinity, or religion/religious studies. In this context theology, rightly, has no special privileges; it must make its way among numerous other academic disciplines. The traditional objective here is the training of students’ minds through rigorous academic study, with a view to equipping them with an intellectual foundation upon which they may build throughout their lives. In some present-day university circles this objective is managerially blurred, as when universities are organized in such a way as to be ‘business facing’, and the needs of the market to a greater or lesser degree determine the curriculum. However that may be, the terms ‘Theology’ or ‘Divinity’ in secular universities normally denote a faculty of disciplines comprising biblical studies (often, though less frequently than hitherto, with at least required Hebrew and Greek); the history of Christian thought and doctrine; ecclesiastical history; apologetics and philosophy of religion; and world religions with their texts, histories and theologies. Both those who teach these subjects and their students who learn may belong to any religion or to none; a proportion of them (often small) may be members of Reformed churches. The networks arising from this context are scholarly in nature, and all of the disciplines named above have their professional societies. Thus, for example, Reformed theologians will be found with others in the American Academy of Religion, the American Theological Society, the Australian Theological Forum, and the Canadian Theological Society, and The Society for the Study of Theology (U.K.).

Secondly, there are specifically Reformed universities and colleges. These vary greatly in size and range of subjects covered. Some, like Erskine College of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church, have close continuing links with their founding denomination, while in other cases the historic link has been all but broken. Some of these institutions seek to offer a theological education in a spirit of open enquiry, while others, often denominationally orientated, seek to ensure that in addition to a strongly confessional Reformed theological curriculum, a Christian worldview is propounded through all disciplines from accountancy to zoology. The theologians in such institutions may join their secular university colleagues in general disciplinary societies such as those cited in the previous paragraph; or they may seek out such specifically Christian bodies as the Christian Theological Research Fellowship (U.S.A.), which may also include Reformed scholars who work in secular universities and colleges; or they may join Reformed theological subject gatherings; or they may do all of these things. Some may belong to specifically denominational bodies such as the Association of Presbyterian College and Universities (U.S.A.).

Thirdly, there are Reformed theological seminaries and colleges, some of which, as in England, are closely related to secular university departments. Their traditional commitment has been to the education of the church’s pastoral ministers, but increasingly in some places education for a variety of types of ministry is offered. A minority of these institutions offer academic degrees from bachelor to doctor, though some
offer the professional Doctor of Ministry degree. They may, but usually do not, cover as many academic disciplines as the universities, but their curriculum, vocationally orientated as it is, will normally include such subjects as homiletics, pastoral theology, missiology, evangelism, liturgiology and the like – which need (indeed, should) not be less rigorous than other theological disciplines. Not all staff members are necessarily Reformed, and the student body is frequently denominationally diverse. Indeed, some seminaries are ecumenical foundations, or are in ecumenical consortia in which Reformed theologians work alongside those of other traditions; and some, including the Latin American Biblical University, with its centres in a number of countries is international in its range, as is the South-East Asia Graduate School of Theology. The South Pacific Association of Theological Schools is one of a number of regional, international groupings of theological schools in which Reformed theologians participate. In some countries many students are part-time (a significant challenge as far as the formation of ministerial candidates is concerned), and many are second career candidates. Like their colleagues in secular and Reformed universities and colleges, teachers in theological seminaries and colleges may belong to the more traditional subject networks; to such more recently-founded association as Societas Liturgica, the Society for Pastoral Theology (U.S.A) and the Southern African Missiological Society; and also to such denominational networks as the Collegium Doctorum (Hungary). They may also attend such regional gatherings as the Central and Southern European conferences of Reformed theologians.

Fifthly, Reformed theology is taught by distance learning in a significant number of institutions around the world. Some such institutions are Reformed in character, some are ecumenical; while others, notably the University of South Africa – a pioneer of such education – is a secular university with a sizeable Faculty of Theology. Their Reformed theologians may belong to any of the above named networks.

Finally, an increasing amount of theological networking nowadays takes place electronically through an ever-growing number of websites, some of which are of specifically Reformed interest.

Over and above the networks spawned by universities, colleges and seminaries, there are numerous ecumenical bodies in which Reformed theologians meet one another as well as colleagues from other Christian world communions. Forty years of international and regional bilateral and multilateral dialogue have greatly facilitated such interaction. The Programme for Theological Education of the World Council of Churches has been a further forum in which Reformed theologians have participated alongside others. They also contribute to the theological work of such regional ecumenical bodies as the Conference of European Churches, and to that of national councils of churches. In addition there are such bodies as the Center for Theological Inquiry, Princeton, and the Association for Theological Education in South-East Asia, in which Reformed theologians participate. As to more specifically Reformed organizations, there are the theological programmes and consultations of the Reformed Ecumenical Council and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, and the latter’s regional bodies in the Caribbean and North America, Europe, Latin America, Asia and Africa. Of growing importance is the International Reformed Theological Institute, founded in 1995 and based at the Free University of Amsterdam. This body organizes biennial international conferences and publishes the Journal of Reformed Theology and the series, Studies in Reformed Theology. The recently-established World Reformed Fellowship has instituted commissions for both theology and theological education In addition to all of these there are the claims of the doctrinal/theological commissions/committees of particular Reformed churches on which their own theologians are invited to serve.

Finally, a significant amount of networking occurs through publication. Publishers of scholarly monographs by Reformed theologians are too numerous to name, but mention may be made of some journals. It is not surprising that Reformed theologians contribute to Calvin Theological Journal and Reformed Review (U.S.A.), Journal of Reformed Theology, Reformed Theological Review (Australia), and Reformed World (Geneva); but they also contribute to a wider range of theological journals including the International Journal of Systematic Theology (U.K.), Scottish Journal of Theology, Theology Today; and to
such regionally important journals as the Asia Journal of Theology, Asian Missiology, the Journal of Theology for Southern Africa, and the Pacific Journal of Theology. Their papers may also be found in journals which are more biblically, historically, philosophically, pastorally or ecumenically orientated.

Bibliography

The following incomplete list of sources in English is a sample of reflections on theological education over the last half century. A few of the authors/editors are not Reformed, but all of the works concern Reformed theological education to a greater or lesser degree. The examples are drawn from various parts of the world; some are ‘conservative’, some are ‘liberal’ in approach. They are noted in chronological order of publication, and if read in that order they are revealing as to trends in Reformed theological education around the world.

Bethune, Roderick, ‘Selection and training of candidates for the ministry: The Church of Scotland,’ ibid., LXXIII no. 10, July 1962, 308-311.
Frost, Stanley B., ‘Selection and training of candidates for the ministry: Theological education in Canada,’ ibid., LXXIII no. 11, August 1962, 324-327.

Kromminga, Carl G., ‘Education at Calvin Theological Seminary as training for ministry,’ Calvin Theological Journal, XII no. 1, April 1977, 5-23.

The following bibliography concerns theological education by distance learning: lib.tcu.edu/staff/bellinger/theo_distance_bib.htm

Handbook of Theological Education in World Christianity
For a list of ‘Theological schools with Reformed teaching’ see Jean-Jacques Bauswein and Lukas Vischer, eds., *The Reformed Family Worldwide. A Survey of Reformed Churches, Theological Schools, and International Organizations*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999, 563-699. As the title suggests, this list does not include all of the secular universities or any of the American liberal arts colleges in which Reformed theology is taught.
Methodism began as a revivalist reform movement within the Church of England in the 18th century. Most initial key leaders were linked to student groups in Oxford in the late 1720s. They had high expectancies towards their own personal holiness and tremendous activities in social holiness, including education for poor children. They pursued moral reform for church and society on highest standards. Through diverse personal journeys during the 1730s, they all experienced a profound renewal of their person in being justified before God by grace alone, through faith in Jesus Christ. They preached the gospel which they had discovered and a revival broke out in 1739. Thus, Methodism became a revivalist reform movement in the Church of England, on both sides of the Atlantic. One branch was Calvinistic. Only part of this branch created Calvinistic Methodist churches since the 1770s. Most clergy of the Church of England which adopted Methodist doctrine belonged to the Calvinistic branch and remained within the Church of England. The other branch upheld an evangelical Arminianism. John and Charles Wesley were its protagonists. This chapter will deal only with them and the Methodist Churches which are rooted in the Wesleyan heritage.

John and Charles Wesley deliberately remained in the Church of England for all their life. But only a handful of clergy gave them wholehearted support. Nevertheless there movement, the “United Societies”, spread over the country. At their death, the Methodists in connexion with John Wesley counted well over 70,000 members in their societies. It was only possible thanks to lay-preaching and laypeople acting as travelling preachers. The criteria for their selection and the expectations for their education have continued to shape theological education in a Methodist perspective.

In 1746, in one of the first Annual Conferences, three points for the examination of preachers were adopted which can still be found in slightly revised versions in the rules and regulations or Books of Discipline of most Methodist churches today:

1. Do they know in whom they have believed?  
   Have they the love of God in their hearts?  
   Do they desire and seek nothing but God?  
   And are they holy in all manner of conversation?

2. Have they gifts (as well as grace) for the work?  
   Have they (in some tolerable degree) a clear, sound understanding?  
   Have they a right judgement in the things of God?  
   Have they a just conception of salvation by faith?  
   And has God given them any degree of utterance?  
   Do they speak justly, readily, clearly?

3. Have they success?  
   Do they not only so speak as generally either to convince or affect the hearers?  
   But have any received remission of sins by their preaching?  
   A clear and lasting sense of the love of God?
As long as these three marks undeniably concur in any, we allow him to be called of God to preach. These we receive as sufficient reasonable evidence, that he is moved thereto by the Holy Ghost.¹

Being called of God to preach is fundamental, but not sufficient. It needs the examination and confirmation by the community of believers. The three questions for examination are made up of spiritual criteria (point 1: ‘grace’), educational competence (2: ‘gifts’), and effectiveness (3: ‘success’ or ‘fruit’). These three basics have continued to be guidelines for the outward confirmation of a personal call to pastoral ministry in Methodist churches. In Wesley’s time, lay preaching has always been an ‘extraordinary calling’ from God which needed the confirmation according to this examination, originally applied by one of the Wesley brothers themselves. With increasing age, John Wesley began to honour the preaching of women along the same guidelines, and he stood to it even against the opposition of younger travelling preachers.

Educational competence is among the three basics. Of course, John Wesley called himself ‘homo unius libri’, the man of one book, the Bible. He said so in the Preface to the first volume of his sermons. But John and Charles Wesley were prolific writers and publishers. They wanted to teach others in ‘the way to heaven’, in ‘the religion of the heart, the faith which worketh by love’.² ‘The preachers, considered to be “as young students at the University,” were also required to follow a strict method of study …’³ If preachers considered reading the Bible as enough for them, the Wesley brothers heavily criticized them as fanatics (‘Enthusiasts’ in 18th century English) and sent them home. They should spend each weekday morning in studying the most useful books for at least five hours.

Educational expectations were upheld also towards local lay preachers and class leaders and towards rank and file Methodists. The ambitious publishing project of A Christian Library in fifty volumes contained extracts from ‘the choicest pieces of practical divinity which have been published in the English tongue’, as the title page indicated, reaching from the early church to the 18th century. In main buildings where Methodists gathered, libraries were established, particularly for the preachers. John and Charles Wesley understood Methodism as a revivalist reform movement which linked heart and mind. In their evangelical Arminianism, reason was a good and positive faculty given by God. They supported the classical Anglican triad of Scripture, Reason and Tradition, as Richard Hooker (1554-1600) had identified, and they added experience to it as additional criterion for understanding and interpreting the Holy Scriptures. Methodism as a revival was always criticised as promoting fanaticism. John Wesley took his pen and wrote several Appeals to Men of Reason and Religion. He wanted Methodism to be a movement which spreads ‘Scriptural holiness over the land and reforms the Nation’. Education of illiterate and poor people was high on his agenda. ‘Virtually the entire Wesleyan system evidences his teaching role.’⁴

Very early, John Wesley took on an initiative of George Whitefield to establish a school for the colliers of Kingswood, near Bristol, who were among the first community to be transformed by the break out of the revival in 1739. In a letter, John Wesley described the following aim for this educational endeavour: ‘and hereafter (if it should please God) some poor children, to lodge in it. … It is proposed, in the usual hours of the day, to teach (chiefly the poorer) children to read, write, and cast accounts; but more especially (by God’s assistance), “to know God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent”. The elder people, being not so

¹ Minutes 1746, 30-31; see Richard P. Heitzenrater, Wesley and the People Called Methodists (Nashville: Abingdon, 1995), 175.
³ R. P. Heitzenrater, ‘Wesley and the People Called Methodists’, 176 – see also the whole chapter 4 ‘Consolidation of the Movement’.
⁴ Russell E. Richey, Doctrine in Experience: A Methodist Theology of Church and Ministry (Nashville: Kingswood Books Abingdon, 2009), chapter 10: ‘Connecting through Education’, 203. ‘And the activities and structures and processes by which he taught were also what connected Methodists to him and to one another. The educational was connectional; the connectional was educational. At the heart of both was Mr. Wesley.’ 203.
proper to be mixed with children (we expect scholars of all ages, some of them grey-headed), either in the
morning or late at night, so as their work may not be hindered. In 1748, the Kingswood School started
with a new curriculum including all classical branches and five languages. The Kingwood School also
became a place for education of children of travelling preachers. In 1749, John Wesley held a residential
course for some of his preachers, but it did not become a regular feature. He had planned an ‘advanced
course’ which would lead the children in school after eight classes on to a five years course of study to
become preachers. The plan never materialised. Some of Wesley’s principles in education of children are
outdated. But there is a lasting and typical Wesleyan contribution: Kingswood School combined the high
Wesleyan ideal to ‘unite the pair so long disjoined, knowledge and vital piety’ as Charles Wesley
expressed in his hymn for the opening of the school:

‘Come, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,
To whom we for our children cry!
The good desired and wanted most
Out of thy richest grace supply –
The sacred discipline be given
To train and bring them up for heaven.

Learning’s redundant part and vain
Be here cut off, and cast aside;
But let them, Lord, the substance gain,
In every solid truth abide,
Swiftly acquire, and ne’er forego
The knowledge fit for man to know.

Unite the pair so long disjoined,
Knowledge and vital piety:
Learning and holiness combined,
And truth and love, let all men see
In those whom up to thee we give,
Thine, wholly thine, to die and live.’

Developments in 19th and 20th Century Great Britain

Methodist preachers followed a course of study established by the Conference well into the 19th century.
The reading list covered works by John Wesley (most prominent: the Standard Sermons and the Notes
upon the New Testament), John William Fletcher (Checks to Antinomianism) and then extended to early
19th century Methodist books. There was strong reluctance to establish theological institutions. People
feared that higher education would separate future preachers from their members and weaken their
effectiveness among the growing number of working poor. Adam Clarke, himself well educated, submitted
a plan for establishing ‘some kind of seminary for educating workmen for the vineyard of our God’ in
1807. It took almost thirty years till the Annual Conference in 1834 decided to establish its first

1980).
6 On Kingswood School, see: A.G. Ives, Kingswood School in Wesley’s Day and Since (London: Epworth, 1970); on
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General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, 2000), particularly see: Richard P. Heitzenrater, ‘Wesley and
7 The Works of John Wesley, 7, 643-44 (Nashville: Abingdon / Oxford University Press, 1983), stanzas 1, 4 and 5.
8 For this and other quotations in this section, see the chapter on ‘Education’ by F. C. Pritchard, in: A History of the
Theological Education in Methodist Churches

Part III: Theological Education from Denominational and Confessional Perspectives

Theological institution. Other institutions were added in the following years. They offered a mix of general education and theology. Some of them worked in a relationship to a neighbouring university. Thus they widened the horizon for the brightest among their students and opened up to future ecumenical cooperation. In the 1860s, the Missionary Society used part of its Jubilee Fund to establish an institution for the training of missionaries.

In the second half of the 19th century, the increase of better-educated congregations strengthened the need and the acceptance of ministerial training in theological institutions in all branches of Methodism in Great Britain. This development was paralleled by a strengthening of formal education for children, particularly among the poor. John Scott, Principal of a teacher training college, said in 1861: ‘Is a child less rational, less capable of intellectual and moral improvement, of living an orderly, creditable, and useful life in society, of serving God and ensuring a blissful immortality because his parents are poor?’ And the effectiveness of preachers was measured whether they were able to minister to such segments of the population.

In the early 20th century, excellence in ministerial training brought a few Methodist scholars to the forefront of biblical and theological studies and made them known beyond their own denomination. The length of theological studies was extended to four years and links to neighbouring universities became more important. In the last three decades of the 20th century, theological training underwent major changes. Since the late 1960s, married students arrived with their families, followed by the first women training for the ministry. The average age of entrance rose, as did the costs for maintaining the institutions. Student numbers dwindled, as did the overall membership in the Methodist Church. Most Colleges were closed. More flexible models of theological training were needed. Those which offered them attracted new students who had heard the call to ministry.

Developments in 19th and 20th Century United States of America

From its organization as a church at the Christmas Conference in 1784 until the reunion of three of its branches in 1939, American Methodism developed and then relied on a Course of Study administered by annual conference leaders to train its preachers rather than on formal academic training through colleges and seminaries. The Christmas Conference established Cokesbury College as a copy of Kingswood College. But as it burnt down a few years later, no new initiative was taken. The Christmas Conference also exhorted all preachers to regularity in reading the Scriptures, Mr. Wesley’s and Mr. Fletcher’s tracts, and other useful books. Early in the 19th century, concern was expressed over the lack of more efficient means for improving theological education.

By 1816 the church declared, ‘That it be the duty of the bishop or bishops, or a committee which they may appoint in each annual conference, to point out a course of reading and study proper to be pursued by candidates for the ministry; and the presiding elders … shall direct him to those studies which have been thus recommended.’ Still reluctant to any seminary education and not seeing it as essential to an effective ministry of the gospel, this report in 1816 established a more formal Course of Study in the annual conferences. By the middle of the 19th century, it became standardised by General Conference and lasted four years, with designated texts and study guides. In 1876, a separate course was designed for local preachers. The latter has continued to the present day as an alternative to collegiate and graduate

10 See for this section: Gerald O. McCulloh, Ministerial Education in the American Methodist Movement (Nashville: United Methodist Board of Higher Education and Ministry, 1980).
11 Journal of the General Conference 1816. See also: Richard M. Cameron, Methodism and Society in Historical Perspective (‘Methodism and Society’, 1; Nashville: Abingdon, 1961); chapter on ‘Ministerial Education’, 1, 235-44.
theological education for candidates entering ministry late in life and those whose cultural and linguistic backgrounds make it difficult to pursue college and seminary degrees.

In frontier America, preachers were expected not to confuse holiness with formal education. Indeed, formal training for preachers in theological seminaries was strongly rejected. The experience of Wesley in the appointment of unlettered lay preachers and their fruitful effectiveness in evangelistic preaching were taken as guidelines for ministerial qualification. The centrality of the call of God to the ministry was regarded as the basic and only necessary preparation. The presence of the Holy Spirit could be depended on to provide the message and the persuasiveness for its effective presentation. A minister, it was believed, was made by the call of God rather than formal preparation by education and the schools. He was sent out into itinerancy and should not start in settling down for theological training over several years.

After the Civil War in America, the church added a provision to its Course of Study for special language studies for persons in ministry to communities of faith that did not speak English. By 1904 the Course of Study was available in English, German, Norwegian, Danish, Swedish, Finnish, Italian, Spanish, Bulgarian, and French, mainly for the use among immigrant communities in the US. The Course of Study was also made available to Native Americans who spoke Ojibway. Conferences and missions in Africa, India, Malaysia, China, Japan, and Korea were mentioned for editing their own prescribed courses. With the slowing of the flood of immigration, the enactment of the Quota Law of 1921, and the assimilation of second and third-generation descendents into the cultural stream of America, the need for a Course of Study in multiple languages diminished. By 1942 only English remained.

In 1820, General Conference charged annual conferences to establish schools and colleges. By the middle of the 19th century, education had become more accessible, particularly in urban settings. The need for a better trained ministry grew. In 1856, General Conference gave official approval on the activities of theological seminaries, under the supervision of conferences and bishops. Back in 1829, Newbury Biblical Institute had been established as the first one, and eventually became the Boston University Theological School. It was followed by others related to the Methodist Episcopal Church including Garrett (1854), Drew (1867), Iliff (1882) and Maclay College of Theology (1887, predecessor to Claremont Theological Seminary). The Methodist Episcopal Church, South, followed a similar path with the founding of theological schools at Vanderbilt (1875), Emory (1915), Southern Methodist (1915), and Trinity College (1926, later to become Duke University). Theological education for the newly freed Negro slaves occurred with the creation of Gammon Theological Seminary in 1872, now part of the Interdenominational Theological Center in Atlanta.

The same year, 1872, General Conference established national denominational agencies which strengthened financial support, accountability and connection among all the educational endeavours supervised by annual conferences. Twenty years later, it created the University Senate which edited church-wide standards for all educational institutions of the Methodist Church and became the first accrediting agency in the US. The same General Conference also mandated a national fund for the support of students.

The other predecessor denominations to The United Methodist Church also overcame their objections to theological education in seminaries. The Methodist Protestant Church established Westminster (now Wesley Seminary) in 1884. The United Brethren Church established Union Biblical Seminary in 1871 (‘Bonebrake Seminary’) which merged with Evangelical Seminary of the Evangelical Church to become United Theological Seminary in 1954. The Evangelical Church opened Union Biblical Institute (1877) which merged with Garrett after the union of 1968 to become Garrett Evangelical Theological Seminary.

While the Course of Study administered through the annual conferences was the official minimum requirement for conference membership and ordination up until 1944, a formal education through college

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(BA) and a basic graduate-professional degree from seminary (originally Bachelor of Divinity, later Master of Divinity) has become normative since that time. Any other admission of a candidate to conference membership, leading to ordination as an elder, now required a convincing recommendation ‘setting forth the particular ways his ministry is exceptional’.13 In the aftermath of the union in 1939, two additional seminaries were created, Saint Paul School of Theology (1959) and Methodist Theological Seminary of Ohio (1960). Seminary training has been shaped after a well-known model where intellectual education precedes the practice of ministry. People had to learn the profession before being able to exercise it. But unlike the German university which was influential in its scientific approach, theological seminaries have combined intellectual studies with living in a college setting, thus strengthening the formation not only of intellect, but also of character. The history of Methodist Theological Schools and Universities is stamped by a sometimes fruitful and sometimes hurtful tension with denominational supervision, even leading to separation (Wesleyan, Vanderbilt, University of Southern California, Northwestern).

With the rise of the Ecumenical Movement, the makeup of faculties and student bodies in Methodist Theological Schools became multi-denominational. Charters were revised and denominational membership requirements or nomination processes for trustees were superseded or minimised. Professional excellence took priority over denominational origin. And vice-versa, the number of Methodists graduating from non-Methodist Theological Schools grew tremendously. The experiences of an ecumenical spirit among the Christian churches, the relationships to World Christianity, as well as the awareness of other religions have grown over the last decades, all of which shape the curriculum of the theological schools. On educational standards for ordination, General Conference provides the guidelines for the minimum requirements in Methodist history, doctrine and polity. The University Senate upholds accreditation standards.

Seminary education faces new challenges: over many decades, until lately, the entry age of students rose and the number of students on ordination track declined; living on campus became more difficult for family reasons; student indebtedness has increased tremendously and many local churches have been unable to provide for salaries of seminary graduates. At the same time, the number of local pastors in the Course of Study grew and clergy membership in the annual conference was opened up for them. Without their ministry, many United Methodist churches in the US would not be served by a theologically educated pastor, licensed or ordained. The debate about adequate theological education will continue.

**Developments in the Mission Fields of British and US Methodism**

In the lifetime of John Wesley Methodists of Great Britain spread not only to the American colonies which became the United States of America, but also to many other countries, some under British rule and others which were completely independent. For US-Methodism, a widespread mission outside their own ever growing nation only began around the mid 19th century. The British and the US branches of Methodism met in many countries, but saw each other as competitors. If there was cooperation, it began rather on the mission field than in the offices of the mission boards back home. Missionaries were sent out as trained pastors, but with the growth of the mission, theological education of indigenous men became a challenge. Each mission board tried to build up its own structure, planning for an ever growing indigenous church. Cooperation was rare in the early days, but slowly grew as time went on and a combined effect of limited resources and of growing mutual trust between different Methodist branches developed. Thus, an inner-Methodist ecumenism with roots in the last decades of the 19th century preceded a larger ecumenism among Christian churches of different traditions.14

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14 The origin of the World Methodist Council which gathers the churches in the Wesleyan tradition goes back to a first ‘Ecumenical Methodist Conference’, held in London in 1881.
The following section is limited to a glimpse into developments in Continental Europe and Asia. Contributions from other parts of the world would be needed to enrich the presentation of theological education in Methodist seminaries and ecumenical institutions with Methodist participation.

Continental Europe

In Continental Europe, Methodist mission spread in the 19th century primarily as a renewal movement in Protestant regions and came to Catholic countries (exception France) or Orthodox ones (exception Bulgaria in the Ottoman Empire) only in the last decades or at the turn to the 20th century. In most instances, migration and witnessing of lay Methodists were more decisive for planting Methodist congregations than strategies of mission boards. With the exception of the fast growing missions in Sweden and in German speaking countries of central Europe, Methodist presence remained extremely small in most other regions. All the more, it became difficult to organise theological education for indigenous people in so many countries and languages. But the necessity was seen and acknowledged right from the beginning. In western and northern European countries, literacy and education was quite high, already in the 19th century. Therefore Methodist preachers should be well educated. Particularly in Germany, educational institutions which combined general and theological education for future pastors were created right from the beginning of the mission in the mid 19th century. There were attempts to build up a high quality Methodist theological institution for all of Europe, but it always failed on the choice of a venue. After World War I, the leading theological institutions were in Gothenburg, Sweden, for the Scandinavian countries, and in Germany (Frankfurt and Reutlingen for the two different branches of Methodist origin) for the far reaching German speaking expansion in continental Europe.

Towards the end of the 20th century, regular consultations among the deans of the Methodist theological schools led to the formation of an association, similar to the one existing in the US. Limitations in finances, personnel and number of students as well as longstanding contacts to Theological Faculties of Universities have strengthened cooperation in many countries. At present, United Methodist institutions offering the whole range of theological studies exist only in Germany (Reutlingen), Estonia (Tallinn) and Russia (Moscow). In Norway, the Methodist institution has become part of the University of Oslo. In Sweden, Gothenburg has merged with the institution of other Free Churches in Stockholm. In Slovakia, the Methodists have taken a leading role in establishing a department of evangelical theology in the Faculty of Pedagogy in Banska Bystrica. In other countries, the future of institutions is uncertain (Poland) or Methodists receive their theological education at denominational institutions from Free Church, Lutheran or Orthodox background. Students in these institutions do not receive any courses in Methodist history or theology, but the Methodist churches try to select theological institutions in places where the presence of a local Methodist church fosters a holistic concept of education.

As an answer to the need for additional Methodist studies for pastors trained in non-Methodist theological institutions, the ‘Methodist e-Academy’ was launched in 2008. It is currently being built up and will offer six basic courses in Methodist history, theology, mission and polity, each in German and English. It combines internet based courses taken from home with tutorials in vernacular per country and intensive seminars in one location. First feedbacks show the well known problems for students in self-organisation in distance education, but also the inspiring and enriching experiences of a learning community crossing borders of languages, nations and cultural backgrounds.

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15 For Europe, see: P. Ph. Streiff, Methodism in Europe: 19th and 20th century (Tallinn: Baltic Methodist Theological Seminary, 2003).
Methodism first came to Asia in the early 19th century through the missionary efforts of the British Methodists, landing on the shores of Sri Lanka (1814), India (1817), and Upper Myanmar (1887). American Methodists followed later in the century and in the beginning of the 20th century as they planted Methodism in China (1847), Lower Myanmar (1879), Singapore (1885), Malaya (1885), the Philippines (1898), Korea (1884) and Indonesia (1905).

In many of these places, Methodist missionaries followed the general pattern of evangelistic church planting, the setting up of schools to educate a young generation, and a printing press to promote the work of their mission. How quickly Methodism took root in these various places depended on various factors such as the number and continuity of missionaries, local conditions, and the availability of funds. As the work developed, local leadership had to be trained in the growing churches and institutions. From the early days, attempts were made to facilitate training; some of them failed, others made slow but steady progress.

For example, in the case of Singapore and Malaya, soon after Methodism began in 1885, missionaries, such as Dr Benjamin F. West, tried to train small groups of national workers. Initially such attempts had a chequered history as they depended on the availability of missionaries for conducting theological training over and above their regular duties. They also had to move their ‘schools’ wherever they happened to be assigned. However, these small and faltering steps eventually led to the establishment of theological educational institutions. Hence nascent institutions such as the Jean Hamilton Training School and the Eveland Training School/Seminary merged in 1941 to become the Malaya Methodist Theological College.

Similar stories of Methodist theological institutions can be found in other Asian countries, such as the early history of the Methodist Theological University in Korea and the Leonard Theological College in India. In the development of these and other institutions some further features can be found.

The period after the World War II provided an impetus for the rapid progress in the setting up of new theological institutions. What happened in Singapore is a good example. Missionaries were interred in prison by the invading Japanese forces. In Changi prison, church leaders from the various denominations met. They were persuaded that theological education of indigenous people needs to move ahead on a higher gear, and that the challenge was big enough for them to work together ecumenically. Thus, the Malaya Methodist Theological College became the Trinity Theological College in 1948, governed jointly by Methodist, Anglican, Presbyterian, and (later) Lutheran churches.

Similar ecumenical theological institutions emerged in various countries such as the Divinity School of Chung Chi College in Hong Kong and the Theological College of Sri Lanka. In some cases, ecumenical seminaries were established even before World War II, such as the United Theological College in Bangalore, India, which began in 1910.

Such ecumenical ventures promoted a common interest to contextualise theological education, and to go beyond Western categories and methods of theological training and ministerial formation. This included sending faculty members of seminaries for further studies to the West, with the hope that they would return to help the churches contextualise theological reflection and praxis. Unfortunately, a significant number of these people remained in the West. A fair number returned home to teach in the Asian seminaries. Eventually some of them took the leadership of these institutions, thus passing from the hands of Western missionaries to Asian theological educators. The process of indigenisation of theological education and theological leadership is still in progress. One element of this process involves publications by Asian

theologians and pastors. It has started to some extent, but more needs to be accomplished. Much of the work published locally by Asians remains unknown in the global theological landscape unlike similar works published in the West. There is also a great need to ground theological education and ministerial training in its specific local context.

Asian Methodist churches have begun to move out in mission. They are themselves planting churches in other countries. They are also setting up schools and institutions to provide theological education (a process we saw in early Methodist mission in Asia). Hence, for example in Cambodia, a United Mission partnered by Methodists from the US, Europe, Korea, Singapore, and the World Federation of Chinese Methodist Churches, has established a Methodist Bible School and provides theological education for those who will become pastors in the growing number of Methodist churches. Likewise in Nepal, where Methodists from the US, Korea and Singapore are working separately to plant churches, an institution (Caleb Bible Institute) has been set up by the Singapore Methodists to help train pastors and evangelists. Asian Methodist seminaries are giving birth to their own offspring.

The continuing challenges for denominational and ecumenical theological institutions related to Methodism are contextualisation, funding, further development of resources (faculty, libraries), and programmes (on Master and doctoral levels as they are already provided by leading institutions such as Trinity Theological College in Singapore), and to strengthen (as many of the Nazarene-related colleges indicate) Charles Wesley’s vision to ‘unite the pair so long disjoined, knowledge and vital piety’.

Towards the Future

The preceding sections have mentioned major challenges for theological education in different parts of the world for the 21st century. In 2006, the Theological Committee Report to the World Methodist Council noted with concern ‘the increasing tendency of member churches to cut back on their training budgets, often as a result of financial difficulties, in the mistaken belief that theological education is not as important as mission or preaching’. It reported that some member churches want to do without fully trained ordained ministers or only offer a greatly reduced training program. The committee was convinced ‘that the church needs to rediscover the importance of being a learning church’.

In 1991, an association (IAMSCU) was created to link and strengthen educational institutions related to Methodist churches.21 In a time when leadership becomes more and more crucial, the churches are challenged to continue to invest in education in general and theological education in particular. The following quote is true not only for Africa:

‘The challenge we face in Africa today is how to bring about this new type of leadership – a leadership that will seek to serve rather than be served; a leadership prepared to listen and consider opposing views on their merit rather than demand rote obedience and subservience from its followers; a leadership that endeavors to facilitate and encourage people to do for themselves rather than control and restrict their rights to fully realize their potential; and a leadership that will shun corrupt behaviours but seek to provide honest service and leadership, one that will operate in a transparent way and be accountable to its constituents.’

The largest of the member churches of the World Methodist Council, the United Methodist Church, published ‘A Wesleyan Vision for Theological Education and Leadership Formation for the 21st Century’

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21 International Association of Methodist-related Schools, Colleges and Universities (IAMSCU); for more information, see on the web: http://public.gbhem.org/iamscu/schools.asp.

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in 2003. It was a joint effort under the leadership of the Council of Bishops, but focused on the situation in the US part of the church. Under the heading ‘Wesleyan Wisdom’, it reconnects theological education to the mission of the church:

Thus, assessment of present theological education and leadership formation in The United Methodist Church should ideally be informed by insights about effectiveness in fulfilling the church’s mission gained over the range of the prior history and the various cultural contexts of the church. … He [Wesley] highlighted three factors in particular that are central to effective awakening and nurture of Christian life, and were too broadly being neglected: doctrine, discipline, and self-denial.

The document exemplifies the three factors and links them to the three initial questions of Wesley about grace, gifts and fruit (see above). Failures in present church reality are identified. This leads to six ‘current challenges and opportunities’ and six ‘agenda items’ or ‘calls’. They all hold together theological education and leadership formation, in aiming towards a holistic and lifelong transformation. They highlight the need ‘to identify and assess, articulate and embody, nurture and sustain pastoral excellence’. They culminate in a call to develop a comprehensive plan for theological education and leadership formation in the United Methodist Church. The six calls have been taken up by a Task Force of the Council of Bishops which works towards such a comprehensive plan, not only for the US, but also for the United Methodist Church in other parts of the world, and hopes to present it to General Conference 2012. A comprehensive plan shall address needs and resources in the different parts of the world, and begin to show ways how to offer adequate theological education in each place through Methodist or joint ecumenical institutions and programs.

The Task Force presently discusses questions of identity in a Wesleyan tradition, its contribution to the larger church of Jesus Christ, and the role and aims of pastoral ministry in different settings in a fast changing world. It recognises the need for theological education that prepares women and men for leadership in making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. The original trio of grace, gifts, and fruit is being interpreted with the key components of character (vocational identity and spiritual practices that nourish and support both leaders and the communities they lead), knowledge (rooted in the classical historical, biblical, theological, Wesleyan traditions and interpreted for 21st century contexts) and skills (capable of shaping grace-filled communities that embody the gospel of Jesus Christ). It remains a continuing challenge for Methodist churches to build up and sustain theological education which serves the present age.


Part III: Theological Education from Denominational and Confessional Perspectives
There are multiple Baptist beginnings, but the key date associated with Baptists is 1609, when a group of English separatists exiled in Amsterdam and connected with a group of Flemish Mennonites meeting in the Singelkerk came to adopt views which later earned them a name of General Baptists. These were soon followed by the establishment of a Particular Baptist Church in London. Then, as the Pilgrim Fathers escaped persecution in Europe, from the first Baptist churches in Rhode Island and along the North American East Coast to today, Baptists are to be found in almost every country of the world. The global community of those involved in Baptist churches is estimated to be over 120 million people.

The theological and ecclesial roots of Baptists belong in the radical and magisterial Reformation of the 15th and 16th century. The basis of Baptist ecclesiology is that of gathering, convicitional, intentional and interdependent communities of believers practicing the baptism of immersion on profession of faith. The early Baptists were barred from the ancient Universities of Oxford and Cambridge as “dissenters”; so though many early leaders of the movement had been educated in the state universities, the second and subsequent early generations of leadership were denied access to those. Yet although often regarded with suspicion by the Magisterial Reformation traditions – Lutheran, Reformed/Presbyterian and Episcopalian/ Anglican – Baptists have essentially seen themselves as within the classic catholic and orthodox affirmation of the creeds of the church. The streams of Baptist life flowing from the General Baptists’ Arminian beginnings in Amsterdam and the Particular Baptists’ Calvinistic beginnings in London some
years later were mostly fused together in a renewed and open evangelicalism of the late 18th century, embracing a strong missional dynamic in terms of both the life and work of local communities. In the words of J. G. Oncken – the pioneer of Baptist work in mainland Europe – “every Baptist was a missionary”. The desire to engage in cross-cultural holistic mission is also associated with the work of such early Baptist pioneers as William Carey and Adoniram Judson.

More specifically, we might note several strands which came to mark Baptist convictions across four hundred years of their existence. Here we would like to emphasize only a few of them. The first of these is the understanding of the community reading the Bible together. Such an approach originally belongs to Zwingli, but was further developed by Balthasar Hubmaier and other Anabaptists. This approach has generally set authentic Baptists over against the classic Reformation tradition which has sought to train scholar-pastors to be “ministers of the Word and Sacrament”. In contrast, Baptists typically look for enabling ministries of those who have a particular gift, or have been encouraged to study and break open the Word of God in order to assist the community in discerning the mind of Christ. That is, the community is the place where primary theology is done; the seminary, college or university are a place of secondary theological discourse. With such an understanding of the immediacy of the biblical revelation in guiding the life of a community or a believer, the notion of university or seminary training was not at first easily

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11 It is widely agreed that these Baptist theological and ecclesiological marks of identity are shared across a spectrum of baptistic communities and can be summarised as: a) the stress on the use of biblical story as trustful guiding for both faith and practice and as effecting a direct narrative link of the present community with the communities of the apostles; b) the freedom of conscience as God’s given gift to a believer or to a faith community to congregate voluntarily, to respond to God without interference of a state or other power structures, including the structures of institutional religion; c) the following of Jesus’ way in mutual submission to the care of the community of disciples under the Lordship of Christ; d) and, correspondingly, the forming of intentional gathering interdependent communities in a daily sharing in the storied life incorporating biblical vision in deliberate opposition to the Constantinian marriage of church and nation state; e) the responsibility to missional witness to what life in Christ means both to persons and to the state in words and deeds and to endure the suffering this witness may entail. (See Parush R Parushev, “Doing Theology in a Baptist Way,” in Teun van der Leer, ed., *Doing Theology in a Baptist Way*, the Plenary Papers Collection of the Symposium (Amsterdam: Vrije Universiteit, 2009 in English and Dutch), 8-10, available electronically on www.baptisten.nl/upload/ParushevEng.pdf (last accessed 5/10/09). Cf. James Wm. McClendon, *Ethics*, 26-34 and Randall, “A Review of Baptist Genealogy,” *passim*.


13 The Community of Protestant Churches in Europe (CPCE) in the Leuenberg Concordat of 1973 asserts in clause 43 that they have achieved “pulpit and table fellowship and the mutual recognition of ordination”; this is a key aspect of church fellowship. Baptists have been unable to participate as full members of CPCE largely due to their distinctive theological and ecclesiological perspective.
embraced by Baptists. As we will see, mentoring and apprenticeship were more common models for the purpose and work of seminaries.

Many other traditions, arising out of the Reformation period in the 16th century, focused on “right belief” (orthodoxy) with commonly agreed and clear doctrinal statements and the anathematization of those disagreeing with them. Baptists, following the Anabaptists, have been very concerned with discipleship (orthopraxy).14 From this point, the nurturing of the life of the convictional community joined voluntarily in a covenant15 has seen the development of an understanding of ministry as “called out” from within or from another local community. Such an understanding was based on the gifts discerned, rather than individuals16 themselves believing they are called, seeking training and ordination from a denomination and then being “placed” or “settled” by trans-local juridical ecclesial authorities (bishops, presbyteries, synods and the like), or by a patron or the state.

First Educational Institutions

Nevertheless, Baptists did see the need to shape those they had called out to be enablers and servants of the local faith community, and they did it by a pattern of apprenticeship as well as diligent reading of books and gatherings of pastors in association.17 Other significant developments began to occur in the 17th and 18th centuries, when in 1679 an English Baptist, Edward Terrill, bequeathed a sum of money to Broadmead Baptist Church, Bristol, for establishing a Baptist Academy (later Bristol Baptist College) to educate men (sic) for ministry. In 1770, this led to the foundation of the Bristol Baptist Education Society which claims to be the oldest Baptist educational institution in the world.18

The establishment of an institution for theological education of Baptists was readily followed by similar developments in the United States of America19 with the founding of a Baptist College on Rhode Island (in 1804 renamed Brown University) under the direction of the Revd Morgan Edwards. This took place in 1764 after consultation with English Baptists John Rippon, John Gill and the faculty at Bristol.20 Building on earlier dissenting academies at Warrington, a society for educating young men formed in London in 1752, and the New Connexion Academy in 1798, the Northern Baptist Education Society was formed in 1804.21 William Carey, the British Baptist missionary, and his colleagues established the famous Serampore College in India in 1818.22 Serampore was the first University in India to be given this status by charter (from the hand of the King of Denmark). It is now both a seminary and the pre-eminent awarding body for theological degrees in India.

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15 On the importance of covenant theology for Baptists see Fiddes, Tracks and Traces and Brian Haymes, Ruth Gouldbourne and Anthony R. Cross, On Being the Church: Revisioning Baptist Identity (Bletchley, Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2008).
16 Ordained pastoral ministry was male until the 20th century within the Reformation, Episcopal and baptistic church families.
17 It is a serious mistake to categorise, as some do, Baptist communities as independent. They have always been interdependent. See further Jones, The European Baptist Federation, especially chapters 1 and 2; Fiddes, Tracks and Traces.
18 For the story of Bristol Baptist College see Norman S. Moon, Education for Ministry (Bristol: Stanley L. Hunt Ltd., 1979).
21 Peter Shepherd, The Making of a Northern Baptist College (Manchester: Northern Baptist College, 2004).

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In the USA, both American (Northern) Baptists and Southern (SBC) Baptists established seminaries. American Baptist Churches USA produced Newton Theological Institution (1825), Colgate Rochester Theological Seminary (1850), Northern Baptist Theological Seminary (1913) and Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary, now re-named Palmer (1925)\(^\text{23}\). SBC founded Southern (1859), South Western (1908), Golden Gate (1944) and South Eastern (1950) Baptist seminaries. The Samuel DeWitt Proctor School of Theology at Virginia Union University in Richmond was founded in 1865 to address the needs of African-American students.

In Europe, institutions were also developed on the model of Bristol. In England these were Spurgeon’s (1857), Regent’s Park (1752), Manchester (1866) and Rawdon (1859) Colleges; in Wales – Cardiff and Bangor Colleges; in Scotland – Scottish Baptist College in Glasgow (1894); in Ireland – Irish Baptist College (1892); in Sweden – in Stockholm (1866); in Germany – a seminary in Hamburg (1880).

Baptist institutions also developed in Australasia. New Zealand saw Carey Seminary (1929); Australia – Whitley College (1891), Morling College (originally Baptist Theological College in New South Wales, 1916), and later Vose seminary (formerly the Baptist Theological College of Western Australia in Perth, 1963). In Southern and Eastern Europe, Africa, Latin America and parts of Asia, Baptist theological education made its way much later in the twentieth century, often being initiated and largely supported by missionary outreach, particularly after 1910. Indigenous development of theological institutions in Romania (1921)\(^\text{24}\) and the Soviet Union (1968)\(^\text{25}\) is rather an exception.

**Models of Training**

Initially the curriculum in most of these schools was a broad one of arts, philosophy, sciences and theology,\(^\text{26}\) but soon specialization began to emerge. By 1910, Baptist seminaries and colleges created for the formation of ministers/pastors and missionaries had developed in a way similar to that of institutions in the traditions of the magisterial Reformation with a course leading to a specialist degree – Bachelor of Divinity, Bachelor of Theology or Master of Divinity.\(^\text{27}\) Typically, these programmes covered introduction to Old and New Testament, Biblical languages, theology, church history, philosophy, Christian ethics, liturgy and worship, homiletics, and later pastoral care and missiology.\(^\text{28}\)

\(^{23}\) Interestingly, the latter from beginning accepted female students.


\(^{26}\) On philosophical theological perspective arising out of these institutions see, for instance, Alan P. F. Sell, *Philosophy, Dissent and Nonconformity 1689-1920* (Cambridge: James Clarke and Co, 2004).

\(^{27}\) The latter is mainly a qualification used in the USA, but of a similar construct to the Bachelor of Theology or Bachelor of Divinity degree elsewhere.

\(^{28}\) The pervasive spread of this ‘standard’ curriculum is evident in the curriculum of the only theological educational course – the Bible Correspondence Course – allowed for the ministerial training of Baptists in the former Soviet Union. It included subjects on the study of the Bible, exegesis, dogmatics, Christian history, pastoral theology, singing and church music (and, interestingly, the Constitution of the USSR as well as other relevant laws). See Peter F. Penner, *Nauchite Vse Narodi: Misija Bogoslovskogo Obrazovaniya [Teach All Peoples: Mission of the Theological Education]* (St. Petersburg: Biblija Dljà Vseh, 1999, in Russian), 242-243, and Albertas Latužis, *Po Jo sparnais: Baptistų istorija Lietuvoje, 1841-1990 [Under His Wings: History of Baptists in Lithuania, 1841-1990]* (Klaipėda: Eglė, 2009 in Lithuanian), 216. It is not surprising, considering that the syllabi of the Course were adopted primarily from the curriculum of the Moody Bible Institute in Chicago via the adaptations of the immigrant Slavic Bible School in Rosario, Argentine, with some local modifications (Walter Sawatsky, *Soviet Evangelicals Since World War II* (Scottdale: Herald Press, 1981), 218.)
Education in Baptist schools was normally a minimum of three or four years, residential, and limited to men, who, as a rule, were not allowed to marry until after completing training. Some Baptist institutions became linked to universities. Others obtained accreditation as degree awarding institutions. In certain countries such as Germany, Denmark and in most countries of the former Communist Block (with exception of Hungary and Romania) the latter proved to be impossibility, as the national confessional churches controlled university theological education.

The model of seminary training outlined here was refined and adapted in the first half of the 20th century, but then remained largely unrefomed. A debate continued between those advocating that the focus of training should be on creating scholar-pastors with skills in the Biblical languages able to exegete the Scriptures competently, and those arguing for a pattern of formation which would give future ministers necessary skills and competencies for engaging in pastoral ministry in community. After 1918 in some countries (Britain, Sweden, USA), an increasing number of women were admitted for ministerial and missionary training. The number of countries and institutions preparing women for ministry in local congregations has expanded rapidly throughout the world, though in parts of Africa, Asia and Eastern Europe the norm is still only to train and ordain men.

Developments in theories of education and the needs of the churches in the second part of 20th century, together with the rapid expansion of the Baptist churches in Africa, Asia and Latin America, led to reflection on new models of training, later described as ministerial formation. After the collapse of the European Communist Block, there has also been rapid expansion of Bible schools and seminaries in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. This expansion reflected the desire of the Baptists in each now independent state to have their own seminary for pastoral formation. In countries with large geographic areas such as Russia, regional seminaries, Bible schools and specialist education programmes have developed with a variety of patterns of education and intended outcomes. A further, and perhaps unexpected, development relates to controversy on fundamentalism within the Southern Baptist Convention in the United States, which led to the formation of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship (CBF) in the early 1990s. The churches that affiliated with CBF felt they could no longer use Baptist ministers emerging from the traditional and well-established Southern, South Western and South Eastern Baptist seminaries affiliated to or controlled by the SBC leadership. In consequence, something like twelve new CBF educational institutions came into being. Some of these were Baptist House of studies within universities of another tradition, such as Duke University, Durham, North Carolina, which is a Methodist foundation. Others developed as seminaries within Baptist universities: for example, the Truett Seminary at Baylor University, Texas, and the McAfee Seminary in Mercer University, Georgia.

Today in many countries there are traditional Baptist seminaries offering college-based three- or four-year courses leading to a specialist degree intending to equip people for a preaching, teaching and pastoral ministry within a local church. Some of these courses are full-time residential; others allow part-time with weekend and evening study; still others offer forms of in-service ministerial formation. In Europe,

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29 However, in some parts of the world, most notably in areas of former Soviet Union, young men had been often considered not eligible for theological studies unless they were married. Lina Andronoviene, Involuntarily Free or Voluntarily Bound: Singleness in the Baptistic Churches of Post-communist Europe (Prague: International Baptist Theological Seminary, 2003), 27-28.


31 There are many excellent guides to this from both sides of the controversy. Bill J Leonard’s Baptist Ways (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 2003) and Baptists in America (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005) offer scholarly history and analysis.
congregation-based work was pioneered by Professor Michael H. Taylor, when he was the Principal of the Northern Baptist College, Manchester, in the 1970s. The model had been later gradually adopted by others.

Examples of classic seminary-based formation with the intended outcome being a degree in theology and ordination into local pastoral ministry might include Regent’s Park College, a permanent private hall of the University of Oxford, England; Northern Baptist Seminary, Chicago, USA; Elstal Baptist Seminary, Berlin, Germany; Palmer Seminary, Philadelphia, USA; Whitley College (Australia), International Baptist Seminary, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; Vose Seminary, Perth, Australia; Odessa Baptist Seminary, Ukraine; Theological Seminary of the Evangelical Christians-Baptists, Moscow, Russia; Arab Baptist Theological Seminary, Beirut, Lebanon; Minsk Baptist Seminary, Minsk, Belarus; Acadia Divinity College, Wolfville, Canada; Beeson Divinity School, Samford University, Birmingham, USA; Southern Baptist Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky, USA; Oriental Seminary, Nagaland, India; Spurgeon’s College, London, England. In South America there are up to 100 institutions, many much smaller than in Rio, Buenos Aires and Santiago, Chile. However, the combined numbers now in Latin America employ over 1,000 lecturers and all the institutions are accredited through one of the three main evangelical accrediting associations in the region. We note that whereas institutions in Africa, Asia and Latin America are often overstretched in their resources with high numbers of students and few qualified lecturers, some institutions in the North are very well endowed with high staff-student ratios but few candidates for ministry. This continues to represent a serious challenge in Baptist theological education.

In most of these seminaries, the institution is principally owned by a Baptist union or convention, or by an association or non-governmental organization, with a board on which Baptists predominate. Many will be open to receive applicants from a broad range of evangelical traditions, but the focus of the courses offered will reflect the needs for ministry within the context of local Baptist churches.

The admission criteria will vary across all institutions, but will generally assume entry is for those who have left high-school with appropriate qualifications to study for a degree, or already have a general liberal arts or similar first degree. In some parts of the world the average age of those commencing such education rose significantly in the latter years of the 20th century and was often seen as a second career or vocation. The course would normally be of three or four years full-time equivalent. As discussed earlier, traditional curriculum consists of general introductions to the Old and New Testaments, often Greek and Hebrew language courses, systematic theology, church history, Baptist history and identity, Christian ethics, philosophy, advanced work in one or more books of the Bible, including translation and exegesis, practice of ministry, pastoral counselling, preaching and worship leadership, theology of mission, and reflection on the place of the church in society. Most courses these days would include field work, mentoring or supervised ministry within a congregation, so that a student was not propelled straight from the seminary into a local church context. In Latin America and Asia course more linked to the context of particular settings have been introduced, including reflection on traditional religions.

It would now be a reasoned judgment that over 50% of those being formed to exercise ministry in Baptist congregations around the world are being prepared on courses which are non-residential (in terms of living physically in a college or seminary for a prolonged period of training), part-time, theological education by extension and largely operating with a model of preparation which takes as a key component a local worshipping community engaging with a student to help shape their formation and subsequent ministry. The positives of this type of approach have been adjudged to be significant in making ministerial formation more relevant and in making sure the “end users” – local congregations – have their aspirations addressed. In this case, formation is less controlled by seminary lecturers, who may have been out of active

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32 It should be noted that many larger seminaries offer several tracks for formation, so some institutions listed as an example in one category might also have programmes in another category.

33 Josue Fonesca, *RIBET Map on Theological Education in LA* (Santiago: Latin America Baptist Network of Theological Institutions, 2008).
pastoral ministry for some years and may not fully appreciate the current key issues on congregational life. Negatively, such forms of development have been seen to make the task of spiritual formation of ministers more difficult because of the lack of experience of living within a settled Christian community built around daily times of worship. Such non-residential courses have also been seen to allow character traits in ordinands to go unchecked, as against the perceived value of a community of students living within a closed community and by their interaction teaching one another to work with varied types of people.

Baptists have increasingly sought to embrace innovative and non-traditional theological education. There has been a growing recognition that centres of theological education must engage in the forming of the whole people of God and not just in the preparation of a separated and ordained group of individuals. In some Baptist Unions, the whole approach has become that of offering theological formation for Baptist congregations through non-residential training programmes. For instance, the Non-residential Bible School of the Baptist Union of Lithuania (NEBIM) works on module delivery at weekends; the venue changes amongst the churches and people can either participate for informal education, or take the module and do the assignments for credit. The programme covers courses in Biblical Studies, Church History, Theology, and Church Ministries. The students are not required to have any prior theological education but are encouraged to be actively involved in the ministry in their local churches already during the course of the programme.

The Northern Baptist Learning Community (NBLC) (until 2008 Northern Baptist College) has likewise pioneered the Community Learning Network (CLN) for Baptists in the North of England with a part-time college tutor based in each of five Baptist regional Associations. It is designed to help churches and individuals to engage in education on a wide range of issues, both intensely local church related, but also with topics offered where churches can helpfully engage with society, such as working with those who have dementia, engaging in conflict resolution, community building, etc. NEBIM and NBLC have discovered synergies in their work and formed a partnership which includes exchanges of students and lecturers. In Latin America several institutions are developing lay leadership education using forms of group learning.

In addition to their main programmes of ministerial formation, a significant number of institutions offer evening and weekend courses, often for those exercising some form of bi-vocational ministry within the churches. Radosec seminary in Warsaw, Poland, does this quite extensively. Bristol, Baptist College in England has specialist weekends and Spurgeon’s College, England, seeks to develop the availability of its programmes to meet the needs of leaders of minority ethnic churches in London.34

Alongside courses open for all church members, the development of specialist programmes for youth leaders, church educators, church administrators, missioners, social workers, and the like has developed apace. It would be true to say that those courses rarely existed outside of the United States of America until the 1980s, but now this development of specialist formation for those called to roles other than the classic pastor/preacher is noteworthy. The curriculum would often consist of common core courses, with then specialist subsidiary focus in the second part of the programme. In some institutions such courses have been delivered on a devolved basis away from the primary site. Many are offered in the format of evening, weekend or distance learning patterns and in a way which allows students to design their own course selecting modules from a “basket” of units or modules available from an institution. The concern for lifelong learning and continuous professional development is also apparent with many institutions offering refresher or new skill courses for those already engaged in ministry.

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34 Considering the phenomenon of the reverse migration from Africa, Asia and Latin America to Europe and North America, there is an increasing awareness among Baptists for the needs, including the leadership training, of immigrant ethnic churches, see e.g. Peter F. Penner (ed), Ethnic Churches in Europe: A Baptist Response (Schwarzenfeld: Neufeld Verlag, 2006).
New concerns have entered the curriculum offered at many institutions. These include the theology of creation care and sustainable life-style, featuring such concerns in liturgy, creating eco-congregations and the like.\textsuperscript{35} There is also a growing tendency to include more structured courses on the place of church in society, especially in the ex-communist countries where the engagement of the Christian community in civic society had previously been severely restricted.\textsuperscript{36} There has also been a significant development in the field of missiology to integrate it more thoroughly throughout the theological curriculum.\textsuperscript{37} Some schools, particularly in ecumenical settings, would offer courses on World Christianity, interfaith issues, and inter-denominational dialogue.

With the exception of a small number of genuinely international seminaries, such as the International Baptist Theological Seminary in Prague, Czech Republic, which is owned by all national Baptist unions in Europe and the Middle East, there is a small number of cross-border institutions of which the most notable had been the Scandinavian Academy of Leadership and Training (SALT) which operated in Sweden, Norway and Denmark through a series of education centres, enabling students to take elements of the programme in different countries and centres and seeking to share the lecturing team across borders.\textsuperscript{38} Other formally national Baptist institutions serve \textit{de facto} as international training schools, such as the College of Theology and Education (1995)\textsuperscript{39} in Kishinev, Moldova and the Arab Baptist Theological Seminary (1960) in Beirut, Lebanon. The challenge to this type of international work is the requirement of the use of either of a common language, such as English, Russian or Arabic, or the ability to understand other similar languages, as with SALT which worked in Norwegian, Danish, Swedish and English. Asia Baptist Graduate Theological Seminary (1959) tried another approach to internationalization of education. While based in the Philippines, it has teaching centres in Hong Kong, Indonesia, Korea, Philippines, Taiwan, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, and Malaysia-Singapore-Thailand.\textsuperscript{40}

The sharing of lecturing staff, resources and programmes is attempted in various ways amongst Baptists. In Europe and the Middle East, a consortium of European Baptist Theological Schools (CEBTS)\textsuperscript{41} has been formed. Currently it involves nearly forty Baptist and Baptist-related institutions. Regular forums (European Baptist Theology Teachers Conferences\textsuperscript{42}) are held to assist in the development of curricula, standardize policies for seminaries, arrange subject lecturer peer group mentoring, lecturer and student exchange, promote training of members of governing bodies and develop training for librarians and administrators. The latter has proved particularly important, as most Baptist institutions only have one librarian, perhaps trained in theology, much more rarely in library science, so the CEBTS Librarian events help to provide vital mutual help for librarians in seminaries.

\textsuperscript{37} Peter Penner (ed), \textit{Theological Education as Mission}.
\textsuperscript{38} At the time of this writing, SALT is undergoing a thorough reorganization and is not active.
\textsuperscript{39} Oleg P. Turlac, “Moldovan Outreach to Central Asia and Russia,” \textit{East-West Church & Ministry Report} 12:4 (Fall 2004), 7-8.
\textsuperscript{40} It is, in fact, a partnership of the following Baptist institutions: Baptist Theological Seminary of Indonesia, Baptist Theological Seminary, Singapore, Hong Kong Baptist Theological Seminary, Korea Baptist Theological Seminary, Philippine Baptist Theological Seminary and Bible School, Taiwan Baptist Theological Seminary, Thailand Baptist Theological Seminary and the Department of Theology, Seinan Gakuin University, Japan.
\textsuperscript{41} For more information, see www.cebts.eu (accessed 30/8/09).
\textsuperscript{42} The last one has been held in Prague in 2008.

\textit{Part III: Theological Education from Denominational and Confessional Perspectives}
Ecumenical Collaboration

While there are some prominent Baptists in the ecumenical circles who contribute to a number of the grassroots ecumenical initiatives, Baptists are not generally noted for being amongst those at the forefront of ecumenical movement.43 The Baptist World Alliance (BWA) does take part in the meetings of the Secretaries of the Christian World Communions44 as well as in bilateral consultations with the other world Christian communions (Roman-Catholic, Orthodox, Anglican, etc.) and the more recent Global Christian Forum.45 In some countries there are very close relationships between the national Baptist Union and other non-episcopal churches. This is especially true in Sweden, Great Britain, parts of the West Indies and certain areas of Asia, such as India, China, and Korea. However, with the exception of the Church of North India, Baptists have generally not participated in uniting churches under one ecclesial structure. Considering the turbulent history of the relationship of the minority Baptist communities with the dominant state churches (Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox) in Central and Eastern Europe or in Latin America, it is fair to say that at this stage the ecumenical cooperation with these traditional national churches is at an embryonic stage.46

Noticeably, in the area of theological education, Baptists in some countries have been willing to establish a theological framework for ecumenical education47 or to merge the work of their own institution within an ecumenical college or seminary to a greater or lesser degree. Generally, the other partners have been what we named here Baptist or “free” churches – Methodists, free evangelicals, Waldensians, Pentecostals, Congregationalists, Covenantals, and contemporary Charismatics. Occasionally the partners have included Episcopalian, Lutheran or national Reformed seminaries, as, for example, the theological faculty of “Matija Vlačić Ilirik”, located in Zagreb, Croatia, founded by Croatian Lutheran Church and the Baptist Union in 1976. Named after a prominent Croatian Protestant theologian, the faculty primarily serves the needs of the churches of the Reformation heritage.48 Possibly the most overtly ecumenical institution in which Baptists fully participate is the United Theological College of the West Indies, established in 1965 to “deepen ecumenism for the sharing of resources”49. This institution is jointly sponsored by various Anglican (Episcopalian) dioceses in the Caribbean, the Methodist Church, the Jamaica Baptist Union, Disciples of Christ, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Guyana, the Moravian Church,

45 The participation of the BWA in this WCC initiative has, so far, not been subject to criticism by member bodies of the BWA.
46 An example of an attempt to initiate such ecumenical co-operation in theological education at post-graduate level is the partnership between IBTS and the Bulgarian Faculty of (Orthodox) Theology of the Sofia University “St Kliment of Ochrid.”
47 For example, the widely appreciated WCC resource for ecumenical education is written by a Baptist, Simon Oxley. Creative Ecumenical Education: Learning fro One Another (Geneva: Risk Book Series/ WCC Publication, 2002).
48 The institution is currently in a process of governmental accreditation and, alongside with training of pastors and theologians, “aims at promotion of general theological understanding within Croatian society, research and promotion of the idea of ecumenism, human rights and Christian peacemaking.” www.tfmvi.hr/english/index.html (accessed 5/10/09).
49 Trevor Edwards, lecturer at the United Theological College, personal letter to authors, 14 August 2009.

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the Presbyterian Church of Trinidad and Grenada and the United Church in Jamaica and Grand Cayman. There are eight programmes offered from Certificate courses through to Doctor of Philosophy in partnership with the University of the West Indies.

A similar institution founded in the 1980s is the Partnership for Theological Education based in Manchester, England. The Northern Baptist Learning Community is fully involved with this partnership, along with the Church of England, Methodists, United Reformed Church and the Moravians (Unitas Fratrum). The Partnership provides theological education from general lay training through pre- and post-ordination formation to offering higher degrees in theology in cooperation with the Universities of Chester and Manchester. The President of the Partnership is currently a Baptist. In Slovakia, several free churches, including the Baptists, have formed a Department of Theology within the University of Matej Bel in Banská Bystrica.

In Bulgaria, the Evangelical Theological Institute brings together Baptists, Pentecostals and various other free churches in a combined programme for ministerial formation currently on the point of achieving state accreditation at Bachelor’s level. The Stockholm School of Theology is a partnership of Baptists and Covenant Church. Of special interest in their work is a programme in Human Rights as well as the more traditional courses for ministerial formation. They also work closely with a teacher training institution.

There are many instances of cooperative programmes and the sharing of lecturing staff without physically sharing the same campus. Examples of this might include Bristol, England (Church of England, Methodist and Baptist). In some other countries the facilities of one denomination are used by others. So the Baptists in Italy send students to the Waldensian Faculty in Rome. Baptists can be formed for pastoral service within the Baptist House of studies in Duke University. For a short period American Baptist Churches USA operated a Baptist house of studies within the evangelical Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, California, but this has now ceased to function.

Baptist work and writing on theological education is often contained within wider documents or reports or is locally focused. One key area for developing reflection on how Baptists engage in theological formation and development and in the process of preparing people for Christian ministry is the periodic Baptist International Conference of Theological Educators (BICTE). There have been seven such conferences organised by the Department of Study and Research of the Baptist World Alliance. The most recent was in Prague in 2008, drawing together over 100 theological educators representing every continent.

In Conclusion: Challenges and Prospects

Baptist theological education has become a global reality since Edinburgh 1910. In almost every country of the world a Baptist Bible school or seminary can be found. Today, much of the work is done by extension, non-residentially, and in the majority world, with limited resources in terms of qualified lecturers and adequate libraries. However, there is a very high level of commitment to contextual theological education for the life and health of the primary ecclesial communities, the local gathering, convictional, intentional, missional meetings.

Baptist bodies and individuals responsible for theological education recognize several serious challenges for the future. The task of doing contextual theology in a world of multi-cultural, multi-ethnic and variably resourced communities is one facing many Baptist seminaries. The addressing of the

51 The papers for all the BWA BICTE Conferences are published periodically and held in the BWA library, Falls Church, Virginia, USA. The Conference report and statement can found at www.bwanet.org/default.aspx?pid=864 (accessed 25/8/09).
imbalance of resources between the majority and minority worlds remains on the agenda of the world Baptist community. The need to make further strides to move from formal to informal education and to life-long learning for the whole people of God cannot be overemphasized. The challenge also remains in many places to enable the majority groups in congregations – women and young people – to fulfil their potential within the Christian church by being equipped to fully utilize their gifts. For some Baptists, there remains a pressing need to understand better and cooperate with other Christian confessional families and to engage in dialogue with those of other faiths.

Baptists in many places continue seeking to develop theologians able to assist the church in meeting these challenges, but often struggle to achieve accredited post-graduate qualifications because they are excluded from access to institutions able to offer such possibilities, either through doctrinal tests which prohibit access or lack of resources to fund such possibilities.
Traditionally theological educators are trained in the Bible and theology but they hardly have any training as teachers – let alone formal training for educational leadership and management. Most instructors of theology and principals of theological institutions have learned their job “by doing”. This is changing now. As quality management and accreditation become standard even for smaller Bible institutes, the need for educationally trained instructors and school leaders becomes evident. But it is not just the pressure of accreditation which forces theological schools to invest in the educational training of their faculty and leadership; it is the growing awareness that good theologians are not automatically good teachers, deans and principals. As the formula fitness for purpose becomes standard in the definition of educational output qualities, one has to seriously ask whether faculty and leaders who are trained only in the fields of Bible and theology are fit for the purpose of teaching and leading educational institutions.

From this perspective it comes as no surprise that a development towards more intentional and formal educational training of faculty and leadership can also be observed among theological schools of evangelical orientation. It is from this perspective that I approach the topic of this contribution, making available some experiences of evangelical theological education to a wider audience.

Introduction to Evangelical Theological Education

Evangelical theological education stands in the Protestant tradition and has its foundational source certainly in the Reformation. Beyond that two roots should be highlighted: the search for the renewal of theological education through Pietism in the 17th and 18th century,1 and the movement of mission training centres and Bible schools of the 19th century.2 Evangelical theological education has traditionally been linked to the evangelical mission movement and was therefore international in its perspective from the very beginning. While some of the evangelical institutions of theological education are associated with denominations, most of them are interdenominational or non-denominational.

Evangelical theological education experienced tremendous changes over the last four to five decades. Most Bible schools developed into recognised Bible colleges and seminaries. This process was accompanied by the growing continental associations of evangelical theological institutions. Today we find on all continents networks and accrediting associations for evangelical theological education. Together they build the global network called International Council for Evangelical Theological Education

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1 Cf. Philip Jakob Spener’s tract Pia desideria; for a summary of its contribution to the renewal of theological education see Reinhard Frische, Theologie unter der Herrschaft Gottes (Giessen and Basel: Brunnen, 1979).

ICETE,3 which brings together eight continental associations representing about 1000 evangelical theological schools in 113 countries.4 Given the strong link to the protestant mission movement, as well as the global network through ICETE, it is no surprise that evangelical theological education in general is characterized by its international, missionary and inter-cultural horizon.

Whereas in its early days, ICETE and its member bodies focused their attention on accreditation, today the trend is for ICETE and its regional associations to become “service networks” of which accreditation is but one important activity. ICETE represents the various roles as multidirectional service and capacity building: from ICETE to the leaders of the regional associations; from the eight regional networks to the leaders of their member theological institutions; from theological colleges to their stakeholder churches; from the church to the world in the context of the church’s mission to reach and to serve the world. ICETE and its member bodies see themselves as active participants in the growing “professionalization of evangelical theological education”, i.e. training leaders of the theological networks, capacity building for principals and academic directors of institutions, specific formation in adult learning, distance education and other matters relative to being effective faculty members, etc. The major venue for the ICETE community is that of its triennial “International Consultation for Theological Educators”, more recently held in High Wycombe, UK in 2003; Chiang Mai, Thailand in 2006 and Sopron, Hungary in 2009. The latest Consultation brought together approximately 180 attendees from over 50 countries, on the theme: “Energising Community: Theological Education’s Relational Mandate”. In addition to the plenary sessions, capacity-building events, ICETE board meetings, a resources Expo and other events were held. Plenary speakers in Hungary included Bishop Hwa Yung (Malaysia), Professor Henri Blocher (France), Daniel Bourdanné (Chad), Oscar Campos (Guatemala), Joseph Shao (Philippines), Riad Kassis (Lebanon), Chris Wright (UK), David Baer and Doug Birdsall (USA).

In the early 1980s the ICETE community issued the so called Manifesto on the Renewal of Evangelical Theological Education. The Manifesto develops the following themes:5

Therefore, we now unitedly affirm that, to fulfil its God-given mandate, evangelical theological education today worldwide must vigorously seek to introduce and reinforce...

1. Contextualization
Our programmes of theological education must be designed with deliberate reference to the contexts in which they serve. We are at fault that our curricula so often appear either to have been imported whole from abroad, or to have been handed down unaltered from the past. The selection of courses for the curriculum, and the content of every course in the curriculum, must be specifically suited to the context of service. To become familiar with the context in which the biblical message is to be lived and preached is no less vital to a well-rounded programme than to become familiar with the content of that biblical message. Indeed, not only in what is taught, but also in structure and operation our theological programmes must demonstrate that they exist in and for their specific context, in governance and administration, in staffing and finance, in teaching styles and class assignments, in library resources and student services. This we must accomplish, by God’s grace.

2. Churchward orientation
Our programmes of theological education must orient themselves pervasively in terms of the Christian community being served. We are at fault when our programmes operate merely in terms of some traditional or personal notion of theological education. At every level of design and operation our programmes must be visibly determined by a close attentiveness to the needs and expectations of the Christian community we serve. To this end we must establish multiple modes of ongoing interaction between programme and church, both at official and at grassroots levels, and regularly adjust and develop the programme in the light of these contacts. Our

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3 The following section on the ICETE is written in cooperation with Paul Sanders, Associate Director of ICETE.
5 Cf. www.theoledafrica.org/ICETE/ICETEManifesto.asp.
3. Strategic flexibility

Our programmes of theological education must nurture a much greater strategic flexibility in carrying out their task. Too long we have been content to serve the formation of only one type of leader for the church, at only one level of need, by only one educational approach. If we are to serve fully the leadership needs of the body of Christ, then our programmes singly and in combination must begin to demonstrate much greater flexibility in at least three respects. Firstly, we must attune ourselves to the full range of leadership roles required, and not attend only to the most familiar or most basic. To provide for pastoral formation, for example, is not enough. We must also respond creatively, in cooperation with other programmes, to the church’s leadership needs in areas such as Christian education, youth work, evangelism, journalism and communications, TEE, counselling, denominational and parachurch administration, seminary and Bible school staffing, community development, and social outreach. Secondly, our programmes must learn to take account of all academic levels of need, and not become frozen in serving only one level. We must not presume that the highest level of training is the only strategic need, nor conversely that the lowest level is the only strategic need. We must deliberately participate in multi-level approaches to leadership training, worked out on the basis of an assessment of the church’s leadership needs as a whole at all levels. Thirdly, we must embrace a greater flexibility in the educational modes by which we touch the various levels of leadership need, and not limit our approach to a single traditional or radical pattern. We must learn to employ, in practical combination with others, both residential and extension systems, both formal and nonformal styles, as well, for example, as short-term courses, workshops, evening classes, holiday institutes, in-service training, travelling seminars, refresher courses, and continuing education programmes. Only by such flexibility in our programmes can the church’s full spectrum of leadership needs begin to be met, and we ourselves become true to our full mandate. This we must accomplish, by God’s grace.

4. Theological grounding

Evangelical theological education as a whole today needs earnestly to pursue and recover a thorough-going theology of theological education. We are at fault that we so readily allow our bearings to be set for us by the latest enthusiasms, or by secular rationales, or by sterile traditions. It is not sufficient that we attend to the context of our service and to the Christian community being served. We must come to perceive our task, and even these basic points of reference, within the larger setting of God’s total truth and God’s total plan. Such a shared theological perception of our calling is largely absent from our midst. We must together take immediate and urgent steps to seek, elaborate and possess a bibliically-informed theological basis for our calling in theological education, and to allow every aspect of our service to become rooted and nurtured in this soil. This we must accomplish, by God’s grace.

5. Continuous assessment

Our programmes of theological education must be dominated by a rigorous practice of identifying objectives, assessing outcomes, and adjusting programmes accordingly. We have been too easily satisfied with educational intentions that are unexpressed, or only superficially examined, or too general to be of directional use. We have been too ready to assume our achievements on the basis of vague impressions, chance reports, or crisis-generated inquiries. We have been culpably content with evaluating our programmes only irregularly, or haphazardly, or under stress. We hear our Lord’s stern word about the faithful stewardship He requires in His servants, but we have largely failed to apply this to the way we conduct our programmes of theological education. Firstly, we must let our programmes become governed by objectives carefully chosen, clearly defined, and continuously reviewed. Secondly, we must accept it as a duty, and not merely as beneficial, to discern and evaluate the results of our programmes, so that there may be a valid basis for judging the degree to which intentions are being achieved. This requires that we institute means for reviewing the actual performance of our graduates in relation to our stated objectives. Thirdly, we must build into the normal operational patterns of our programmes a regular review and continual modification and adjustment of all aspects of governance, staffing, educational programme, facilities, and student services, so that actual achievements might be brought to approximate more and more
closely our stated objectives. Only by such provisions for continuous assessment can we be true to the rigorous demands of biblical stewardship. This we must accomplish, by God’s grace.

6. Community life
Our programmes of theological education must demonstrate the Christian pattern of community. We are at fault that our programmes so often seem little more than Christian academic factories, efficiently producing graduates. It is biblically incumbent on us that our programmes function as deliberately nurtured Christian educational communities, sustained by those modes of community that are biblically commended and culturally appropriate. To this end it is not merely decorative but biblically essential that the whole educational body-staff and students-not only learns together, but plays and eats and cares and worships and works together. This we must accomplish, by God’s grace.

7. Integrated programme
Our programmes of theological education must combine spiritual and practical with academic objectives in one holistic integrated educational approach. We are at fault that we so often focus educational requirements narrowly on cognitive attainments, while we hope for student growth in other dimensions but leave it largely to chance. Our programmes must be designed to attend to the growth and equipping of the whole man of God. This means, firstly, that our educational programmes must deliberately foster the spiritual formation of the student. We must look for a spiritual development centred in total commitment to the lordship of Christ, progressively worked outward by the power of the Spirit into every department of life. We must devote as much time and care and structural designing to facilitate this type of growth as we readily and rightly provide for cognitive growth. This also means, secondly, that our programmes must foster achievement in the practical skills of Christian leadership. We must no longer introduce these skills only within a classroom setting. We must incorporate into our educational arrangements and requirements a guided practical field experience in precisely those skills which the student will need to employ in service after completion of the programme. We must provide adequately supervised and monitored opportunities for practical vocational field experience. We must blend practical and spiritual with academic in our educational programmes, and thus equip the whole man of God for service. This we must accomplish, by God’s grace.

8. Servant moulding
Through our programmes of theological education students must be moulded to styles of leadership appropriate to their intended biblical role within the body of Christ. We are at fault that our programmes so readily produce the characteristics of elitism and so rarely produce the characteristics of servanthood. We must not merely hope that the true marks of Christian servanthood will appear. We must actively promote biblically approved styles of leadership through modelling by the staff and through active encouragement, practical exposition, and deliberate reinforcement. This we must accomplish, by God’s grace.

9. Instructional variety
Our programmes of theological education must vigorously pursue the use of a variety of educational teaching methodologies, evaluated and promoted in terms of their demonstrated effectiveness, especially with respect to the particular cultural context. It is not right to become fixed in one method merely because it is traditional, or familiar, or even avant-garde. Lecturing is by no means the only appropriate teaching method, and frequently not the best. Presumably the same may be said of programmed instruction. Our programmes need to take practical steps to introduce and train their staff in new methods of instruction, in a spirit of innovative flexibility and experimentation, always governed by the standards of effectiveness. This we must accomplish, by God’s grace.

10. A Christian mind
Our programmes of theological education need much more effectively to model and inculcate a pattern of holistic thought that is openly and wholesomely centred around biblical truth as the integrating core of reality. It is not enough merely to teach an accumulation of theological truths. Insofar as every human culture is governed at its core by an integrating world view, our programmes must see that the rule of the Lord is planted effectively at that point in the life of the student. This vision of the theologically integrated life needs to be so lived and
taught in our programmes that we may say and show in a winsomely biblical manner that theology does indeed matter, and students may go forth experiencing this centring focus in all its biblical richness and depth. This we must accomplish, by God’s grace.

11. Equipping for growth
Our programmes of theological education need urgently to refocus their patterns of training towards encouraging and facilitating self-directed learning. It is not enough that through our programmes we bring a student to a state of preparedness for ministry. We need to design academic requirements so that we are equipping the student not only to complete the course but also for a lifetime of ongoing learning and development and growth. To this end we must also assume a much greater role in the placement of our students, as part of our proper duty, and experiment in ways of maintaining ongoing supportive links and services with them after graduation, especially in the early years of ministry. By these means each student should come to experience through the programme not the completion of a development but the launching of an ongoing development. This we must accomplish, by God’s grace.

12. Cooperation
Our programmes of theological education must pursue contact and collaboration among themselves for mutual support, encouragement, edification and crossfertilization. We are at fault that so often in evangelical theological education we attend merely to our own assignments under God. Others in the same calling need us, and we need them. The biblical notion of mutuality needs to be much more visibly expressed and pragmatically pursued among our theological programmes. Too long we have acquiesced in an isolation of effort that denies the larger body of Christ, thus failing both ourselves and Christ’s body. The times in which we serve, no less than biblical expectations, demand of each of us active ongoing initiatives in cooperation. This we must accomplish, by God’s grace.

May God help us to be faithful to these affirmations and commitments, to the glory of God and for the fulfilment of His purposes.

This document can still be seen as the most accurate summary of the ethos of evangelical theological education. It still serves as a point of reference for the assessment of sound evangelical theological education.6

**Efforts for the Training of Evangelical Theological Educators**

However, over the years it became evident that the implementation of the values outlined in the *Manifesto* will need intentional and resolute investment in the training of faculty and school leaders. At the international level institutions such as Overseas Council and Langham Partnership are well known for their efforts in training theological educators around the world. But also the continental networks and accrediting associations have been active in providing training for faculty and school directors. In addition some theological schools have added courses and programmes focussing especially on theological education.

This presentation will now focus on such efforts in Europe – the context with which I am most familiar:

*Research in Evangelical theological education*

In recent years several studies on the history and the performance of Evangelical theological education have been conducted. These investigations build a first step and a necessary foundation for meaningful training of faculty and school leaders. They provide a better understanding of the historic movement of

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evangelical theological education. Some of these studies offer critical analyses which enable institutions to implement evidence based strategies for change.

Almost simultaneously two investigations have been produced in the 1990s: Graham Cheesman investigated the history of The Bible College Movement in the UK, while I was working on a study on the Bible school movement in Germany and Switzerland.

More recently doctoral research has been conducted at a more educational level. Marlene Enns’ doctoral research focussed on the topic of “cultural variations of reasoning”. Her study in educational theory shows strength and limitations of the Western educational traditions and calls for a more holistic view in an international and inter-cultural perspective.

Another study, conducted by Marie-Claire Weinski, is An Inquiry Into the Transformative Learning of Evangelical Theological Students in Germany. In her empirical research she applies Jack Mezirow’s theory of transformative learning to evangelical theological education in Germany.

Thomas Eisinger investigated ‘Theological Seminaries and their Contribution to the Personality Development of their students in respect to mission’. Based on the theory of M. Karecki (Cycle of mission praxis) he develops a model for personality development in theological training.

All three studies are substantial contributions to the search for excellence in theological education. The Manifesto emphasises that good evangelical theological education “must combine spiritual and practical with academic objectives in one holistic integrated educational approach. We are at fault that we so often focus educational requirements narrowly on cognitive attainments, while we hope for student growth in other dimensions but leave it largely to chance”. Such studies, as conducted by Enns, Weinski and Eisinger, provide foundations for evidence based strategies toward a better integration of more holistic cognition, spirituality, and life transformation.

Presently several research projects in the field of evangelical theological education are in process in connection with the Centre for Theological Education at Belfast Bible College, with the EdD-Programme of the Akademie für Welt Mission, Korntal/Stuttgart, Germany (German campus of Colombia International University), with the University of Wales and with the University of South Africa (UNISA).

This leads to some of the institutions in Europe which offer studies and research in evangelical theological education.

Training theological educators

In recent years several initiatives for the training of theological educators developed in Europe. In 2005 the Centre for Theological Education (CTE) was founded as part of Belfast Bible College (BBC). It is so far the only one of its kind among evangelical theological colleges in Europe. As study and fellowship centre for theological education it is associated, through BBC, with the Queens University Belfast for the

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7 See footnote 2.
8 See footnote 2.
10 Understanding and Promoting Life Change. An Inquiry Into the Transformative Learning of Evangelical Theological Students in Germany (Hamburg: Kovac, 2006).
awarding of post-graduate degrees.12 The centre piece of CTE is its Post Graduate Certificate Course in Theological Education. This PGC course aims at the preparation and continuing education of teachers and leaders engaged in theological education. The subjects of the taught modules focus on the theory and the practise of theological education.

Beyond the post-graduate certificate CTE also supervises students for Ph.D. and M.Phil. degrees awarded by The Queen’s University, Belfast.

The founder and present director of the centre is Graham Cheesman. Under his leadership and supervision CTE has served around 40 students in its short history.

Almost simultaneously the Akademie für Weltmission (AWM) at Korntal/Stuttgart, Germany, developed a Doctor of Education Programme in International Theological Education (EdD-ITE) in conjunction with Columbia International University (CIU), South Carolina, USA. The AWM is the study and training centre of the Associations of Evangelical Missions in Germany and Switzerland offering “a multitude of in-service options for missionaries and other cross-cultural workers”.13 Until recently this included mainly courses and programmes at the Master level leading to various mission related MA degrees including a few courses in education. Responding to the growing need for further training and studies for those engaged in theological education world-wide, CIU/AWM has now started to operate a Doctor of Education programme with an emphasis on Leadership in International Theological Education. I was asked to develop and lead this programme and it is now in operation in its third year. In the two years since the beginning 9 students have formally been accepted into the doctoral programme and a further 14 have taken individual courses. The fact that in every course a group of committed theological educators comes together – from Europe and with international experience – makes each course an extra-ordinary learning experience for all involved.

It happens that both Graham Cheesman from the Centre for Theological Education at Belfast Bible College and myself, leading the Doctor of Education Programme at the Akademie für Weltmission, Korntal/Stuttgart, work together in the council of the European Evangelical Accrediting Association. It is therefore no surprise that the training of those engaged in theological education – be it at the level of faculty or in leadership roles – is a major concern of the EEAA council. To put this into practice the EEAA has just recently decided to develop a Post-Graduate Certificate Programme in Theological Education (PGCTE) for its member schools and beyond. Drawing on the recourses of the two aforementioned institutions, the EEAA is now in the process of designing a curriculum which will serve evangelical theological educators in Europe and beyond.

In the realization of training the theological educators we are confronted with several challenges. Some of them shall be outlined in the following section.

Challenges of Training Evangelical Theological Educators

Why should (evangelical) theological education develop means for the training of their faculty and leadership in education and educational management? Are there not many opportunities “out there” in the arena of secular higher education – opportunities of high quality drawing from the rich recourses of social sciences, education and management? Yes – but! Yes, when it comes to the educational and managerial training of faculty and school leadership, (evangelical) theological educators are well advised to learn from the educational sciences (pedagogy, learning theories, didactic). And evangelical theological educators will do that. Evangelicals have seldom hesitated to draw from the social sciences if they are convinced that this will serve the advancement of the mission movement and the development of the church. But: precisely

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because evangelicals can become very pragmatic we need approaches to education and educational leadership which are reflected theologically. Is there a unique contribution to education and educational leadership which is informed by our Biblical and theological core convictions? Yes, I think so – and I am therefore convinced that the community of evangelical theological educators needs to provide means and opportunities for the training of its faculty and leadership based on theological core convictions. Let me outline three areas of concern:

**The many things and the main thing**

At the 2003 consultation for evangelical theological educators, organized by the International Council for Evangelical Theological Education ICETE, Miroslav Volf was one of the keynote speakers addressing the many challenges and the main challenge for theological education. Volf deliberately focussed on what he called the “theological” challenge understood as “regrounding theological education in our shared biblical and theological commitments.” Before he outlined this very challenge he quickly introduced the many challenges which can eat up time and energy of those engaged in theological education. His summary is accurate and worth being considered here:

I will say very little about some things that many of you are deeply concerned about. To start with the mundane, I will say nothing, for instance, about financial challenges, which I know must weigh heavily on your shoulders…

I will also leave aside institutional challenges – an issue whose importance is often grossly underrated in Christian circles because of our narrow definitions of spirituality. How do we create healthy patterns of relationships between people which contribute to their flourishing instead of sapping their energies and stifling their creativity? How to ensure institutional longevity… How do we create workable cooperative links with other institutions nationally and internationally?

I will also say nothing about contextual challenges … by “context” I mean here primarily the cluster of processes grouped under the term globalization. How does the kind of knowledge demanded by the globalization processes – knowledge understood primarily as flexible technical know-how oriented toward satisfying immediate needs – relate to the kind of knowledge theological education has traditionally favoured – knowledge understood as wisdom drawn from sacred texts and oriented toward life in light of the world’s ultimate future? … How does one do theology in situation of increasing inequality of power and resources caused by unjust international relations?

One final item on the list of things I will not speak about: pedagogical challenges facing theological education. Starting with the educational processes, to what extent is the mass-education model appropriate for theological education – whether it is teacher or learner oriented – and to what extent should we work with an apprenticeship model? How should we incorporate new technologies into our educational settings?

Already these four points would provide enough material for an entire curriculum for the training of theological educators. But Volf tells us that these are not the main issues. Evangelicals in particular, strong in activism and even pragmatism, need to hear what Volf puts at the centre: “Now, more than ever, theology needs to be reminded of the old adage: the main thing is to keep the main thing the main thing. And the main thing for theology is God.” And later he adds:

Especially today when the world is awhirl with globalization processes, our greatest challenge as theologians and theological educators, is to keep God at the centre of what we do. If we succeed here, we’ll succeed, even if that

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success gets stifled by lack of funds, obstructed by inadequate pedagogy or lack of sensitivity to context, and marred by faulty institutions and warped institutional cultures. If we fail here, we’ll fail utterly, no matter how brilliantly we do as fund-raisers, institution-builders, cultural analysts, and teachers. Why? Some 10 years ago, my own theological teacher, Juergen Moltmann, gave as good a reason as one can give in the opening lines of his key-note address before American Academy of Religion: “It is simple, but true, to say that theology has only one, single problem: God. We are theologians for the sake of God. God is our dignity. God is our agony. God is our hope.” We theologians are either like Moses, ascending the mount Horeb to meet with God, or we are no theologians at all.

This means that the training of theological educators shall not be caught up in the practices and pragmatics of finances, institutions, context, and pedagogy. It has first of all to be concerned with its theological core – not just with the content of bible of theology, with, to use Volf’s phrase again, the “love and knowledge of God”. I am happy to see that some of the research projects on evangelical theological education I am aware of do not only deal with empirical inquiries and the application of social science theories, but with what can be called a theology of theological education. I am also happy to see students doing research and writing papers on spiritual formation in and through theological education, because only as we achieve a high level of integration of the academic and the existential we succeed in what Volf calls for: To keep the main thing the main thing.

With this I do not imply that the finances, institutions, context, and pedagogy are not areas where substantial educational efforts are needed. But these are items of ‘second order’ which must be centred in the ‘main thing’.

Fitness for purpose – but fit for what?

This immediately leads to a second challenge: The formula fitness for purpose has become a key phrase in the definition of quality in education. This formula shifts the focus from input-orientation to output-orientation, from content and knowledge to skills and competences, from teacher-centeredness to learner-centeredness – and even more: from teaching to learning.

This is not the place for a thorough discussion of the underlying issues of this paradigmatic shift in the philosophy of education, especially the tension between what in the German language is called Bildung and Ausbildung. I am firmly convinced that the two – education and vocational training – must be integrated in order to reach fitness for purpose.

But how do we define fitness for purpose? One key term is competence-orientation. Competence-oriented education calls for a precise definition of the desired output competences. In view of pastoral and missionary work the lists of competences normally used for curriculum development cover the practical skills a pastor or missionary needs in order to perform effectively in his or her ministry. Such lists of professional competences are usually supplemented by a catalogue of so called key competences. Such generic competences are pre-defined in lists such as the so called Dublin Descriptors for European Higher Education in Europe. The EEAA has integrated this list of generic competences into its standards.

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16 The concept fitness for purpose has been criticized for being too marked-driven looking only at the success of learning (i.e. productivity of the employee) without critical evaluation of the purpose itself. Therefore the term fitness OF purpose has been added. I will not enter this discussion here.


18 EEAA Manual, Fourth Edition, 4.3. The Dublin Descriptors have been further developed in the so called ‘Tuning’ process of the EU (http://tuning.unideusto.org/tuningeu), and adapted to theological education by the EEAA.
While the definition of graduate profiles as *fitness for purpose* and thereof the deduction of desired learning outcomes as *competences* are very helpful tools for curriculum development and handy criteria for assessment and quality management, there are underlying questions which must be asked and answered in the training of theological educators: Who defines what *fitness for purpose* is? Who defines the desired and needed *output competencies*? If we look for help only through the lenses of empirical research and social science theory we will end up with a purely functional and pragmatic notion of *fitness* and *competence*.

More foundational Biblical and theological queries make us aware of some deficiencies in some of the often used definitions of *fitness for purpose* and many lists of *competencies*. I mention only one aspect which concerns me:

The concepts *fitness for purpose* and *competence* imply capability. This is what the secular notion of *fitness for purpose* suggests: Graduates are capable to do what later employers expect from them in order to be successful in the workplace. However, if the “workplace” is the church in mission, the kingdom of God, the participation in the *mission Dei*, then we – as theologians – know that “not being able to do it” is not only a humbling experience we make but a desired competence of Christian workers.\(^{19}\) How a person, serving in Christian ministries, is aware of and copes with his/her limitations, helplessness, neediness, incapability, and dependence must be one of the top items on any list of key competences in theological education. Beyond all necessary and useful competences and skills in theological education we should never forget that the Biblical concept of ‘grace’ and the very notion of ‘charisma’ suggest that it is neither our knowledge nor our capability which generate God’s reign and produce the transformation of individuals and communities.

*From the transmission of theology to the art of theologizing*

I talked about the formula *fitness for purpose* earlier and I questioned some of the existing lists of *outcome-competencies* used in theological education. There is another key competence which I desperately miss in evangelical theological education: It is the competence to *theologize*. It is neither sufficiently covered by definitions like “knowing the Bible and the theological foundations”, nor by the generic competences given by the *Dublin Descriptors*. My thesis is that the *competence to theologize* belongs at the top of the list of desired output competences in theological education – and there are many arguments which support this thesis:

Martin Kähler’s dictum “Mission is the mother of theology” is a good point of departure.\(^{20}\) Kähler pointed to the fact (1899 and 1908!) that the church in mission over and over again encounters new situations which provoke questions which have never been asked before and which call for answers which are not available in the treasure of the tradition. This implies that theological education which only focuses on the transmission of the treasures of the past does not equip students adequately for ministries in the church in mission. Such education does not measure up to the standard *fitness for purpose*. One key competence is missing: The competence to theologize in continually new contexts, answering questions which have never been asked before and which call for answers which have never been given before.

What Kähler, and many others, have suggested is more than just a fashion trend of the last one hundred years. It is what we observe in the Bible itself. As God’s people moves through history, time and again new situations provoke new questions which call for fresh theology. Form the prophets of the Old Testament to Jesus and the Apostle of the New Testament; they all theologized, challenged by new issues coming up in

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\(^{19}\) Cf. the parable of the growing seed Mark 4:26-29.

\(^{20}\) For a broader discussion of this topic (including bibliographical references) see Bernhard Ott, *Handbuch Theologische Ausbildung* (Wuppertal: Brockhaus, 2007), 152-154; 171-177. In the concluding section of my dissertation I argued that theological education which does not equip students to theologize is an inadequate preparation for meaningful ministry in trans-cultural and missional contexts (Ott, *Beyond Fragmentation*, 294-316).
new situations. They went beyond the mere repetition of the tradition and even beyond the mere application of that tradition. They created new theology. The Apostle Paul is an outstanding example: As the church moved beyond the Jewish community in the Non-Jewish world, questions came up which had never been asked before.

Evangelical theological education has traditionally been strong in the faithful transmission of orthodox theology. It used to be less proficient in what can be called doing theology or theologizing. We have to learn it! And first of all: theological educators have to learn it.

However we ought to refrain from the idea that this is only a quick matter of certain skills and techniques. The craft of theologizing can only be learned deeply embedded in a culture which supports communal discernment at every level. Such a culture comprises at its centre guiding core convictions which support and model theologizing in community. Beyond this, such a culture builds up a set of virtues and attitudes necessary for enquiry in community. And finally, at the surface level, we need a corresponding repertoire of learning arrangements, activities, tools and methods. This is what needs to be taught and learned in the training of theological educators.

**Conclusion**

In this paper I have argued that we need to invest in the training of theological educators – not only in the classical subjects of Bible, history, theology and ministerial practice, but in education and educational leadership. Good theological educators are not only good theologians but also good educators. The community of evangelical theological educators represented in the International Council for Evangelical Theological Education (ICETE) and its regional member associations is committed to the educational training of theological educators. Concentrating on Europe, we observe many encouraging projects and initiatives emerging in recent years. On this journey we are confronted with serious challenges. Beyond motivation (do the schools see the need), resources (time, finances, staff), languages (think of the many languages spoken in Europe), and curricular structures, we have to face one central challenge: Will we achieve in training faculty and educational leadership by drawing not only uncritically from the rich resources of the educational and the managerial sciences but by using these resources in a way which is congruent with our Biblical and theological core convictions.

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The word, evangelical, has had a variety of meanings. Originally, evangelical referred to the various Lutheran churches of Germany. In England, the term referred to the Protestant wing of the Church of England, and by the end of the eighteenth century, to those who supported the revival and particularly the home and foreign missionary movement. In nineteenth century America, evangelical was a synonym for those mainstream churches that supported revivalism and missions, similar to ecumenical in the twentieth century. After 1940, Protestant conservatives increasingly applied the term to a mosaic of churches and organizations that included Pentecostal, fundamentalist, and holiness groups. Strong doctrines of Biblical authority and substitutionary atonement, and emphases on conversion and Christian activism characterize most members of these groups. In addition to church membership, many evangelicals participate in a patchwork of trans-denominational, parachurch and missionary organizations. Many evangelical bodies, but not all, are members of the National Association of Evangelicals.

Origins

Present-day evangelical theological education begins with the great divide between the moderate and liberal Christians and their more conservative counterparts in the early twentieth century. Prior to that division, most American Protestants shared a common heritage that stressed individualism, a naïve Biblicism, activism, foreign missions, and an openness to American culture. As the controversy deepened, however, the conservative side formalized its position around a consistent supernaturalism, reflected in belief in biblical inerrancy and, to a lesser extent, dispensational hermeneutics. In contrast, the liberal side stressed the church’s social witness, the historical and critical study of the Bible, and a general openness to high culture, including science and the humanities. When the controversy ended, although the conservatives retained considerable local influence, their opponents controlled the leading seminaries with the exception of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and Princeton as well as the denominational and ecumenical bureaucracies. Despite the fact that the new majorities legitimated their victory by appealing to the American values of toleration and fair play, the victors excluded their conservative opponents from leadership once they secured control. As successive generations of conservatives experienced marginalization, they inherited and renewed the bitterness of the first generation.

The two conservative powerhouse seminaries did not escape the battle unscathed. Princeton Theological Seminary was the focal point of a major Presbyterian battle that moved the school progressively into the Presbyterian mainstream under Presidents J. Ross Stevenson (1914-1936) and John A. Mackay (1936-1959). Embittered conservatives, led by J. Gresham Machen, founded their own seminary, Westminster, which in turn suffered division when its dispensationalist supporters withdrew to found Faith Theological Seminary. Westminster, of course, was never alone in its advocacy of traditional Reformed theology. James Oliver Buswell, President of Wheaton College, located near Chicago, Illinois, supported J. Gresham Machen when he left the Presbyterian Church. Wheaton was known as the “West Point of Evangelicalism,” because so many evangelical leaders were its graduates. Although operating from a more continental Reformed basis, Calvin College, which added a Seminary in the 1920s, held to a similar Reformed position.
Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville and its new rival, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, were also the subjects of major theological assaults in the 1920s. The major issue was the historicity of Genesis, a popular issue at the time. Although the conservative wing of the convention won strong victories, the seminaries escaped without serious disruption. E. Y. Mullins, the scholarly President of Southern and Lee Scarborough, his more revivalist counterpart at Southwestern, managed to broker a theological compromise, the 1926 Baptist Faith and Message, that maintained a very high doctrine of Scripture without either the dispensationalist rigor of a Faith Seminary or the doctrinaire inerrancy of Westminster. In many ways, this Southern Baptist version of evangelicalism continued earlier nineteenth century motifs. However, the Southern Baptist story was interwoven with the story of other conservatives and often both impacted that story and was impacted by it. William Bell Riley and many Northern Baptist Conservatives, for example, were graduates of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, and a moderate/conservative battle in the 1980s transformed Southern Baptist seminaries.

The example of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary had great influence on Baptists in the North. Battles over the then Baptist University of Chicago convinced many Midwestern Baptists that they needed a new and more conservative school to train their ministers. In 1913 they established Northern Baptist Theological Seminary. The theological basis of the school was similar to that of Southern and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and drew upon the New Hampshire Confession of Faith, the basis of the 1926 Baptist Faith and Message. Northern’s broad evangelicalism was an important precedent for those who formed the National Association of Evangelicals. Interestingly, the first four editors of Christianity Today were graduates of Northern. The story of Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary, opened in 1925, is similar. In many ways, the school was a protest against Crozer Theological Seminary. Eastern retained much of the nineteenth century passion for home and foreign missions and religious education and had a significant number of women enrolled in its programs. Gordon had a significant history as a missionary training school before the conservative/ liberal battles of the 1920s. These battles forced Gordon to declare itself, and the school developed as a counter to more liberal Newton. Like Northern, it was an important later New Evangelical seedbed with many neo-evangelical leaders serving on its faculty, including Carl F. Henry and E. J. Carnell.

The Bible Schools
In the 1920s and for some years thereafter, conservatives looked to Bible schools and colleges for much of their leadership. The Bible schools developed to serve the expanding demand for church workers that followed the 1870s and 1880s Moody revivals. During this period, the demand for workers in home and foreign missions rose dramatically as the American churches sought to serve both their own cities and to further their ministries abroad. Women benefited from this new missionary excitement. They were the majority of Christian workers at home and abroad, and some of the earliest missionary training schools had an exclusively female student body.

Many of those who worked with Dwight L. Moody, including C. I. Schofield and Lewis Sperry Chafer, were dispensationalists. In addition, the influential English missionary pioneer, Hudson Taylor, was a member of this same circle as was A. J. Gordon, a Boston pastor and missionary leader. The dispensational movement had two primary attractions. First, the belief that Christ was preparing to come again for his saints, the Rapture, as well as the more classical belief in the Second Coming, implied that missionaries be sent abroad now. The time was short. Second, as dispensationalists learned at the Niagara Bible Conferences and similar events, the system was easy to teach. They presented its primary conclusions as a series of explanatory notes to the Bible. C.I. Schofield’s Schofield Reference Bible, published by Oxford University Press (1909, 1917, 1967), summarized the dispensational system in the form of notes on the Biblical text. Dispensational teachers could, consequently, present their work, not as theology, but as

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biblical exposition. Early Bible schools, such as Moody Bible Institute, the Bible Institute of Los Angeles, and the Philadelphia School of the Bible, hence, advertised that their teachers taught every subject from the Bible.

The comparatively simple and uniform nature of dispensationalism might suggest that dispensationalism was a semi-confessional movement. This was not the case. Some dispensationalists, such as Robert C. McQuilkin of Columbia (S.C.) Bible College and John R. Rice, believed that the urgency of the moment required a strict separation of Bible believers, not only from the liberal churches, but also from those who refused such separation. Others, while agreeing that separation from liberal churches was a necessity, refused to break fellowship with fellow conservatives who stayed in the denominations. A third party was composed of those who did not endorse separation at all. William Bell Riley of the Northwest Bible School (to which he added a college and a seminary), although a combative member of the Northern Baptist Convention and a founder of the World Christian Fundamentalist Association, refused to leave his denomination until shortly before his death. The ecclesiastical issue dogged American evangelicals until the battle over the ecumenical character of the Billy Graham crusades exposed the deep divisions among American conservatives.

Although some schools, including Lewis Sperry Chafer’s Dallas Theological Seminary and Carl McIntyre’s Faith Theological Seminary included dispensationalism in their confessional documents, most conservative seminaries only required adherence to a vague pre-millennial eschatology. Nonetheless, dispensationalism was strongly represented in evangelical schools.

**Beyond Fundamentalism: The New Evangelicals**

Conservative theological education entered a new phrase following the Second World War. To conservatives, the War and its aftermath demonstrated the futility of humanism and western society’s need for a firm religious foundation. The Communist conquest of Eastern Europe, which inspired a popular American anti-Communist movement, moved a mark of the Old Religious Right from the wings to center stage. The new evangelicalism was represented intellectually by such theologians as Carl F. H. Henry and Edward J. Carnell, ecclesiastically by such innovative pastors as Harold Ockenga, one of the founders of the National Association of Evangelicals (1942), and socially and politically, by Billy Graham, whose revivals attracted large crowds in all major American cities. The New Evangelicals wanted to leave the stringency of the old fundamentalism behind them and to engage the present social and political situation. Their journal, *Christianity Today*, sought to provide a public voice for conservative Christianity similar to that provided by the liberal *Christian Century*. Like the *Century*, *Christianity Today* periodically reported on the seminaries and their leadership.

This influential group of leaders quickly staked out new territory, founding and sustaining Fuller Seminary (1947), leading a national revival, beginning with Graham’s influential 1949 campaign in Los Angeles, and making significant inroads into the rapidly expanding world of television and radio. Southern Baptists, historically strong in the southern portions of such states as Illinois and Indiana, rapidly expanded in the west, especially, in California. Significantly, evangelical schools, including Fuller, Northern, and Eastern, applied for and received American Association of Theological Schools accreditation in the 1950s, laying the foundations for other evangelical schools to follow in the 1960s and the 1970s. In 1947, the Bible colleges began their own accrediting organization. New Evangelicals also had significant impact on Gordon, which became Gordon-Conwell in 1967, and on Trinity Evangelical Seminary, a small denominational school in Illinois, that grew to become one of the nation’s largest seminaries.

The New Evangelicals did not speak for all conservative Christians. Carl McIntyre and other more militant conservatives established the American Council of Churches in 1941 on firmly fundamentalist principles, and such stalwarts of the conservative movement as Bob Jones, Senior and Junior-- the leaders...
of the world’s most unusual college—were not at home in the new movement. The tension between the new evangelicals and their opponents came to a head in 1957 when Billy Graham cooperated with liberal churches in his New York crusade. Despite efforts to hold the conservatives together, they divided in the first of a long series of boundary disputes that continued into the new millennium.

**Battles Over the Bible**

Perhaps the most disruptive struggles were the battles over Biblical inerrancy that rocked the evangelical world in the 1970s and 1980s. During the 1960s, disputes over the nature of biblical authority had begun to surface in different parts of the evangelical world. Among Southern Baptists, for example, controversy raged around Ralph Elliot and his study, the *Meaning of Genesis*, which resulted in Elliot’s dismissal from the recently established Midwestern Baptist Seminary in 1963. Shortly thereafter, an extended dispute over the new Boardman Commentary resulted in the withdrawal of the first volume, *Genesis*, in 1970. A similar controversy over biblical authority rocked the Lutheran Church, Missouri Synod, and resulted in 45 out of 50 of the professors in its flagship school, Concordia, leaving that institution. Among Northern evangelicals, the debate focused on Fuller Seminary. When David Hubbard became President in 1963, some critics believed that some professors, including Dan Fuller and Paul Jewett, had drifted from its original confession of faith. The charges were not new, and the previous President, Harold Ockenga, had privately warned some faculty members that they might be in violation of the confession of faith. In 1964, Harold Lindsell and Gleason Archer left Fuller over the Biblical issue, and the leading New Evangelicals, including Harold Ockenga, called a conference in 1966 at Wenham, Massachusetts to contain the dispute. It was unsuccessful, and David Hubbard and C. Davis Weyerhaeuser led the Faculty and Board to modify Fuller’s Statement of Faith. In response, Harold Lindsell published the *Battle for the Bible* (1976) that spread the controversy. At Gordon-Conwell, the debate forced Ramsey Michaels, a highly regarded New Testament scholar, to resign in 1983. The related controversy in the Southern Baptist Convention resulted in an almost complete change in the denomination’s leadership and a strong shift towards ultra-conservatism.

The controversy threatened to destroy many evangelical gains. In an attempt to find some stability for the movement, noted evangelicals established the International Council on Biblical Inerrancy. In its meeting in 1978, this body adopted the Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy, which three hundred leading evangelical theologians signed, including the most important representatives of the original New Evangelical movement. The Chicago Statement did not end the controversy, of course, and – in some evangelical communities – may have further enflamed passions. For good or ill, the issue of inerrancy has continued to disrupt evangelical seminaries.

Some measure of healing came from an unlikely conjunction of events. Throughout the 1970s, evangelicals increasingly became concerned about public policy issues, especially those related to family life. This was both expected and surprising. Surprising in that many evangelicals had resolutely stood apart from social action, as contrasted with social service. Yet, it should have been expected. Before the 1970s, American Christians had been almost unanimously vocal about family issues and had strongly advocated laws and customs protecting family life. Social Gospel advocate, Walter Rauschenbusch, had cited such laws as evidence that Christianization had advanced in the United States. Political activism led to new alliances, and evangelical Christians found themselves politically allied with Catholics. This has educational consequences. By the 1990s, both evangelical and Catholic faculties acknowledged their alliance, and evangelicals looked to Notre Dame for a model for their own institutions and as a source of Ph. D. graduates for their faculties.
Missions

The conservative victory on the mission field further united battling evangelicals. In the first half of the twentieth century, the American missionary movement, which had sustained the mainstream churches for almost one hundred fifty years, lost its hold on their imaginations. Beginning with the Hocking Report in 1932, the mainline churches rethought their commitment to the evangelization of the world. At first, denominational leaders replaced the traditional church planting ministries with a myriad of educational and social initiatives, but by the 1960s, even this Christian humanitarianism had waned. The 1968 meeting of the World Council of Churches in Uppsala marked the retreat of the mainstream as American and western churches recognized the end of colonialism and progressively withdrew from work abroad.

Perhaps, to their own surprise, American evangelicals found themselves the custodians of America’s world missionary effort. Conservative Christians had long been active abroad. During the thirties and forties, they established a number of missionary societies, often based on the faith principle that required each missionary to raise his or her own support. The post-war prosperity of the South encouraged Southern Baptists, whose earlier missionary efforts had been spirited but poorly financed, to create new world in Africa and Asia. The Lausanne Conference (1974), financed in part by Billy Graham and led by New Evangelical theologians, marked evangelicalism prominence on the mission field, and, significantly, encouraged cooperative thought and action throughout the world. World Vision, founded in 1950, grew to become one of the largest Christian philanthropies.

Evangelical seminaries passionately embraced the missionary movement. Southern Baptist seminaries, historically closely related to their denomination’s programs abroad, expanded their offerings and faculties, a trend that continued after the conservative takeover. Among Northern Evangelicals, Fuller assumed an important position of leadership with its establishment of the School of Missions and Church Growth in 1965. The original leader of this new enterprise was Donald A. McGarvan, a former missionary to India, who had developed an anthropological approach to evangelization that he called Church Growth. What made McGarvan controversial in mainstream circles was his resolute belief that the purpose of missions was to make converts. The schools’ interest in the empirical study of mission contributed to the controversy over Peter Wagner and John Wimber’s course, Signs and Wonders, that drew on the experience of Pentecostal missionaries of the value of miracles in evangelization. Although the Fuller administration discontinued the original course, some of the emphases continued. Fuller established its School of Psychology the same year, another foray into applied social science.

Trinity Evangelical Seminary and Gordon-Conwell also established substantial programs in missiology. Interestingly enough, the later school formed a partnership with Methodist Boston University to develop a Th.D. in missions to complement its Doctor of Ministry. Partly as a result of evangelical resistance to the initial globalization proposal, the Association of Theological Schools adopted a standard related to Globalization that included traditional missionary goals and objectives. With this understanding, the standard became binding on all member schools. Despite anti-Islamic statements by some evangelical leaders, the emphasis on missions led some evangelical schools, including Fuller, to develop an emphasis on Islamic studies. The United States government recognized the quality of Fuller’s program with a grant of 1,000,000 in 2003 to promote better understanding between Islamic citizens and other Americans.

Poverty and Innovation

Although evangelical seminaries grew rapidly after 1960 and by 2010 enrolled the majority of Protestant seminarians, most remained poorly endowed. The reoccurring financial crises that hit all American seminaries from 1960 to 2010, consequently, affected evangelical schools more immediately than their mainstream counterparts. As a consequence, evangelicals led in the development of new forms of theological education, such as extension centers and distance (computer) education. The success of these
programs has inspired some evangelical schools to seek partnerships with theological schools abroad. Thus, Fuller Seminary developed a partnership with the Saint Petersburg Theological Academy in 1998. Online courses are also beginning made available to students abroad. If these seminaries continue their present trajectory, they may become World Christian institutions with students, graduates, and resources around the world.

**Bibliography**


MISSIOLOGICAL AND THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES
ON EVANGELICAL THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION IN AFRICA

Bill Houston

Setting the Scene
Most seminaries in Africa operate in the context of poverty. The students and their churches are cash strapped. Some have survived horrible protracted wars (Angola, Mozambique, Sierra Leone, Liberia to name a few) and have suffered the resultant destruction of infrastructure and services. Some still operate in very unstable environments such as Chad, Sudan and the DRC for example. Zimbabwe is the prime example of a basket case economy where a seminary had to cope with run away inflation. Many are in countries with sporadic and unreliable electricity supplies. One seminary in Kenya became an instant refugee camp in January during the post election factional fighting. Most have problems with poor internet connectivity, especially in the lack of bandwidth. Doing business, even importing books, becomes an uphill struggle with red tape and sticky fingered officials! Travel is often difficult and very expensive. One recognizes that running a tertiary level educational institution is very stressful and very challenging. It is for these reasons that I have the utmost admiration for those exercising leadership in these seminaries. They are heroes.

There are hundreds of bible schools and lay training programs at certificate level, in both formal and non formal modes of education. This paper will concentrate on degree conferring, accredited seminaries in the evangelical stream of theology that are located in sub-Saharan Africa.

With these introductory remarks behind us let us examine this sector of theological education from a missiological perspective.

Trends and Challenges

Self governing
There has been a massive change over the past decade or two with respect to the ownership, leadership and governance of evangelical seminaries. This was a long time in coming. Mission founded national churches gained their independence in the wake of the wave of ‘uhuru’ over 40 years ago but mission agencies were able to retain control of seminaries for a lot longer because of the high cost of running them and the lack of suitably qualified national lecturers. Today, only one of the 34 Overseas Council partner seminaries is headed by an expatriate. All the rest have nationals as principals. All of them have governing councils made up of nationals. This has had some liberating consequences. They have been free to seek out new relationships with other like minded seminaries in the region and they have found the space to begin to change their curriculums. The psychological ownership of the seminary is now clearly vested with Africans. On the negative side, in many cases the Boards are problematic because people are appointed who do not have the skills to add value to the seminary.

Self supporting
With the independence of the seminaries has come the loss of easy funding from Western mission agencies. This might be a blessing in disguise in the long run as it is forcing seminaries to break their dependency mode of thinking. There is always a constant tension between viability and dependency.
Charity often destroys dignity\(^1\) and so Overseas Council International has worked hard to help partner seminaries to become more self sufficient from local sources, especially with respect to the operating budget. There will be need for overseas help for capital projects for many years to come. The locally sourced share of the income budget varies from 0.5% (Zimbabwe) to 90% with the average being around 45 to 50%.

New and creative ways are being found to raise supplementary income. Some examples are: To build and rent out houses to Christian organizations. Build an office block for rental income. Open a cyber café at the gate of the seminary. Operate a junior school for profit. Plant two acres of bananas for sale on the open market. Have a contract with the government to train the chaplains of the army, police and prison services.

In these two aspects evangelical colleges are increasingly fulfilling two of Henry Venn’s ‘Three self principles’. His third principle, that of being ‘self propagating’, is largely inapplicable because seminaries are not meant to aggressively replicate themselves. I would be so bold however, as to add a fourth dimension and that is to be ‘self theologising’. In as much as Venn’s three self formulae addressed the issue of dependency of the third world church on the West, so too this fourth dimension also addresses an aspect of dependency. This time it is the question of curriculum content and learning materials.

\textit{Self theologising}

Most of the evangelical seminaries have seen themselves as being teaching institutions, faithfully transmitting the scholarship of the West. The libraries are generally adequate, probably averaging around 20000 volumes, although Francophone and Luzophone seminaries have greater difficulty sourcing theological texts. The common weakness is, however, in journal holdings. This is largely due to the cost of ordering and maintaining a journal series. Overseas Council is working on this problem by investigating taking a group license to e-journals on behalf of the 100 partner seminaries. The lack of journals means that lecturers will eventually fall behind in their scholarship and in the trends and current debates.

An important factor that militates against research is the fact that the brightest and most qualified lecturers tend to end up in administrative positions and have to multi task, which leaves little time for research. Much more needs to be done to engender a culture of research in our partner seminaries.

Another factor is that at this stage of development many lecturers are expanding their energy to obtain higher degrees and have no time left to publish. But we are on the cusp of change here and in the next decade we will see the production of new knowledge that finds the light of day in books and journal articles. The complaint that text books are too Eurocentric and do not address African realities is being addressed. In January 2009, a training workshop was organized in Kenya for first time aspirant writers. Fifteen people attended who were to write on African related subjects such as iLobola (bride price), rights of passage, conflict in the DRC, ministry to refugees, sickness and dying, childhood in Africa and the like. A second writer’s workshop will take place in West Africa in 2010. Theological reflection on issues confronting the church has been part of the mission of the church in all situations and down the ages. Africans need therefore to do their own theologizing by relating the Text to their context. David Bosch, quoting Kahler writes that ‘Mission is the mother of theology.’ (Bosch 1991:489). Theology has always developed as the church crossed frontiers with the gospel. The theological enterprise needs to enable the church better fulfill its missionary task. This requires a strong link of the seminary with the faith community and raises the question as to the primary point of reference for seminaries: Is it the academy or the faith community?


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A sub text in this section relates to the use of overseas lecturers. The marked decline in the number of overseas lecturers has been offset by the rise in the number of properly qualified African faculty members who have at least a masters degree or doctorate. Of course there is the balancing act of having to find the salary of national staff as against the free services of externally supported missionaries. National lecturers are however better placed to address most contextual issues with insider knowledge of the problems. But there is another issue here. It is the relationship between local and contextual theologies and the universal body of theological and historical truths that are held in common by all Christians.

**Context and curriculum**

The curriculums were, for the most part, deposits left behind from the mission enterprise. Most curriculums bore little relationship to African realities. In 2004 I organized a conference in South Africa on HIV/AIDS and the Curriculum. Ninety seven people attended from 40 bible colleges and seminaries from 19 different African countries. Of these only four or five had any courses on HIV/AIDS! Mercifully things are changing. In fact two seminaries now offer masters degrees in the subject. Courses on AIDS, peacemaking, development studies, leadership, holistic child development and the like are being incorporated into curriculums today. One subject that is important but that is being studiously avoided is that of gender studies. There is still a long way to go before we can say that the training given to pastors is adequately preparing them to work in the context of African realities.

One challenge that is emerging is the realization that pastors also need to be given income earning skills because so many churches do not provide a livable wage. The context of poverty is challenging the assumed Western model of the full time paid clergy. Should seminaries therefore include marketable job skills in their training programmes? There is another related assumption concerns the professionalization of the clergy who are the ones who do all the work and the resulting marginalization of the laity. A partner seminary in western Kenya currently trains teachers during their school holidays. They already have some tertiary training and are already in leadership positions in their churches but now they are being given the necessary theological training to enhance their contribution to the local church. But they will not seek ordination. The question is thus how to design theological education that serves the whole people of God.

Another fundamental question is ‘What should be taught?’ If seminaries exist to serve the church then the competencies to be produced must relate to the nature of the ministry. Curriculums need to be constructed, first by identifying the desired outcomes, then, secondarily, to construct the curriculums and learning experiences that will achieve those outcomes. The key question to ask is ‘what competencies are needed to be an effective minister in this context?’

**Accreditation and excellence**

In South Africa, we are only too aware of the law requiring registration with the South African Qualifications Authority and accreditation by the Council on Higher Education. In most African countries however, the governments have shown no interest in theological education. To fill this gap an organization called ACTEA (the Accrediting Council for Theological Education in Africa), a subsection of the World Evangelical Fellowship, has done sterling work for 30 years. It has built up a credible reputation so that graduates from ACTEA accredited seminaries are given recognition when applying to South African universities for further studies. The accreditation process is very thorough – a team of 5 people visit a seminary for 5 days and investigate the seminary under 5 headings. The great benefit is that a self reflective culture with respect to quality assurance is inculcated in the seminary through the Self Evaluation Review.

There is however, a new discernable trend in which national governments are becoming more involved in the accreditation of theological education. Ghana, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Kenya are a few examples. In time, I believe more will follow suit. While there are benefits to government accreditation, there is also the danger of political interference or political favouritism that could undermine the validity of the process.

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**Part III: Theological Education from Denominational and Confessional Perspectives**
Models and modes

The model of theological education we have inherited is that of the full time residential student. This model is under pressure because of the high cost of tuition and accommodation coupled to the loss of income for the duration of studies. The growth of the South African Theological Seminary (SATS), as an electronically based seminary, to 4300 students in 10 years is testimony to this. The rapid development of electronic delivery systems will transform the method of delivery in time to come. Virtual interactive class rooms are possible. The real time interactive video lecture is coming. Africa will lag behind the rest of the world due to infrastructural problems, but change will come. Newspapers are in decline in the West because of access to online news. Both colleges and newspapers are in the business of creating and communicating information. Paradoxically, both are threatened by the way technology has made that easier than ever before. New technology will be a powerful driver of change in theological education.

In the west, degree level seminaries too easily become elitist and lose touch with lower level schools. A new model is emerging in Africa whereby higher level seminaries help to resource lower level bible colleges. Mekana Yesus Theological College in Addis Ababa is a case in point. It is at the apex of the pyramid, but it helps 4 lower level regional colleges which, in turn, help 12 lower level local colleges. In Mozambique the Nazarene seminary has only 30 full time students but it overseas lower level lay training programs for 1000 people in 50 extension sites. One seminary in Kenya runs classes for 60 teachers during the school holidays for people who are already in ministry and leadership positions in their local churches. Many seminaries hold in-service training events for pastors. A number of recent seminars in Chad, Senegal, and Cote d’Ivoire have been around the subject of HIV/AIDS. Three seminaries are experimenting with evening classes for young professionals.

Models of distributed education are appearing. It might be by extension campuses where the lecturer goes to another town, or by distance learning (text based or electronic), or by short course residencies. Whatever the case, it is clear that the mode, time and place of delivery is changing.

Church or society

A question today in the minds of at least a dozen seminaries is that of becoming a Christian University. This raises numerous questions about the nature and purpose of theological studies. It begs the question as to what constitutes a ‘Christian university’? Secular society needs good programs in leadership studies, business studies, computer studies, even medical studies and the like. This is self evident. But should the seminary change to become the vehicle to meet that need? The danger here is that the rapid growth in numbers of students enrolling for these other courses will swamp the theological faculty and deflect it from its original purpose to serve the church.

This, in turn, raises a fundamental missiological question as to the mission of the church in the world. Much church life is, well, too churchy! The church does need to become involved in a redemptive way in the life and needs of broader society. Theological colleges have trained ministers for this rather cloistered church oriented model of ministry. The debate is whether the curriculum should be broadened to equip ministers to deal with poverty, aids and conflict as an expression of the ministry of a local church, or whether the seminary should be training Christians for ‘secular’ work but as witnesses as salt and light in society. This raises the missiological debate as to whether God works directly in the world or mainly through the church. My position however, is that the usual vehicle for expressing the Missio Dei is the church despite all its faults. For mission to be Christian it needs to be done in the name of Christ and in the power of the Holy Spirit to the glory of God.

Competition or co-operation

Jesus’ prayer in John 17 was ‘that they may be one, so that the world may believe’. This link between unity and mission was a theological imperative driving the ecumenical movement. The important evangelical
statement, the Lausanne Covenant of 1974 similarly calls for evangelicals to cooperate in its paragraph 7. Even though evangelicals have historically been wary of the ecumenical movement, there has always been an informal ecumenism which was expressed through many joint ventures and faith mission structures. In the seminaries there is an informal mixing of students from many different denominations. Some seminaries are owned jointly by several denominations. Some are owned by the national evangelical fellowships. Two were founded by the continental Association of Evangelicals in Africa. Even those that belong to a single denomination have up to 40% of their students from other denominational backgrounds. The Overseas Council’s annual ‘Institutes of Excellence’ brings the leaders of the seminaries together and has had the effect of building relationships between previously isolated theological institutions.

The more difficult point at issue is to find inter seminary cooperation, but there are a few notable examples. The Francophone grouping of 34 seminaries and bible colleges has adopted a common core curriculum and they share lecturers to plug gaps in each others faculty needs. The Ethiopian Graduate School of Theology was jointly sponsored by three agencies rather than having each one start its own graduate school. In Maputo the Nazarenes and the Assembly of God seminaries are jointly sponsoring a master’s degree program. Much more could be done however, even if it is sharing library resources through a common data base. The Lausanne Covenant rightly states ‘We confess that our testimony has sometimes been marred by sinful individualism and needless competition’.

If this paper had been written from the perspective of education, some other important concerns would have been addressed. Many key books have been written analyzing theological education in all its many facets. They reflect the fact that there is a lot of soul searching going on in theological education because there seems to be deep dissatisfaction with the current model. While these debates are not of much concern yet in Africa, they will arise sooner rather than later:

1. Much classroom practice is in the form of the ‘banking method’ as if Paulo Freire had not existed, in negation of the large body of literature on adult education.
2. The curriculums are still organized around specializations of subjects but the problems to be faced in the ministry do not come as ‘old testament’ or ‘systematic theology’ but as life related whole units that need to be solved on an interdisciplinary basis. More use of problem based learning and case studies would serve this end well. In practice most curriculums are overcrowded with content, courses and programs and the focus is on the transference of information.
3. Evangelical seminaries all affirm the importance of an holistic education that includes head, hands and heart. In practice most effort goes into the academic component because that is more easily assessed. There is need for the other two domains to receive intentional education design in both learning experiences and assessment.
4. Evangelical theological education has lacked a theology of education with the result that it has followed the trends in society and become captive to the spirit of the age which has to date been the rationalistic enlightenment paradigm.

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In summary

In summary then let me make some general concluding statements:

- Theological education in the evangelical sector of the church is in the state of rapid change. It is both exciting and daunting. Fundamental questions are being asked as to what should be taught, where should it be taught, who should be taught and how should it be taught?
- Faculty qualifications are improving. This needs to follow through to research and publications. There is today less dependence on lecturers from the West because nationals can now do the job.
- The seminaries still have close links to denominations and the faith community. They have not spun off into some independent orbit.
- New modes of delivery will become apparent in the next decade, be it electronic or paper based distance learning, extension courses, mixed mode block release. The full time residential model will have to change.
- If “Mission is the mother of theology”, as I believe it is, then the seminaries in Africa need to engage much more with African realities such as poverty, gender, children, climate change, corruption, exploitative leaders, health issues, war and violence, urbanization etc. Notwithstanding the changes in the curriculums to date, much more needs to be done.

Bibliography

I

My topic is “Challenges facing theological education today.” There are many such challenges, some of which are unique to theological education and some of which are common with other educational efforts. Because of constraints on our time tonight and because of the kinds of expertise I bring to this task, I will limit myself to just one type of challenge. I will reflect about theological challenges facing theological education today. In terms of the program conceptualization, I will undertake primarily to “reground theological education in our shared biblical and theological commitments.”

Because I will concentrate on theological challenges I will say very little about some things that many of you are deeply concerned about. To start with the mundane, I will say nothing, for instance, about financial challenges, which I know must weigh heavily on your shoulders. How to put food on students’ tables and pay electricity bills? Where will the money come from for faculty salaries, library books, computers, building maintenance, not to speak of new programs and new facilities? How to survive financially in an economically depressed times when the pressures of globalization are widening the gap between the rich and the poor, not just between nations, but also within them?

I will also leave aside institutional challenges, an issue whose importance is often grossly underrated in Christian circles because of our narrow definitions of spirituality. How do we create healthy patterns of relationships between people which contribute to their flourishing instead of sapping their energies and stifling their creativity? How to ensure institutional longevity, beyond the life-span of a charismatic founder or a particularly gifted visionary? How to rebuild trust and reignite enthusiasm after an institution has been mismanaged for years and its staff mistreated, all in the name of the demands of God’s kingdom? How do we create workable cooperative links with other institutions nationally and internationally?

I will also say nothing about contextual challenges (though much of what I say will be informed by a particular reading of our contemporary contexts). Although there are many contexts and it is not easy to know where one context ends and another begins, by “context” I mean here primarily the cluster of processes grouped under the term globalization. How does the kind of knowledge demanded by the globalization processes – knowledge understood primarily as flexible technical know-how oriented toward satisfying immediate needs – relate to the kind of knowledge theological education has traditionally favored – knowledge understood as wisdom drawn from sacred texts and oriented toward life in light of the world’s ultimate future? How does one negotiate at the educational the interplay between local and global (where “global” tending to stand for culture and institutions which are spreading from the economic center toward the periphery and “local” for the resistances that periphery offers to the center)? How does one do theology in situation of increasing inequality of power and resources caused by unjust international relations?

One final item on the list of things I will not speak about: pedagogical challenges facing theological education. Starting with the educational processes, to what extent is the mass-education model appropriate

\[1\] This paper was originally presented at the International Council for Evangelical Theological Education (ICETE) Consultation for Theological Educators, High Wycombe, UK, on August 18, 2003.
for theological education – whether it is teacher or learner oriented – and to what extent should we work with an apprenticeship model? How should we incorporate new technologies into our educational settings? In terms of educational goals, how do we motivate students to pursue with intellectual seriousness the love of God as well as the knowledge of God and God’s ways with the world? How do we transmit to them a sense that God is a God not only of the big picture but also a God of details – a God who cares about the finest of the fine points of an argument because he is a God of truth or a God who, as Lewis Smedes put it in his recent spiritual memoir, likes “elegant sentences and [is] offended by dangling modifiers” because he is a God of beauty?² Beyond students’ experience in college or seminary, how do we transmit to them habits that sustain a life-long intellectual exploration of love of God and knowledge of God in service of God’s world? How do we help them acquire a conviction that theology is done for an encompassing way of life rather than simply to satisfy intellectual curiosity, earn a living, or dazzle others with brilliance? How do we inculcate a sense that theology, like much of ancient philosophy, is itself a way of life – a life of love and knowledge of God – so that one is a theologian with one’s whole life and not just from 9-5?

II

All these challenges – financial, institutional, contextual, and pedagogical – and many more are the stuff of our daily lives as educators, and no responsible theological education can afford to disregard them. But there is a challenge that comes closer to the core of what we as theological educators are about. For the lack of better term, I’ll call it a theological challenge (by which I mean that it is “strictly theological,” for given that theology concerns the whole way of life, financial, institutional, contextual, and pedagogical challenges are also in their own way theological). Put very simply, the challenge about which I will speak concerns the place of God in theological education and, more broadly, in doing theology.

In global context, this is the most important challenge for theology that claims to be evangelical. A powerful dynamic was unleashed by globalization processes which makes, to quote Karl Marx’ Communist Manifesto, “everything that is solid melt into air” – the whole ways of life are being permanently revolutionized, local customs undermined, established beliefs and practices swept aside, old hierarchies of wealth, power, and prestige torn down and new ones established only to be torn down again. The last thing theology needs is to be pulled into that dynamics, either supporting or opposing it. Instead, it needs a vantage point outside globalization processes so it can properly evaluate them and so it can resist their tendency to claim our whole attention – its implicit claim that “its all about money and power” – and thereby drain us from our proper humanity and, ultimately, destroy creation. Now, more than ever, theology needs to be reminded of the old adage: the main thing is to keep the main thing the main thing. And the main thing for theology is God.

By definition, theology is speech about God. I am familiar, of course, with the influential notion that theology is not speech about God but speech about speech about God. It is a second order discourse, proponents of this view claim, an analysis of the religious language that communities of faith use. I disagree. I prefer to differentiate between religious studies and theology. Religious studies is a second order discourse and therefore has as its object of study, among other things, speech about God. Theology is a first order discourse and therefore has God and God’s relation to the world as its object of study – a God who is not an item of this world and whom we can therefore study only indirectly, through the language used about God. Indeed, properly understood theology does not only study God. Its goal is to promote love of God – the creator, redeemer, and consummator of the world, the source of all truth, goodness, and beauty.

² Lewis Smedes, My God and I. A Spiritual Memoir (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 56.

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Examine, however, what most theologians and theological schools do and you would have never guessed that our primary concern was with God. Calvin’s comment in the Institutes of Christian Religion about Christians’ relation to “heavenly immortality” can be easily transferred to theologians’ relation to God. He writes, “There is not one of us, indeed, who does not wish to seem throughout his life to aspire and strive after heavenly immortality…. But if you examine the plans, the efforts, the deeds, of anyone, there you will find nothing else but earth.”3 Nothing but earth – that is also what you will find in the plans, the efforts, and the deeds of most of us theologians, and that is so even if you disregard for a moment the kind of self-centeredness in our work that we share with other human beings which makes us seek ourselves and our own good in everything we do.

If we are of a more pious bent, the piece of “earth” you will find in our activities is called the Christian church. We work for its numerical growth and institutional stability. In relation to outsiders, we defend the faith; in relation to insiders, we offer a communal ideology. If we are inclined toward social activism, the earth you will find in our activities is the wider world, graced with goodness, truth, and beauty or wrecked by injustice, deception, and violence. We celebrate the world’s virtues as well as analyze causes of the world’s woes (or often make our own social analysis of others) and propose solutions in the light of God’s purposes with the world (or often take over and consecrate the solutions of others). As “church theologians” we serve ecclesiastical communities; as “public theologians” we serve political communities – and God gets left out of the picture, more or less. Of course, we make references to God; we even claim that we are guided by God’s designs for the church and the world. But often, it does not take even a mind trained in the school of the great masters of suspicion taught – Feuerbach, Marx, Nietzsche, and Freud – to notice that we use God to achieve our own ecclesiastical or political ends rather than aligning these ends with God’s purposes.

Especially today when the world is awhirl with globalization processes, our greatest challenge as theologians and theological educators, is to keep God at the center of what we do. If we succeed here, we’ll succeed, even if that success gets stifled by lack of funds, obstructed by inadequate pedagogy or lack of sensitivity to context, and marred by faulty institutions and warped institutional cultures. If we fail here, we’ll fail utterly, no matter how brilliantly we do as fund-raisers, institution-builders, cultural analysts, and teachers. Why? Some 10 years ago, my own theological teacher, Jürgen Moltmann, gave as good a reason as one can give in the opening lines of his keynote address before American Academy of Religion: “It is simple, but true, to say that theology has only one, single problem: God. We are theologians for the sake of God. God is our dignity. God is our agony. God is our hope.”4 We theologians are either like Moses, ascending Mount Horeb to meet with God, or we are no theologians at all.

But what does it mean to keep God at the center of our efforts as theologians? Let me explore one possible answer by looking at the central theological categories of “trust” and “love” and linking them with God. Before I start, two explanatory remarks are in order. First, I will start my analysis “with a piece of earth” – human trust and human love. My purpose, however, is to use them to focus our attention to God. Second, I will start with failure of trust and love. This may suggest that we can know what proper objects of trust and love are by examining the breakdown of trust and love. But that is not the case. Though negatives can prepare us, under certain conditions, for the positive, in and of themselves they do not lead to it. Instead, we understand failures of trust and love properly only in light of their proper object – which takes us back to the centrality of God in our lives and theology.

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III

What do we trust? In what do we believe? My question is not, “What do we say that we trust?” Most Christians will blurt out the right answer without much thinking: we trust God. My question is rather, “What do we actually trust?” The answer to this question seems to be the same today as it was centuries ago in the time of the church father Augustine. We trust in power. Individually and collectively we seek to amass power, because power seems to open all doors. In the City of God, Augustine called this *libido dominandi* – lust to dominate, and noted that the city of this world, which “aims at dominion” and “holds nations in enslavement,” is itself “dominated by that very lust of dominion.”

When one is captive to power, one manipulates and exploits. And of course, the victims are the powerless – the poor, the old, and the very young, especially the unborn. Augustine believed that the lust to dominate is the main characteristic not only of the earthly city but of also of its ruler, Satan. In his great book on the Trinity he wrote,

> The essential flaw of devil’s perversion made him a lover of power and a deserter and assailant of justice, which means that men imitate him all the more thoroughly the more they neglect or even detest justice and studiously devote themselves to power, rejoicing at the possession of it or inflamed with the desire for it.”

What do we desire? What do we love? Again, my question is not, “What do we say that we love?” If asked, we’d recite the great commandment: “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself” (Luke 10:27), implying that this is, more or less, what we do or at least strive to do. My question rather is “What do we actually love?” We live in a culture that above all desires to possess. Possessions offer power and promise happiness. And yet by pursuing this desire for possessions we find ourselves caught in a squirrel wheel: the faster we run to acquire more, the faster the wheel is turning and the desired end – happiness – remains out of our reach. We do amass more and more possessions. But possessions, no matter how many we have, never give happiness; they are like children’s toys – interesting only while they are new.

Or we desire to give ourselves to others without holding back. We find fulfillment in loving other human beings – a child, a lover, a community. Like Margarete in Kierkegaard’s retelling of the story of Faust, we feel that we love adequately only when we achieve that state of selflessness of which religious thinkers, philosophers, and poets so eloquently speak, and “completely disappear” in the beloved. And yet, in our sober moments we hesitate, knowing well that disappointment is inevitable. So we oscillate between calculating and holding back and abandoning all measure to give ourselves completely. In the first case we remain with a gaping hole of unfulfillment; in the second, we risk an unbearable contradiction in our very identity.

Most of the problems in our society – from economy and politics to academy, from religion and family to friendship – are traceable to misplaced faith and misplaced love. From the corporate executive who seeks her own wealth at the expense of employees or clients, to the professor who fabricates findings in pursuit of the influence and prestige that come with academic acclaim, to the church leader who chooses the security of silence over the risk of calling a colleague to account for his offenses, to a lover pained by the loss of what was to her dearer than the self – so many of the problems that trouble us as persons, communities, and nations stem from our trusting power and desiring either to acquire or to give ourselves to finite things.

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5 Augustine, *De civitate Dei*, 1.P.
6 Augustine, *De trinitate*, 13.17
At the very heart of what Christian faith is all about are two revolutions: a revolution of trust and a revolution of love. The core content of the Christian calling is to make God the object of our faith and love – not just to say that God is the object, as the correct “Sunday School” answer, but to order our lives around trusting and loving God.

When God, rather than power, is object of our trust, we will place the exercise of power in proper relation to justice, so that power serves justice rather than justice being sacrificed to power. We will find the motivation and strength to prefer losing power by doing what is right to possessing power by doing wrong. To trust simply in power, I have suggested earlier by quoting Augustine, is satanic. This does not mean that power as such is evil, but that it must be subordinated to the will of the God of justice, in whom we ultimately place our trust. Will we ourselves be objects of injustice if we give precedence to justice over power? We might, but God will ultimately guarantee that justice will be done to those who do right. God will guarantee that the powerful perpetrator will not eternally triumph over the victim who would rather be wronged than do wrong.

When God, rather than possessions, is the object of our love, we place possession of goods in proper relation to love of neighbor. To love possession, I have suggested, is futile and melancholy. But that does not mean that possessions as such are evil, so that we should simply give up all possessions. Instead, we are called to share with our neighbors, because we are created by and worship God who is love. God has created us to love and to find happiness when we love. And God will reward with happiness our sacrifice on behalf of another.

What the love of neighbor – the love of any human being – ought not to be is a love that excludes God. For then it will either cancel itself by turning into selfishness (if we are calculating) or it will destroy us (if we deliver ourselves to the mercy of the finite and therefore inherently unreliable objects of our love). The only way to guarantee that we will not lose our very selves if we love sacrificially is if our love for the other passes through God, if we, as Augustine put it, love the other in God. Listen to what Kierkegaard, a deeply Christian 19th century philosopher, has to say about the matter:

No, the one who in love forgets himself, forgets his suffering, in order to think of someone else’s, [the one who] forgets all his misery in order to think of someone else’s, [the one who] forgets what he himself loses in order lovingly to bear in mind someone else’s loss, forgets his advantage in order lovingly to think of someone else’s – truly, such a person is not forgotten. There is one who is thinking about him: God in heaven. Or love is thinking about him. God is Love, and when a person out of love forgets himself, how then would God forget him? No, while the one who loves forgets himself, who think of the person, God is thinking of the one who loves. The self-lover is busy; he shouts and makes a big noise and stands on his rights in order to make sure he is not forgotten – and yet he is forgotten. But the one who loves, who forgets himself, is recollected by love. There is One who is thinking of him, and that is why the one who loves receives what he gives.”

From one angle, the main goal of theology is to be a guardian of human trust and desire. First, theology needs to make plausible that God is the proper object of human trust and love. It needs to show how and why it is that if we trust and desire God we will find both personal fulfillment and be a source of blessing to communities, institutions, and eco-systems around us. Second, theology must undertake a critique of misplaced trust and desire. It needs to show how and why it is that if we trust in power and desire either simply to acquire finite things or lose ourselves in them, we and the communities, institutions, and eco-systems around us will be the losers.

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Our failure as theologians to keep God in the center of theological work may itself be a result of a failure to trust and love God. Though we readily affirm that God is the source of all our good and therefore that trust in God and love of God are alone wholly salutary stances of human beings, we don’t quite believe that.

As theologians we find it hard to trust God. At the experiential level, God has a habit of not showing up when we need God the most. We place trust in God, and God lets us down – our child is killed by the negligence of persons who befriended him (as my brother, Daniel, was killed at the tender age of 5), we are mistreated by our employer when we are most vulnerable, our small community, poised at the edge of clashing interests of great powers, gets run over, all the while those who don’t believe in God, let alone trust in God, prosper. God, as Moltmann put it, is not only a theologian’s dignity and hope; God is also a theologian’s “agony.”

Pressures not to trust God come from the academic culture in which we work as well. The cultural elite – especially in the modern West – has, on the whole, not been friendly toward religion. In a recent text about theology as a discipline, philosopher Nicholas Wolterstorff has noted four prevalent attitudes, not always consistent with each other, toward religion in the contemporary culture. “Religion is withering away, religion is causally inert, religion is coercive, religious belief is irrational: those have been dominant themes in how the cultural elite in the modern West has thought about religion.”9 As it happens, these attitudes toward religion are increasingly being called into question, even in the academic high culture of the West. And yet their detrimental impact on theology continues unabated.

Both the experiences of theologians with God and the attitudes toward religion of their non-Christian academic colleagues have made some of us hesitate to place God in the center of our efforts. More conservative ones among us have retreated into the fortresses built with the hard stone of rigid orthodoxy. Fundamentalist parrots that we sometimes are, we act as if just repeating old formulas will make them true and somehow alive. More liberal ones among us have tied their fortunes to what is fashionable in academic circles. We have become ersatz philosophers, cultural critics, ersatz sociologists, ersatz psychologists, ersatz whatever, hoping that giving a bit of religious garnish to the dishes prepared perfectly well with secular ingredients will somehow make our work relevant. As fundamentalist parrots or ersatz intellectuals, we have kept the unpredictable and sometimes terrifying living God who alone is the source of all good at arms length – and made ourselves pretty much inconsequential. For the result of these strategies is nothing but self-destructive self-banalization of faith (in the case of dogmatic parrots) and self-secularization of faith (in the case of ersatz intellectuals).

As theologians, we find it hard to love God. You can tell whom a person loves by examining whom he seeks please and with whom he hangs around.

Whom do we theologians seek to please? You may think that theologians of all people would seek to please God. After all, theology’s main object of study is the living God, creator, redeemer, and consummator of the world. It should matter to us more than anything else what God might think of our work. And yet, more often than not as we speak or write we think to ourselves: “What will our colleagues say? How will this or that interest group react? How spirited or how long will the applause be? How will our book do on amazon.com rankings list? Will it get this or that award (preferably the cash-loaded Grawemeyer award?)” We speak and write to get approval from an audience, to impress reviewers, to satisfy “customers.” As it says in the Good Book of false teachers, we are tickling the ears of our hearers

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9 Nicholas Wolterstorff, “To Theologians: From One Who Cares About Theology but is not One of You,” 5.
(2 Timothy 4:3). Popularity and its rewards take precedence over God’s delight. If we continue down this road, we’ll soon be theologizing the way some elected officials govern in western democracies: by polling religious preferences of our constituencies.

With whom do we as theologians spend our time? Do we take time to extricate ourselves from the hustle and bustle of everyday life – academic and otherwise – and meditate on God, aided by Scripture and the great spiritual masters of our tradition? To be personal, I find it hard to create a space untouched by the demands of my theological career and attend to the One in whom I “live and move and have my being” (Acts 17:28) and for whose sake I say that I am a theologian. Surely this must be foolishness, on par with any other we could imagine!

In The View from the Tower Theodore Ziolkowski has explored the significance of towers in the life and work of Yates, Jeffers, Rilke and Jung. All four built or retreated shortly after World War I into towers “that were conspicuously spiritual refuges.”10 For them “tower” was both an antimodernist image and a micro-ecology in which to pursue “the opposition to urban technological world of modernism.”11 As theologians, we need not follow their anti-modernist stance, as if modernity were a particularly odious epoch in the history of humanity. But we should follow them into towers.

Every theologian should have a “tower,” a space slightly above the world (or, if one prefers to think in temporal terms, a time to pursue non-contemporaneity). Towers have their own dangers and temptations, of course. But a long religious tradition has associated spatial elevation with the presence of God and with visions of unity of heaven and earth, destroyed by the Fall to the detriment of the earth. Jesus wasn’t only taken to the high mountain by the Tempter; he went also to the mountain top to hear the divine voice and be transfigured. In our still very modern age some might see such withdrawals from the world in order to encounter God as a sign of religious lunacy. For, as Peter Sloterdijk has put it, “modernity is an age in which nothing but the world may be the case.”12 But theology will lose its soul if theologians neither get transfigured in God’s presence nor gain a glimpse of some future unity of heaven and earth.

VII

In an interview about her movie Frida – a movie about indomitability, courage, and sadness in the life of the Mexican painter Frida Kahlo – its director, Julie Taymor, told a story about her visit to Bali many years ago, as a young artist. One day she was alone in a secluded wooded area at the edge of a clearing, quietly listening to the distant music of native celebrations. Suddenly there stepped onto the clearing 30-40 old men dressed in the full splendor of warrior costumes with spears in their hands, and started to dance. Nobody else was around, and, hidden by the deep shadows of trees, she could observe them dance for what seemed an eternity. Suddenly she had an epiphany of sorts. She puts it this way:

they danced to – nobody. They were performing for God … They did not care if someone was paying for tickets, writing reviews, they did not care if an audience was watching, they did it from the inside to the outside and from the outside in, and that profoundly moved me

To Taymor, these dancing warriors became symbols of non-commercialized art, art guided primarily by the artist’s inner vision rather than being captive to the sensibilities of its potential audiences. To her, they stood for authenticity, unspoiled by the desire for popularity. To me, they became a symbol of

11 Ibid., xiii.
theology undertaken above all for the sake of God and an indictment against theologians who play for an audience rather than primarily dancing for God.

But doesn’t “dancing for God” sound too pious, even for theologians? And doesn’t it bespeak a basic mistake about the nature of theology? Presumably theology is done to the benefit of the world, not of God. God doesn’t need theology; if anybody needs it, it is our fellow human beings. How can one communicate effectively without taking into account the needs and sensibilities, linguistic habits and cultural preferences, of the people for whom one is theologizing? With theology it is not like with prayer. Hypocrites love to stand and pray in public places so that they may be seen by others; true Christians, Jesus taught, go to their rooms, shut their doors, and pray in secret. You should pray the way Balinese old men danced – with no human eye watching. But you should not do theology like that. When you pray, you speak to God; when you theologize, you speak to fellow human beings.

There is a major difference between Taymor’s dancers and theologians. Unlike those dancers, theologians essentially address people. We interpret the world for them in the light of God’s designs; we reflect on how to align our lives and our world with God’s purposes; we seek to motivate them to find fulfillment and be a blessing to the world by trusting and loving God. What we say and how we put it cannot be just a matter of movement “from the inside to the outside,” to use Taymor’s phrase. We are “pastors,” and must be sensitive to specific needs and situations of our “parish,” whether that be the church or the world. Neither in the way nor in the content of our speaking and writing can we abstract from all audiences and just have God on our minds. Yet the analogy to Balinese dancers applies. As we are speaking and writing for our fellow human beings, we are dancing for God. From a Christian perspective, a god for whom you can dance only when you are not dancing for people, must be a false god – a god shut up in his own sphere and pursuing his own interests unrelated to the wellbeing of creation. This is not who the Triune God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, is. God is the creator and a lover of creation; human beings and their world are God’s sphere and interests. It is impossible to dance for this God to the detriment of creation. A dance pleasing to God will confer blessing upon creation. Indeed, only a dance that pleases God will make creation flourish.

A few months ago I was on a spiritual retreat in the hills of Vermont, New England. At the end of the retreat we prayed for one another, each for each. I will never forget the prayer a musician offered for me. He asked God that as a theologian I would “play to the audience of One.” Now that’s a challenge – to play as theologians to God and give it the best we have, our most rigorous thoughts, our best creativity, our most sustained discipline, and our undivided attention. As I heard the prayer uttered over me, I was deeply attracted to the notion and frightened at the same time. Do I have the courage, I wondered, really to play as if God, the lover of creation, were the only one listening? I soon discovered that a different name for my timidity was a failure to trust and love the One in whom alone all that is loved can be loved properly.
THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION IN PENTECOSTAL CHURCHES IN ASIA

Wonsuk Ma

Introduction

A study of Pentecostal theological education in Asia comes with several challenges. To begin with, what is included in ‘Pentecostalism’ and what is not, has been a thorny question both at global and local levels. This study, with various limitations, will look at classical and selected Neo-Pentecostal groups, with the larger scope of study from the Middle East to Northeast Asia. The vastness of the region comes with cultural diversities in history, religion, language, and many other elements. For this brief study, several particular samples are selected: Korea, the Philippines, Malaysia-Singapore, and in a limited way India. A challenge also arises from the varying history and development of the Pentecostal movement in the region.1 In a way, the samples represent a longer history where classical or denominational Pentecostalism has been fully developed, which has also lent its hand to the rise of independent Charismatic churches, along with the spread of Charismatic Christianity among the established churches. Lastly, still another difficulty is the scarcity of published data on theological education, in spite of the proliferation and expansion of Pentecostal-Charismatic churches and congregations. For this reason, the presence of the Asia Pacific Theological Association (APTS),2 the only Asia-wide association of Pentecostal institutions, is extremely encouraging, although its membership is still concentrated in the Assemblies of God, arguably the largest classical Pentecostal group in the region. Several studies on Pentecostal education, although not specifically on Asia, have been published by the Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies.3 A number of good historical studies published in the same journal provide an excellent window to the general topography of Pentecostal theological education in various Asian countries.

This study has two major parts: a brief survey of Pentecostal theological education in the sample countries, and an observation of the current state, future promises, and challenges that lie ahead.

Four Samples

(South) Korea

The arrival of Pentecostal missionaries from the United States and Great Britain was a courageous feat considering the socio-political environment under the harsh rule of the Japanese. In fact, Mary Rumsey, the first US Pentecostal missionary to Korea (1928), was forced to leave Korea by the Japanese authority in 1937. The Chosun Pentecostal Church, organized through the efforts of various missionaries and first Korean Pentecostal workers such as Hong Huh, was re-organized after the liberation of the nation and paved the way for the birth of the Korean Assemblies of God in 1953. The rapid growth of the

3 Published by Asia Pacific Theological Seminary, Philippines (www.aptsw.edu/ajps).
denomination, including the rise of David Yonggi Cho and his Yoido Full Gospel Church, the largest single congregation in the world, is well documented.\textsuperscript{4} The arrival of Richard Jackson, the first missionary of the Church of God, Cleveland, resulted in the establishment of the Church of God in Korea. The Foursquare Church in Korea was started by a woman educator, Shin-ok Ahn (nee Kim) in 1952 through the establishment of several Christian secondary schools. It is particularly noted that Ahn followed the Foursquare tradition of women leadership. Yongmoon Prayer Mountain, established by a lay Pentecostal leader, Woon-mong Rah in 1950, later assumed denominational identity through a working but uneasy alliance with the US Pentecostal Holiness Church. However, it has remained a strong indigenous Pentecostal group.\textsuperscript{5} Throughout South Korea, Pentecostals number about 2.5 million, and Charismatic believers around 2 million.\textsuperscript{6}

The Assemblies of God opened its Full Gospel Theological Institute in 1953, shortly after the foundation of the denomination. This initial three-year program began to train ministers and church leaders. Today, in addition to this original school, Hansei University is a liberal arts institution with a theology department offering undergraduate to post-graduate programs, including a Ph.D. program. There are at least six regional schools offering graduate (such as Master of Divinity) and undergraduate programs. The Church of God also began its theological program in 1970 and later evolved into Hanyoung University, a liberal arts institution which incorporates the original theological education program. Its academic offerings include four Doctoral degree programs. Similarly the Foursquare Church began its undergraduate theological training program in 1972 and grew into Asia LIFE University, with successful graduate and post-graduate programs including four doctoral programs. The Yongmoon Prayer Mountain began various ministerial training programs including Gideon Bible School 1956.

Philippines

The arrival of the first Assemblies of God missionary (1926) and the formal establishment of the Philippine District Council of the Assemblies of God (1940) is well documented.\textsuperscript{7} Soon thereafter, various other Pentecostal groups, primarily from the United States, arrived to set up their missions in this vast island country: the Church of God (Cleveland, TN) arrived in 1947, and the Foursquare Church in 1949. Several indigenous Pentecostal churches were also organized with different degrees of American connections, such as the Filipino Assemblies of God of the First Born (1941). Indigenous ministries have mushroomed ever since, and it is simply impossible to enumerate them.\textsuperscript{8} In 1953, the deliverance of a demon-possessed woman by Lester Sumrall, an American evangelist, dramatized the signs and wonders narrative and brought widespread focus to this aspect of the Pentecostal ministry.\textsuperscript{9} Sumrall’s popular Bethel Temple in the heart of Manila, marked by a large sign emblazoned “Jesus Is Answer”, brought the movement to the attention of the urban population after it had first been concentrated in rural areas.

It was the outbreak of the Charismatic movement in the early 1980s among Catholic “born-agains” and eventual independent Charismatic groups, such as the Jesus Is the Lord Church, that opened the age of growth for Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity. Two may illustrate this impressive growth: 1) The

\textsuperscript{4} A recent publication by Young-hoon Lee, \textit{The Holy Spirit Movement in Korea} (Oxford: Regnum Books, 2009) places the 1907 Great Revival as the beginning of the ‘Holy Spirit movement’ in Korea.
\textsuperscript{6} Statistics are taken from D. B. Barrett and T. M. Johnson, “Global Statistics” in \textit{NIDPCM}, 284-302. The middle of the 2010s is the perspective for the numbers.
\textsuperscript{8} For an attempt, see Wonsuk Ma, “Philippines”, in \textit{NIDPCM}, 201-207.
\textsuperscript{9} Val Cindric, \textit{The Life Story of Lester Sumrall} (Green Forest, AR: New Leaf, 2003), 147-48.
Philippines Assemblies of God has become the largest Protestant church in the nation, and 2) the El Shaddai, founded in 1984 by Mike Verlarde, a Catholic layman, has grown to claim about nine million followers not only in the country, but also among its emigrants all over the world. Currently, Barrett’s estimate is close to 0.8 million classical or denominational Pentecostal believers and around 11.6 million Charismatics, both independent as well as those embedded in traditional churches.

Unlike the case of Korea, there are countless church-based training programs and schools, as well as denominational institutions spread all over the Philippines. Considering the highly diverse cultural and language factors, the proliferation of ministerial training programs is understandable. For the Assemblies of God alone, there are at least 30 schools that are members of the APTA. Smaller Pentecostal churches have their national and regional training programs which often exist within church-based training schools. The Philippines also hosts at least two substantial graduate and post-graduate international Pentecostal seminaries catering for the entire Asia and Pacific region: Asia Pacific Theological Seminary (for the Assemblies of God), which offers two graduate programs including a doctoral program, and the Asian Seminary of Christian Ministries (for the Church of God, Cleveland, TN).

Malaysia-Singapore

Unlike the previous two cases, Malaysia, which once included Singapore in its territory, received the first Pentecostal message in the early 1930s among Indian and Ceylonese rubber plantation workers, and established the Pentecostal Church of Malaysia (and later several splinter groups). It spread among Tamil and Malayalam-speaking communities. Due to Islamic legislation especially in West Malaysia, Christianity has been a religion available only to Chinese, Indians and indigenous populations, naturally making the Chinese the most significant Christian ethnic group in the country. Pentecostal-type spirituality and revival were introduced by various Chinese evangelists such as John Sung in the early 1930s and Madam Kong Mui Yee in the 1960s. The main theological thrust, however, came from Pentecostal missionaries from the United States and Great Britain. After the arrival of the Assemblies of God in 1934, it was not until the 1970s that other groups, particularly with Charismatic orientations, appeared: Full Gospel Business Men’s Fellowship (FGBFF) which turned into a church in the 1970s, the Full Gospel Assembly in 1979, and the Latter Rain Church of Malaysia in 1975. It is also noted that in East Malaysia, significant revivals took place among tribal groups; one important example is the Borneo Revival beginning in 1973. Other classical Pentecostal churches were also established, for example, the Foursquare Gospel Church of Malaysia in 1984. Today, Barrett and Johnson estimate that there are about 52 thousand classical Pentecostal believers and 330 thousand Charismatics in Malaysia.

The establishment of the Bible Institute (now College) of Malaysia in 1960 heralded the burgeoning Pentecostal education. For some time, this Assemblies of God training program, including the later independent Malaysia Tamil Bible Institute (1972), served more than its own denomination and today many leaders of Pentecostal groups are products of this school. Later, several institutions of other denominations appeared: Royal Priesthood Bible College of the Full Gospel Assembly in 1990, Tung Ling Bible College in 1979 first in Singapore and in 1993 in Malaysia, an independent Charismatic school, and Shekinah Life College of the Foursquare Church (originally TCA Malaysia) in 1998, to name a few. They are joined by a growing number of independent (often Charismatic) schools as well as church-based training programs. Often one institution runs several language programs, typically Chinese, Tamil as well as standard English programs, reflecting the ethnic makeup of Malaysian Christianity.

In Singapore, not only denominational Pentecostal groups (for example, the Assemblies of God from 1928)\(^\text{10}\) but also independent Pentecostal and Charismatic congregations began to appear as early as in the 1950s. Today, in spite of its small size, Singapore claims to be the Antioch of Asia, with high profiled

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mega-churches and extremely active mission engagements. The Assemblies of God Bible Institute (now College) was open in 1976. Then two large Charismatic congregations, both with a strong connection to the Assemblies of God, began to offer their training programs: TCA College (formerly Theological Centre for Asia) in 1979 by Trinity Christian Centre, and Asia Theological Centre for Evangelism and Missions in 1982 by Victory Family Centre. Schools in Singapore train many internationals. Growing and largely influential charismatic congregations, such as City Harvest Church established by Kong Hee in 1975, run church-based training programs.

India

The rise of the Pentecostal movement in India predates the Azusa Street Mission (1906), with the Tirunelveli-Travancore revival (1860s) and Mukti revival (1905-06) evidence of Indian experiences that did not carry the ‘Made-in-USA’ brand. However, these revivals alone could have remained isolated, but for the arrival of Alfred and Lillian Garr and other Pentecostal missionaries from 1907 which gave rise to the modern Pentecostal movement as a reasonably coherent tradition. The subsequent development of Pentecostalism in various parts of this subcontinent is a complex story. Indigenous revivals and their leaders, existing missionaries who embraced Pentecostal distinctives, and the arrival of new Pentecostal missionaries, have contributed to the shaping of the Indian Pentecostal movement.11 Early missionaries like George E. Berg (as early as from 1908), Robert Cook, K. E. Abraham, and others organized the Assemblies of God, while K. E. Abraham later established the Indian Pentecostal Church in 1930. Robert Cook later gave birth to the Church of God (Cleveland, TN) in 1936. Many others, both of indigenous and foreign origins, followed. Most of these beginnings took place in South India. Developments in North India followed, but at a much slower pace. Today classic Pentecostals number 1.3 million, neo-Pentecostals over five million, and the total number of Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians numbering close to 33.5 million by the mid-2000s.

Given the diverse nature of the development of the movement, it is simply impossible to cover the full picture. Thus, the Assemblies of God, perhaps one of the oldest and best documented, although not the largest, will serve as an exemplar. It is popularly known that John H. Burgess opened Bethel Bible Institute (later College) in Travancore in 1927, the first permanent Assemblies of God Bible college outside of the United States.12 Since then, countless formal, informal, and non-formal training programs have been put into operation by the national body, districts, and many large local churches. Currently under the umbrella of the Assemblies of God Association for Theological Education in Southern Asia, at least 40 residential schools are registered as well as 60 extension schools.13 Countless distance learning programs augment the formal education. South Asia Bible College in Bangalore, established in 1951, serves as a regional school, that is, a flagship institution to cater for the Indian subcontinent, currently offering a Doctor of Ministry program in cooperation with a US school.

Observations

The present summary of the Pentecostal churches and their theological education in Asia is extremely sketchy. With more than half a century of development, however, the churches provide sufficient

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12 S. M. Burgess, “India (1910-present),” in *NIDPCM*, 122.
trajectories in their theological education. Here are several observations that are both encouraging and challenging.

**Promises**

Pentecostals began training programs for church work from the start of their missionary operation, and these schools have been the main contribution to the growth of the Pentecostal church. A Korean Pentecostal leader attributes the growth of the Korean Assemblies of God to the establishment of its training school as early as was possible. According to him, other Pentecostal denominations such as the Church of God and the Foursquare Church in Korea did not achieve the same level of growth, and both did not have training programs as robust as those of the Korean Assemblies of God. Throughout the region, and around the world for that matter, the proliferation of lower-level, often informal, training programs resulted in significant growth of the Pentecostal movement. This is in stark contrast to the United Church of Christ in the Philippines, once the largest Protestant church, which has maintained only around 20 affiliate ministerial training schools after the ecumenical merger of several mainline churches in 1948. Today, the Assemblies of God is the largest Protestant denomination with as many as 60 (estimate) training schools.

Secondly, from the beginning the Pentecostal movement has fully empowered the laity through its unique belief in the work of the Holy Spirit. This so-called ‘democratization’ of ministry not only mobilizes the whole church, but also necessitates a radically different philosophy of ministerial training. Various types of training programs, including informal and non-formal as well as formal forms of education, are widespread among Asian Pentecostals. It is particularly true for the Philippines and India, but less in Korea and to some degree in Malaysia-Singapore. Flexibility and creativity in ministerial training allows a large number of trainees to be equipped to supply workers for evangelism and church planting as well as pastoral ministries. Often much of the ministerial load is borne by the laity, and a large proportion of active clergy members have not received any formal theological education among ministers in the Philippines and India. This steady supply of committed ministers, although less ‘adequately trained’ in the established sense of theological formation, has fuelled the exponential growth of Pentecostalism in Asia.

Thirdly, the level of theological education varies significantly, from one-year short-term training to a Ph.D. level education. The trend seems to be that national level institutions either offer or plan to offer Masters level qualifications, such as the Master of Divinity, while regional schools begin to offer doctoral qualifications. A steady upward movement of theological education is observable. However, the majority of workers are produced from the certificate, diploma, or undergraduate programs.

Fourthly, the steady emergence of serious research in the region is encouraging. There are two major sources for this new trend. The first is the increasing number of graduate and post-graduate programs. All the doctoral studies require serious research, while some Masters level programs also require theses. Coupled with a steady production of dissertations and theses on Asian Pentecostalism by western institutions, this welcome trend will continue into the future. The second source is the increasing availability of publications through conferences, journals, dictionaries, and monographs. At least two Pentecostal journals exist in English, while several non-English journals are published, for example, in Korean and in Japanese. The Birmingham conference on Asian Pentecostalism resulted in a massive reference book, while the second edition of *New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic...*
Movements, for the first time, includes a good number of entries in Asian Pentecostalism. Various national and regional learned societies have been formed since the late 1990s. One example is the Asian Pentecostal Society formed in 1998.

Fifthly, the presence and ministry of a region-wide Pentecostal theological association such as APTA is extremely encouraging, although there is still a heavy concentration of Assemblies of God schools. The association provides not only the space for interaction, fellowship and exchange, but also the development of theological material and accreditation services. This promotes exchange among member schools and with other theological associations, such as Asia Theological Association, an Evangelical counterpart in Asia. Several member schools are part of an Evangelical theological consortium corporately offering postgraduate degrees. Increasingly Pentecostal schools, institutional leaders, and faculty members are in contact with other schools for useful exchange. A similar network is now existent in Africa, with much inspiration and assistance from APTA, and it is possible that other continents may follow. A similar network has already been operating in Europe. Currently a plan is underway to create a global umbrella network of the regional associations as part of the Pentecostal World Fellowship’s ministry. The presence of the Asian Pentecostal Society (from 1998) is another sign of broad network interaction.

Challenges

While classical Pentecostals have the best developed academic institutions, programs, and resources, it is important to be reminded that they are the smallest segment of the large Pentecostal-Charismatic movement. This raises a number of serious questions and one of them is: Is their education relevant to the Asian cultural context and the rapidly changing social context? Also, the move from Bible institute model to a seminary model may not necessarily be for everyone. A well-designed, church-based lower-level ministerial formation is still the bedrock of the Pentecostal growth. The increasing appearance of academic programs and publications in Asian Pentecostalism is encouraging. At the same time, the academic community needs to watch the pitfall of Christian scholasticism, which is the opposite extreme of the earlier Pentecostals’ anti-intellectualism. As the traditional Asian high regard for learning continues to promote this trend, it is important that scholarly research and reflection promotes Pentecostal spirituality and serves its mission. Thus, lower-level ministerial programs should not aim at constantly upgrading their offerings.

The rapid growth of some Pentecostal-Charismatic groups in Asia is often blamed for theological shallowness. This includes the preaching of the so-called “prosperity gospel”. Although its origin is clearly found among popular televangelists in North America, this message has shown strong popular appeal among the poverty-stricken urban populations of Asia. The explosive growth of the El Shaddai ministry in the Philippines, for example, is often attributed to this popularized but distorted presentation of the Christian gospel. Given the religious context of Asia which often offers divine blessing in exchange for human devotion, and also the pragmatic nature of Pentecostal theological formation, there is a dire need to equip future church workers in the knowledge of the broad framework of the gospel. Another thorny area is the never-ending splits and divisions of the church as a result of the introduction of the Pentecostal message. The healthy future of the Pentecostal church is determined by theological formation with a broad vision of God’s kingdom.

The Pentecostal movement is often illustrated by mega-churches. Consequently the image of a ‘successful’ Pentecostal minister is as the pastor of a large congregation. This is further augmented by the belief in Charismatic elements in Pentecostal leadership, often drawn from selected Old Testament leaders.

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In a culture where a leader is often portrayed as having unquestioned authority, any aspiring Pentecostal leader should be seriously equipped in the biblical foundation and patterns of leadership. This requires ministerial training to be more than acquiring a set of how-to’s, but building a Christ-like character.

Lastly, with the majority of global Pentecostal believers now living in the global South, they need to shape a new mission paradigm, which will inevitably be holistic. The engagement of the gospel with every social issue is at the heart of the new mission engagement. For example, the believers live in religiously and ethnically pluralistic environments, and Asian Pentecostals, along with African and Latin American counterparts, are called to shape new mission paradigm in the new century. The challenge is to formulate mission theology and an approach that is authentically Pentecostal. Recently some Pentecostal-Charismatic leaders began to recognize the voting power of their followers, and ran for public offices. Whether this is a right form of mission engagement in politics, for instance, should be closely evaluated. This requires Asian Pentecostal institutions to move beyond western curricula.
PENTECOSTALISM, ECUMENISM AND THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION
IN LATIN AMERICAN PERSPECTIVE

Daniel Chiquete

Introduction
There is a prevailing idea in some ecumenical circles that Latin American Pentecostalism is not interested in theological formation or in ecumenical participation. I believe that this conviction is often based not on direct knowledge about Pentecostalism but on indirect knowledge, which is influenced by a lack of geographical, cultural and theological understanding. What is often known about Pentecostalism has been learned only through secondary bibliographic sources. Until recently, the majority of those who studied Pentecostalism were not Pentecostals, a factor that should be taken into consideration when evaluating their opinions.

It is true that there is a lack of interest in theological formation and ecumenical participation in wide sectors of Pentecostalism, but more important than making this confirmation, it seems to me that we need to try to understand the reasons for these attitudes, and carefully study the concrete circumstances in which they arise. Beyond demonstrating or refuting the interest of Pentecostals in the areas mentioned, in this essay I am interested in reflecting about some of the causes and motives that lead to this attitude. Also, I want to share my opinion about the existing correlation between theological formation and the ecumenical attitude within Pentecostalism.

Theological formation in the first phases of Pentecostalism
Latin American Pentecostalism was born in the 20th century, and it participates in many of the unforeseen changes that are being generated in the continent as the century advances. Just as Latin America is not homogeneous, neither is Latin American Pentecostalism. The enormous Pentecostal diversity should forewarn us against making any general or simplistic affirmations regarding this tradition. However, it is true that there are some common factors that help propose a basic general framework for any analysis, such as, the three centuries of Spanish and Portuguese domination in Latin America; the central role of the Catholic Church as an exclusive expression of Christianity throughout this period (16th to 19th centuries); and a long history of exploitation and dependence, with consequences that were also felt in the religious sphere.

In the first decades of the 20th century, which were also the first decades of Pentecostalism, illiteracy was widespread throughout the continent. The impoverished, illiterate masses that were being impacted by diverse political conflicts were very receptive to the Pentecostal message, which was communicated verbally – its main form of transmission. Oral communication was not just an option in the Pentecostal tradition, but was necessary because of the circumstances. Although the Pentecostal religious experience was born and developed as distinctly verbal, this circumstance does not mean that Pentecostal spirituality, as a whole, consciously rejects the written word or formal education. Rather, many people found in Pentecostalism the needed motivation to struggle against illiteracy. For example, there are innumerable testimonies of Pentecostal believers who were inspired to learn how to read by their desire to personally draw near to the message of the Bible.

The lack of government attention to the problem of illiteracy did directly affect Pentecostal communities during the first decades, and it also meant that it was impossible to give priority to the development of theological education. Therefore, the limited development of theological education was not due to an anti-
intellectual or anti-educational emphasis of Pentecostalism, but rather because it emerged from the most deprived levels of society and, therefore, from those most excluded from education systems. Before being concerned about theological education, the people needed to have at least basic conditions for formal education. Before struggling to achieve basic formal education, there was the struggle for a subsistence livelihood. Pentecostal believers shared the same difficulties as the rest of the poor people in society, such as unemployment, disease, illiteracy, lack of housing, etc. Therefore, the lack of education in Pentecostalism should not be understood “ontologically” as a lack of interest, but rather we should take into consideration the difficulties faced by all marginal groups to obtain any kind of education.

Until well into the 20th century, education in Latin America was a privilege of the middle and upper classes. That is one of the main reasons why the North American Protestant missionaries who came to Latin America were well received by the educated middle class, who were receptive to the new ideas proclaimed by the missionaries. Upper-class Latin Americans, for obvious reasons, were necessarily conservative and strongly linked to Catholicism, which is why they remained faithful to the church. Pentecostalism would find its “natural” public in the large majorities who were excluded from any kind of power, whether economic, political or religious. Therefore, the Latin American religious map took on a general physiognomy: the oligarchy and other privileged groups retained their links to institutional Catholicism; the fragile and unstable middle class to evangelical Protestantism; and the lower classes would have the option of choosing between Pentecostalism, Catholic base communities and popular Catholicism.

Conditions and evolution within Pentecostalism

As a religious movement, Pentecostalism has undergone transformation in several aspects. Certain crises and changes in Latin American societies partly explain some of these transformations, both positive and negative. In respect to the topic we are discussing, we can name the positive effect of literacy programs that were set up by some liberal governments in some areas, especially in many Pentecostal communities. After learning to read and write, the educational level of Pentecostals has gradually increased in recent years. Currently, in urban Pentecostal communities, the majority of the members know how to read and write, and there may be several with university degrees. The image of illiterate Pentecostals no longer corresponds with reality.

This increase in educational levels also has meant the emergence of a new generation of pastors and leaders in the Pentecostal movement with higher educational levels, which often includes university and/or theological studies. These pastors are more aware of and sensitive to the need for education among the members of their communities; they have greater possibilities for developing a social conscience; and they have a clearer political vision and demonstrate greater interest in ecumenism, among other appreciable changes. A better secular education has directly led to a growing interest in better theological formation. This interest, which certainly is not yet large-scale or generalized, is a real fact that should be taken into consideration by those who believe that Pentecostalism has no interest in theological education. This interest cannot spring forth out of nothing, as can no other, but rather needs to have the right conditions for emerging. So, the question should not be whether Pentecostalism is or is not in favor of theological education, but rather how to contribute to creating the conditions that will make this possible.

Pentecostalism and ecumenism

The majority of Pentecostals identify themselves as “Protestants” or “Evangelicals,” which, as it seems to me, is historically and theologically correct, although the Protestant roots of Pentecostalism did not directly come from the European Lutheran or Reformed traditions of the 16th century, but rather from the English and North American Free Church traditions of the 18th and 19th centuries, particularly from Wesleyan Methodism, the Holiness movement and some more recent Charismatic expressions of spiritual renewal.
Protestantism arrived in Latin America through European immigration and North American missionary societies in the last half of the 19th century. The North American Protestant missionary societies, in their strategies of evangelization, sought to win the middle classes, believing that through them they would reach the masses of poor people in the continent, both by preaching a message of conversion and by their educational, health and moral formation programs. This original relationship of Protestantism with the Latin American middle classes continues today. That is why the socioeconomic crisis of the middle classes also has repercussions on the ecclesiastical crisis they are experiencing.

Currently, traditional mainline Protestant denominations are numerically insignificant in many Latin America countries. However, they are significant in the ecumenical movement, for example, by their contribution to theological education and in the leadership of ecumenical institutions and projects, areas in which they absolutely dominate.

Among liberal Protestant and conservative Evangelical leaders and intellectuals, there are diverse attitudes and opinions regarding Pentecostalism. One group shares, with a broad sector of Roman Catholic clerics, the opinion that Pentecostalism is an ideological weapon of U.S. foreign policy (as surprising as it is that there are some who still believe and spread these kinds of opinions), and they make light of Pentecostalism as a religiosity of sectarian groups, as expression of Fundamentalism, as escapists, as apolitical, as anti-intellectual, etc. There is also a broad group of more moderate positions that view Pentecostalism with reservation, at a distance, without disqualifying it altogether, but with greater interest in drawing near to it in a fraternal and dialogical spirit. Fortunately, there is also a small group with broad, direct knowledge of Pentecostalism, with a fraternal and ecumenical spirit, that is interested in mutual learning. These last group is, unfortunately, a minority.

These three general tendencies are reflected to some degree in the theological education institutions with an ecumenical orientation in Latin America. In most of these institutions, one can verify the contradiction between the real presence of Pentecostalism in the continent and the low representation of Pentecostals on the teaching staff in these learning centers. Thus, it seems to me that it is difficult to satisfactorily explain that while Pentecostalism represents 60 to 80 percent of non-Catholic Christianity in many Latin American countries, it is so under-represented or unrepresented in ecumenical or educational institutions. Many educational institutions do not have any Pentecostal professors, nor are Pentecostal themes a part of the curriculum, even when the majority of students in these institutions are Pentecostals, and to a degree, justify the existence of the institution.

Pentecostals are taken into account positively in the preparation of statistics and requests for economic contributions, but are not considered with due relevance in regard to their study, formation needs and their own circumstances. Ecumenical Protestantism benefits from this massive Pentecostal presence, but there are no clear proposals for Pentecostals to achieve the same benefits as enjoyed by ecumenical Protestants. To use a popular expression in Latin America, “The troops are made up of Pentecostals, but the Generals are always Protestants.”

In these circumstances, while educational spaces and ecumenical institutions could be ideal places for encouraging an ecumenical spirit among Pentecostalism, instead they frequently become the cause for bringing this learning movement and mutual drawing together to a halt. I would even say that we ecumenical Pentecostals are ecumenical not thanks to, but despite, Latin American ecumenicalism. I believe that Pentecostalism has made greater efforts to approach ecumenism than ecumenism has made efforts to approach and to open towards Pentecostalism.

Another topic that I think we need to reflect about in greater depth is that of the different motivations for ecumenical participation and theological formation. In Pentecostalism, in general, the desire to study is directly related to the desire to make an important contribution to their church; it is the answer to a concrete ecclesiastical need. That is the first and most important motivation. Likewise, ecumenicalism would have greater interest for Pentecostals insofar as they could see its importance for the daily life of the church.
Pentecostals will be won over to ecumenism through the concrete exercise and implementation of this project and its principles: it will be the ecumenical practice and not its discourse that excites Pentecostals.

Ecumenical thought in Latin America has a symbolic and inspiring importance; it is beneficial and vital, but the great social and spiritual changes of Christian motivation will continue to come mainly from Pentecostalism and from Catholic base communities. To support Pentecostal theological education means supporting the concrete development of the most important Christian presence in the continent. This would be ecumenism and mission with concrete action and a long-range vision.

Theological education and ecumenism in Latin American Pentecostalism

Theological education is certainly not the highest priority for Pentecostal churches, but for diverse reasons there is a growing interest in it, as can be seen by the growing number of educational projects and programs that have arisen in recent years. Roughly, the Pentecostal initiatives for theological education can be classified in three groups:

1. In the first group there would be a good number of local denominational seminaries which are spaces used by the churches that sponsor them to reproduce their official teachings and form their leadership structure. There is not much hope of finding significant critical thinking and ecumenical openness in this group, which is the largest in the continent.

2. A second group would be represented by several Pentecostal educational projects that are more or less solid, several of which have emerged under the sponsorship of a large, well-established denomination, such as the Iglesia Apostólica de la Fe en Cristo Jesús in Mexico, the Assemblies of God in Brazil or the Church of God in Ecuador and the Dominican Republic. Another example of this group is the result of efforts of enthusiastic believers who have worked for years to create the minimum conditions for the existence and operation of small training centers. Some of these institutions have a good academic level, although far from that achieved by the more consolidated institutions in Latin America; these also show different degrees of ecumenical openness, without losing, at all, their profound Pentecostal identity. An example of this group includes SEMISUD (Ecuador), the Mexican Cultural Center (Mexico), PACTO (Venezuela) and the Evangelical Center of Pentecostal Studies (Chile).

3. A third group is represented by hundreds of Pentecostal believers who study in different education institutions with an ecumenical orientation, such as the UBL (Costa Rica), ISEDET (Argentina), Methodist University (Brazil), CIEETS (Nicaragua), SET (Cuba) and many more. For this last group, the access to theological education is more complicated because it is done without the approval of their churches, or even may be against the desires of these, and there is not much interest in several of the educational institutions to provide scholarships or flexibility in the programs to make study possible. Most of the Pentecostals involved in the Latin American ecumenical movement come from this third group.

It is my conviction that theological formation and openness to ecumenism are interrelated in Pentecostalism. Promoting the first leads to the second, even though this is not always automatic. Therefore, any effort to promote theological education should also be valued as a contribution to encouraging the ecumenical spirit. Rather than waiting for Pentecostals to be open to ecumenism, the creation of conditions that permit theological education by Pentecostals is needed: without an awareness of change there will be no action for change; without theological formation there will be no ecumenical conscience.

I do not believe that Pentecostals are either more or less ecumenical than Protestants in Latin America or Europe. It may appear that they are like this because those who declare themselves to be in favor of ecumenism or participate in concrete ecumenical projects are usually people with theological formation who belong to liberal Protestant or Evangelical churches: they are the intellectuals. Likewise, Pentecostals
with theological formation are usually ecumenical. Theological education and contact with ecumenism has made a different vision possible. But a regular member of an older Protestant or newer Evangelical denomination can be as ecumenical or non-ecumenical as any Pentecostal believer. What makes the difference is not church affiliation, but rather educational formation and concrete possibilities to positively experience ecumenism.

Unfortunately, many of these Pentecostal (or non-Pentecostal) projects depend on outside resources for their operation, which will always be a complicated factor to consider. Some ecumenical institutions feel called to contribute to the consolidation of some of these educational programs, which is always a good thing. But, I would like to share some thoughts about the circumstances and aspects to be considered in regard to possible outside support.

1. It seems to me that, despite its importance, the financial aspect should not be central. The symbolic value of that support should be of equal importance. Because, in one way or another, Pentecostalism will continue to develop further as it has been throughout its entire history, with or without outside financial support, but, certainly, conditions will be better with support and progress will be more rapid. Above all, I believe that it is important for the support to enable Protestantism to draw closer to Pentecostalism, thus making more direct interaction possible, in which both traditions can become mutually enriched. This would entail establishing channels or opportunities for encounter, recognition and enrichment in both directions or in many directions, avoiding relationships of one-sided dependency, or relationships in which one party is in a dominant position over against the other. In last resort, the intention should always be to recognize Pentecostalism as equal and not as inferior or needy. If this condition is not guaranteed, then it is better to leave the movement alone and let it continue looking for its own path forward.

2. Another point to be considered is that the ecumenical openness of Protestantism towards Pentecostalism which can be expressed through financial support and fraternal accompaniment should take on a concrete character and should also encourage concrete reactions. That means that until now the ecumenical opening of Protestantism towards Pentecostalism has often consisted more in intentions than in actions, more in words than in concrete deeds, and it is to be hoped that this would change. As far as Pentecostalism is concerned, a real interest in its ecumenical participation can be perceived and will surely develop further if the corresponding motivation for deepening this participation is supported. This can also lead to restating the question with regard to whether Pentecostalism has or does not have a disposition for ecumenical openness, and to rather ask the question how ecumenism can nourish and better motivate this openness to grow.

3. I also believe that outside financing could give more freedom to these Pentecostal initiatives in order to maintain a greater distance from the institutional teaching of their mother-churches in whose shadows they live. This could allow them also to develop some critical thinking and an ecumenical orientation, and not only to reproduce the official teaching of the church. In the tension between closeness and a distant relationship to their churches, some of the educational programs have to continue balancing between faithfulness and the desire to serve the church on the one hand and the need to be its critical conscience on the other hand.

4. Lastly, I believe it is essential to be clearly aware of the fact that, if Latin American Protestantism continues to become more Pentecostal, by supporting the development of a better Pentecostalism we will be also supporting the consolidation of a better Protestantism. It might be however perhaps the same awareness which is currently creating some reserved attitudes on the side of some ecumenical leaders in Latin America; as it is felt that if Pentecostalism develops its full theological potential as well as its numerical potential, it could be very difficult to continue to justify the exclusivity of Protestant leadership in Latin American ecumenism. And this type of consideration seems to be present in the minds of some ecumenical leaders. I hope that the reality and the
Theological Education in Pentecostal Churches

Part III: Theological Education from Denominational and Confessional Perspectives

circumstances of Pentecostal growth can be seen as an opportunity for renewal and growth of the church, and not as a threat to specific interests.

Another factor that seems to be problematic for me in the current practice of support from the ecumenical world to Pentecostalism is a certain aspect of conditionality with which support is given. Frequently, support is conditioned on the existence of a solid organizational structure, which is often difficult to comply with, at least in the way desired, and this is mainly due to two things. On the one hand in Latin America programs are developed in the reverse order of European processes: while in Europe the structures which are meant to sustain the projects are created first, in Latin America projects are carried out during the process and only later structures are created as dictated by the needs, conditions and experiences gained. On the other hand, as a second reason, I think it is very difficult to have stable administrative structures when there are often no financial resources at all, not even to cover the basic needs of the program, such as salaries, rent, utility bills, etc. Therefore, it is frequently a question of faith and trust, and this is not exempt from risk. But, very often, it is in these uncertain conditions in which also great programs have emerged, and not only in educational or ecclesiastical areas.

Expectations and challenges for the 20th century

Pentecostalism has reasons for hope and joy in the 20th century. The consolidation of Pentecostal theological education centers has progressed significantly. The growing presence of women in educational programs, including the post-graduate level, is also very important. I believe that all the previously mentioned centers are carrying out excellent work, with very limited resources, and I hope there will be continued consolidation and enrichment. There are also an important number of Pentecostal theologians who are promoting the publication of theological literature, which certainly will be enriching for Pentecostalism as well as for other Christian traditions interested in Pentecostal spirituality. I believe that the work of one group of scholars of Pentecostalism, who for several years have worked to form a network for reflection and theological production called RELEP (Latin American Network of Pentecostal Studies), is worth to be mentioned particularly. Among its objectives, RELEP intends to promote and coordinate Pentecostal theological publications; to contribute to the promotion of theological education among Pentecostal communities; to be committed to dialogue and other ecumenical projects; and to promote the mutual support of its members in church and academic work, among other tasks. Also, RELEP has begun to plan for its participation in the celebration of One-Hundred Years of Pentecostalism in Latin America, beginning in 2009. Another RELEP projection is to link up with other Pentecostal associations for reflection and theological production, such as the Society for Pentecostal Studies, European Pentecostal Theological Association, Interdisziplinärer Arbeitskreis Pfingstbewegung and with other similar projects in Asia and Africa.

What is clear for now is the following: a lot of work remains to be done and many tasks are to be carried out. But it is also true that there is great enthusiasm and new experiences accumulated already. In future years, Latin American Pentecostalism will continue to progress in its theological formation and in ecumenical maturity. I hope that our Protestant and Evangelical brothers and sisters will accompany us in this development.
AFRICAN PENTECOSTALISM AND THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

Cephas N. Omenyo

Introduction

Today, churches in the southern continents, particularly Africa, are experiencing astonishing growth. Commenting on the growth of Christianity in the southern continents, particularly Africa, Andrew Walls, a doyen of African Christianity, observed that ‘Today, over half the Christians in the world live in the southern continents of Africa, Asia, Latin America and Oceania’.1 He further asserts that ‘African Christians might well tip the balance and transform Christianity into a primarily non-Western religion.’2 Philip Jenkins corroborates Walls’ assertion as follows:

Over the past century, the centre of gravity in the Christian world has shifted inexorably Southward, to Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Already today, the largest Christian communities on the planet are to be found in Africa and Latin America. If we want to visualise a ‘typical’ contemporary Christian, we should think of a woman living in a village in Nigeria or in a Brazilian favela.3

Walls further makes bold to predict that:

This means that we have to regard African Christianity as potentially the representative Christianity of the twenty-first century. …The Christianity typical of the twenty-first century will be shaped by the events and processes that take place in the Southern continents, and above all by those that take place in Africa...The things by which people recognise and judge what Christianity is will (for good or ill) increasingly be determined in Africa. The characteristic doctrines, liturgy, the ethical codes, the social applications of the faith will increasingly be those prominent in Africa. New agendas for theology will appear in Africa.4

A major characteristic feature of the growth of Christianity in Africa is that fact that although growth is experienced in all traditions/denominations, the Pentecostal churches are generally making more gains than the older traditions either through ‘sheep stealing’ or through the aggressive evangelistic activities of the Pentecostal churches themselves. Commenting on the phenomenal growth of Pentecostal and neo-Pentecostal movements in Africa, Matthew Ojo has observed:

The rapid spread of the Pentecostal and charismatic movements in Africa since the 1970s, constitutes the major outstanding development within the contemporary African Church. The movements were the fastest growing endeavour in West Africa in the 1980s and 1990s. From about 10 independent charismatic organizations in the mid-1970s largely restricted to Nigeria, the number has grown to over 10,000 groups across the continent. The membership is substantial with about 10 per cent of the 48 million Christians in Nigeria, about 6 percent of the Christian population in Ghana, and not less than 2 percent for the French speaking countries. By the 1980s, this religious awakening had assumed social prominence due partly to increased media attention, and also to the

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The plethora of a large number of new churches advertising themselves seriously in the print and electronic media.

The explosion and growth of the Pentecostal movement is increasingly making Pentecostalism the characteristic form of Christianity on the African continent. Indeed African Pentecostalism is fast becoming the most significant development to have taken place on the African religious landscape.

The stupendous growth and prominence of African Pentecostal movement has deep implications for theology and Pentecostal theological education on the continent. We should not only be fascinated by the numerical growth of the movement, but the task of providing sound theological education for the numerous zealous Pentecostal preachers and leaders needs to be recognized and engage the attention of all discerning observers. If indeed Africa Christianity has a major role in determining the future of world Christianity then, the rest of the Christian world ought to be interested in the kind of theology that is taught and practiced in African churches and institutions.

The growth of Christianity in Africa is also evident in the number of people who seek to enter the ordained ministries of the various streams of denominations in Africa. While some western theological institutions struggle to fill available vacancies, African institutions are overwhelmed by the number of applicants who wish to avail themselves of the opportunity to train for the ministry. Consequently, the content of theology taught at African Pentecostal schools as well as access to sound theological institutions should feature prominently on the agenda of any caring ecumenical body. This chapter discusses general trends in Pentecostal theological education in Africa with most of the cases cited from Ghana and Nigeria.

**African Pentecostalism**

The genre of Christianity referred to as ‘African Pentecostalism’ generally appeared on the African scene in the early part of the twentieth century. Nevertheless, it experienced a phenomenal growth from the 1970s to the 1990s. Most of its initial members were drawn from the existing mainline churches thereby displacing the African Instituted Churches (AICs) as the major renewal movement in African Christianity. The proliferation of Pentecostal churches has continued ever since. In this essay, ‘African Pentecostals’ generally refers to Classical Pentecostal churches which began around the 1900s to the 1970s as well as Neo-Pentecostals/Indigenous Pentecostal churches which generally began in the 1970s. The African Instituted Churches (AICs) which began in the late 1880s through to the early 1900s are not included. In this paper we are not attempting to draw sharp distinctions between the various categories of Pentecostal-type churches since ‘...in most parts of Africa, the terms Pentecostal, charismatic and evangelical are not strictly demarcated. Mobility of members and participation of members in several activities make any clear separation that could be found in the Western world difficult to maintain.’

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African Pentecostals and Academic Theology

The attitude of African Pentecostals to academic theology was one of utter disdain. They perceived academic theology as anti-spiritual that accounted for the negative growth of the mainline churches. In Ghana for instance the new Pentecostal churches castigated the Trinity Theological Seminary, the main seminary for the mainline/historic Protestant churches as ‘cemetery’. Pentecostal/charismatic oftentimes adopted a polemical and confrontational approach to academic theology and sought to preserve Pentecostal ‘distinctiveness’ by insulating themselves against the alleged intrusion of academic theology within their framework. As a result, they generally did not emphasize formal academic theological enterprise. Allan Anderson has noted that ‘Most early Pentecostal leaders and some of the most successful Pentecostal and Charismatic pastors in many parts of the world have been those with little or no theological education.’ In the African situation this observation is an understatement. What was actually the case is Pentecostal leaders adopted a ‘strong anti-theological, anti-academic prejudice’. In the past, Pentecostals castigated well trained pastors of the older churches as having acquired academic training that was not suitable for the existential needs of the Africans. Theological education for mainline pastors was perceived as ‘dead intellectualism’ that sometimes ‘stifles the spirit-filled life’.

A major difference between Pentecostals and the older denominations is the issue of hermeneutics, particularly the appropriation of Biblical texts. Pentecostals indict the older denominations for leaning towards philosophical niceties without addressing the existential challenges facing the people. Pentecostals claim they are predisposed to pragmatic hermeneutics by rightly interpreting the inner truths in the word of God which are relevant for the African context. According to Cheryl B. Johns, Pentecostal hermeneutics is praxis oriented whereby experience and Scripture are maintained in a dialectical relationship maintained by the Holy Spirit. Pentecostals, particularly the newer genre, consciously attempt to appropriate the gospel in addressing African socio-economic issues. It is remarkable that Pentecostals are becoming increasingly aware that they stand in danger of misappropriation or misuse of scripture if their preachers are not properly trained. As a result since the 1980s there has been a growing desire for Pentecostal theological training in Africa.

Pentecostal Theological Training in Africa: Past and Present

When African Pentecostals found the need to train their leadership they gave them rudimentary training which they believed was just enough to equip them for practical ministry without endangering their spirituality which was deemed more vital for their leadership roles. Pentecostal Bible schools which emerged on the African religious scene produced ‘crude rationalism’ with emphasis on ‘oral theology’, an emphasis which western rationalist would not easily accept because it is perceived as exotic.

The main criteria for the selection and ordination of leaders/pastors of Pentecostal churches are evidence of call to the ministry and spirituality rather than intellectual abilities or ministerial skills. Invariably, the training emphasized a good knowledge of the Bible and the doctrines of salvation, sanctification, angels and demons and the experience of ‘the Baptism of the Holy Ghost’. Most of these training institutions last between three and twelve months. They are accelerated because for them the time for the Lord’s return is

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10 Kalu, African Pentecostalism, 243.
12 Anderson, An Introduction to Pentecostalism, 243.
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short as a result the training should be brief in order to have an accelerated turn out of labourers to work in the vineyard.

In discussing African Pentecostal theological training, we need to mention the role of the late Archbishop Benson Idahosa, who founded the Church of God Mission International, in Benin City, which started in 1970. Benson Idahosa claimed he had a divine mandate to preach the gospel all over the world. By the mid-1980s he had travelled to over seventy countries, organizing evangelistic crusades and initiating networks with other African Pentecostals. His Bible School, All Nations for Christ Bible Institute, Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria was a major radiating centre for several emerging neo-Pentecostal movements. The significance of this particular Bible school lies in the fact that it trained most of the earliest Neo-Pentecostal leaders in Africa, particularly Ghana. For instance, in 1978 he held evangelistic campaigns in key Ghanaian cities. In response to the overwhelming response he received from Ghanaians he offered some scholarships to Ghanaians for Bible training in his Bible school in Ghana. As a result between 20 and 30 Ghanaians graduated from the All Nations for Christ Bible Institute (ANCBI), Benin City which Idaho had established in 1975. At the end of their training, late Archbishop Idahosa charged the students of the Bible school to go back to their respective states and countries to do something different. This charge implied they were to start new ministries and churches with a completely different character and orientation. Indeed Idahosa exerted a tremendous impact on his students to the extent that the graduation of the first batch of his students marked the beginning of the earliest Neo-Pentecostal Church in most West African states, particularly Ghana. The Action Faith Ministries led by his favourite product, Arch-Bishop Duncan Williams is the main Ghanaian precursor of the neo-Pentecostal church movement. A significant number of the pastors of the mega-churches in sub-Saharan Africa, particularly in Ghana were either products of Idahosa’s Bible school or were impacted by products of the school. For example the 1988 graduates comprised 15 from Ghana, 7 from Chad, 2 from Zimbabwe, 3 from Kenya, 2 from Cameroon, 4 from Côte d’Ivoire, and 1 each from Sierra Leone and Togo.

Another equally significant Pentecostal training centre which deserves mention is the ‘International Bible Training Centre’ established in 1980 by the Deeper Life Bible Church led by William F. Kumuyi of Nigeria, which trains numerous African Pentecostals. Matthews Ojo has noted that ‘By 1981, there were about 600 students from about 20 countries in the institution.’

The leadership patterns of Idahosa and Kumuyi have become models for all their products and other neo-Pentecostal as well Pentecostal churches that begin by running their own Bible Schools. In Ghana, it became fashionable for young Senior High School leavers, of whom most could not qualify to progress to the tertiary institutions, to enrol in a Bible School and start using the title ‘pastor’ even though they may not yet be in charge of congregations. Quite apart from the prospects of training for the ministry, Bible School training became another avenue for progress in one’s education. Of course there were also those who graduated from the universities and other tertiary institutions who felt called to enter either full-time or part-time ministry who enrolled in the various Bible schools.

The new wave of proliferation of Pentecostal churches has implications for leadership training since the leaders are required to serve as pastors of the branches. The new churches have responded by establishing their own Bible Schools to meet the need for leaders to pastor their congregations. It is common to find Pentecostal Bible schools in simple structures (oftentimes the place of worship) of new Pentecostal churches. Most of them begin their training schools in rented premises where they worship or the first

chapels that they put up. They may begin with a faculty of one or two people who have basic first degrees (sometimes not in theology) who teach all courses mounted by their respective schools.

In most Pentecostal Bible schools in Ghana, the common courses that are taught include the following: Survey of the Old and New Testaments, harmony of the gospels, general epistles, demonology, Pentecostalism and doctrines, general introduction to church history, practical theology, crusade planning, church planting and church growth, spiritual authority, personal spiritual life, church, communication skills, ministry/Administration.

Some of them have stratified their training into three levels as follows: level one, ‘School of Ministry’ meant for beginners who wish to play any form of role in their respective churches such as praise singers, ushers, various group leaders, and lay preachers. This level ranges from three-month to six-month duration. At the end of the course, successful participants are awarded Certificate in Ministry. The second stage is the ‘School of Theology’ which is open to all successful persons who have passed through the first stage. This course is purposely designed for those who want to become ministers or pastors. At this level the Bible, as well as basic doctrines such as the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, Concept of Salvation and Christology and demonology are taught. Students who go through this programme successfully are awarded Diploma in Theology. The third level is the Pastoral Course which is open to those who progress from the second level. At this stage the emphasis is on ‘Pastoral Discipline, Christian Ethics, Techniques of Teaching, Preaching and Inter-personal Relationship. Participants are also taught Principles of loyalty due to the need to be loyal to the church and Christ. At the end of the training participants are awarded a Certificate of Consecration as a qualification to become a full-fledged pastor.

Generally, the training is weak on church history. For most of them after the primitive church, the next church they know of is their own. They tend to put much emphasis on practical ministry and particular doctrinal issues such as ‘demonology’ which addresses particular African needs of dealing with African worldview. When one takes a cursory glance through the curricula one can see much an emphasis on mission and evangelism.

**Types of Institutions that Train Pentecostal Leaders in Africa**

1. Modular training that lasts between one week and three weeks which takes place annually. Examples are the schools run by Morris Cerulo (Winners Chapel) which has trained thousands of Pentecostal/charismatic leaders in Ghana.
2. Intensive training schools that last between two months and six months which lead to a certificate in pastoral studies
3. Regular training schools that last between one to two years, leading to Diploma of theology/pastoral studies.
4. Theological seminaries of mainline Protestant churches are opening their doors to Pentecostals who are increasingly availing themselves of their training facilities. A typical example is the Trinity Theological Seminary in Accra, the main seminary that trains ministers of the historic mainline Protestant churches in Ghana up to the post-graduate level and enrolls Pentecostal pastors as regular students. This ecumenical venture is a very encouraging one since both Pentecostals and non-Pentecostals can share a lot during those long periods of interaction.
5. An increasing number of Pentecostal leaders (particularly those earmarked as faculty of the upgraded Pentecostal Bible Schools) pursue graduate studies in the state owned secular universities in Ghana and abroad either as regular students or sandwich graduate students. The majority of the sandwich Master of Arts candidates of the Department for the Study of Religions, University of Ghana for instance are pastors of Pentecostal churches. Some have graduated with doctor of philosophy degrees from renowned universities in the United Kingdom and the United States of...
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America. For instance, the current Chairman of the Church of Pentecost, the fastest growing Pentecostal church in Ghana, obtained his Ph.D. from the University of Birmingham in the United Kingdom, while the General Secretary is pursuing a Ph.D. in the state owned University of Ghana, Legon, through the Department for the Study of Religions.

One emerging trend is that almost all of the Pentecostal Bible colleges in Africa are affiliated to Bible schools abroad (mostly the United States), which themselves are modelled on western patterns, their theological categories shaped by Greek culture and enlightenment, with their attitudes severely influenced by modernity, industrialism, colonialism and individualism which has produced a church whose members’ zeal is waning. The disadvantage of the Western dominance in Pentecostal education in Africa is that it does not give much recognition to the specific, local, religious, social and cultural contexts of Africa. As a result the African Pentecostal uniqueness and specificity is lost since students are ill-equipped to properly contextualize their theology.

The new trend of proliferation of Pentecostal churches with the concomitant proliferation of Pentecostal Bible schools should alert us that Africans are making imprints on Christianity by seeking to address specific African issues which Western theology is not well resourced to address mainly because such issues are alien to the West.17 Henry Lederle expresses his apprehension about the dominance of the West in Pentecostal theological education in the following words:

It is an irony of recent ecclesiastical history that much of Pentecostal scholarship has sought to align itself so closely with the rationalistic heritage of American Fundamentalism...without fully recognizing how hostile these theological views are to Pentecostal and Charismatic convictions about present-day prophecy, healing miracles and other spiritual charisms.18

A relatively new development among Pentecostal Bible schools in Africa is that some of them are going through a metamorphosis to becoming university colleges, affiliated to established secular state universities (e.g. Central university is affiliated to the University of Cape Coast, Ghana Pentecost University College is affiliated to the University of Ghana, Legon, Ghana) and accredited by the national accreditation boards. In one vein, this trend is encouraging because it gives us the hope that Pentecostals can receive academically sound and balanced theological education. In another vein, the trend raises the pertinent question, as to how Pentecostal spirituality and its frequent tendency towards exclusivity can cope with liberal and pluralist theological posture of secular a university, which may be diametrically opposed to each other. There is the tendency of the Pentecostal theological institutions to impress the affiliated institutions and accrediting agencies thereby heightening the tension that exists between academic integrity and spirituality.

Conclusions

Pentecostal movements in Africa are increasingly recognizing the need to be deeply engaged in the enterprise of enhancing their knowledge in academic theology, a development which gives credence to Walter Hollenweger’s belief that well organized and resourced Pentecostal Bible schools can produce scholars who speak in tongues and yet are critical in their academic enterprises.19

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Allan Anderson has observed that a major problem that has to be overcome in Pentecostal theological education has to do with flaws in the structures of their Bible schools which are partly ‘western models foisted onto the rest of the world and legacies of the colonial past with its cultural imperialism and ethnocentrism’. Pentecostal training institutions became vulnerable to losing their distinctive experience-oriented spirituality, as evangelical and fundamentalist models of education were bought into wholesale and uncritically. Care must be taken not to condition methodologies, agenda and content of western theology in the African context. An authentic African Pentecostal theological education must be developed to take care of particular African needs which have global relevance.

Emphasis on rationalism in western theology led to an ‘indifferent attitude towards spiritual experience and power’ thereby eroding the sense of the supernatural as well as blurring the experiential dimension of the Christian faith. Karl Barth has discussed the issue of the poverty of Western theology and pointed to Asia and Africa as providing hope that the deficit could be mitigated, in the following words:

Magical world-view? Who knows, maybe our fellow Christians in the new churches in Asia and Africa whose perception in this respect is pretty much alive can come to our aid one day? Let us only hope, though, that in the meantime they do not allow themselves to be too much impressed by our world view, and as a consequence they themselves may become infected by the short-sightedness which we are suffering in this respect.  

Arguably, contemporary African Pentecostalism fulfils Barth’s prophecy. Nevertheless, if the content of African Pentecostal training institutions is allowed to be unduly influenced by the West that development could also confirm Barth’s fears of Africa allowing itself to be ‘...too much impressed by Western worldview’.

Edinburgh 2010 has something to offer African Pentecostal theological education by giving much prominence to it in its scheme of things. The genre, African Pentecostal Christianity, has applicability outside Africa. In the words of Matthews Ojo, ‘That the local can transform and become global has become evident in the rapid growth of Pentecostalism across Africa and beyond since the 1970s.’ Consequently, facilitating African Pentecostal theological education is not merely aiding the African church in addressing African questions; rather it should be approached as an exercise that seeks to empower Africa to play its rightful role in World Christianity.

According to Cheryl Johns, ‘The western church has lost sight of the pedagogical role of the Holy Spirit’, but Pentecostal experience is the ‘epistemological key’ that ‘radically alters traditional forms of theological education’. An innovative African Pentecostal theological education that seeks to meets the needs of the African Pentecostal movement is crucial in empowering the African Church to play its rightful role in World Christianity.

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22 Ojo, Transnational Religious Networks, 177.
Theological Education in Pentecostal Churches

Part III: Theological Education from Denominational and Confessional Perspectives

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http://www.anglicancommunion.org/ministry/theological/

Asia Pacific Theological Association: Network of Pentecostal/Charismatic Schools
http://www.apta-schools.org/

Association for Clinical Pastoral Education
http://www.acpe.edu

Association of Evangelicals in Africa
http://www.aeafrica.org/commissions/atcec.htm

Association of Protestant Scholarship Agencies in Germany
www.evangelische-stipendien.de

Association of Theological Field Educators
http://atfe.org/

Commission on Theological Education (World Reformed Fellowship)
http://www.wrfnet.org/web/guest/commissions/theologicaleducation

Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians (EATWOT)
http://www.eatwot.org/

European Research Network on Global Pentecostalism
http://www.glopent.net/

Foundation for Theological Education in South East Asia
http://www.ftesea.org/

General Board of Higher Education and Ministry/United Methodist Church
http://www.gbhem.org/site/c.lsKSL3POLvF/b.3463035/k.935B/Higher_Education.htm

Global Association of Theological Studies
http://www.gatsonline.org/

Global Network of Research Centres for Theology, Religious and Christian Studies
http://www.globalnetresearch.org/

Green Seminary Initiative: Theological Education for Sustainable Future
http://www.webofcreation.org/GreenSeminary/media/HesselTEMEC.htm

International Association for the Promotion of Higher Christian Education
http://www.iapche.org/

International Council for Evangelical Theological Education (ICETE)
http://www.icete-edu.org/

International Network in Advanced Theological Education (INATE)
www.inateonline.org/

Network for Ecumenical Learning in Central and Eastern Europe
http://www.ecum.ro/infoecum/Ro/nelcee-network-for-ecumenical

Overseas Council Advancing Christian Leaders
http://www.overseas.org/

Theological Education in Africa - Evangelical Network
http://www.theoledafrica.org

United Board for Higher Christian Education in Asia
http://www.unitedboard.org/
Section 2. Regional Associations of Theological Institutions

Africa

Accrediting Council for Theological Education in Africa (ACTEA)
http://www.theoledafrica.org/ACTEA

African Network of Institutions of Theological Education Preparing Anglicans for Ministry (ANITEPAM)
http://www.anitepam.org

Association Oecumenique des Theologiens Africains (AOTA)
http://www.wagne.net/aota

Theological Education by Extension in Africa
http://www.teeafrica.co.za

Asia

Asian Theological Association
http://www.ataasia.com/

Association of Theological Education in Nepal
http://www.aten.org.np

Association of Theological Schools in Indonesia
Perhimpunan Sekolah-Sekolah Teologi di Indonesia (PERSETIA)
http://www.persetia.org/

Association of Theological Schools in Myanmar
http://www.atemmm.org

Association of Theological Schools in South East Asia (ATESEA)
http://www.atesea.org/

Board of Theological Education of the Senate of Serampore College (BTESSC)
http://www.senateofseramporecollege.org/

Conference of Asian Theologians (CAT)
http://www.cca.org.hk/resources/ctc/cte97-cats1/cte97-cats1m.htm

Ecclesia of Women in Asia - Forum of Asian Catholic Women Theologians
http://ecclesiaofwomen.ning.com/
Caribbean

Caribbean Association of Theological Schools (CATS)
http://www.wocati.org/cats.html
Caribbean Evangelical Theological Association (CETA)
http://www.cetaweb.info

Europe

Association of Theological and Religious Educators in Eastern Europe (ARTEEE)
http://www.arteee.ru
Consortium of European Baptist Theological Schools
http://www.cebts.eu
European Evangelical Accrediting Association
http://www.eea.org
European Society for Catholic Theology
http://www.kuleuven.be/eurotheo/
European Society for Women in Theological Research
http://www.eswtr.org
Euro-Asian Accrediting Association (E-AAA)
http://www.e-aaa.org
Irish Theological Association
http://www.theology.ie/itadesc.htm

Latin America

Asociación de Bibliotecas Teológicas de México A.C. ABITEM
Asociacao de Seminarios Teologicos Evangelicos (ASTE)
http://www.aste.org.br/
Association for Evangelical Theological Education in Latin America (AETAL)
http://www.aetal.com
Latin America and Caribbean Community of Ecumenical Theological Education
Comunidad de Educación Teológica Ecuménica Latinoamericana y Caribe (CETELA)
http://www.cetela.com.br
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Asociacion de Seminarios e Instituciones Teologicas (ASIT)
http://www.asit.org.ar/

Middle East

Association of Theological Schools in the Middle East (ATIME)
http://www.etse.org

North America

Association for Biblical Higher Education (ABHE)
http://www.abhe.org
Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada (ATS)
http://www.ats.edu
Churches’ Council on Theological Education in Canada
http://www.ccte.ca
Theological Education Association of Mid-America (TEAM-A)  
www.eteama.org/

Pacific

Australian and New Zealand Association of Theological Schools (ANZATS)  
http://www.anzats.edu.au
New Zealand Association of Theological Schools (NZATS)  
http://www.nzats.godzone.net.nz
South Pacific Association of Bible Colleges (SPABC)  
http://www.spabc.com.au
South Pacific Association of Theological Schools (SPATS)  
http://www.spats.org.fj

Section 3: Resources for Theological Education

American Academy of Religion  
http://www.aarweb.org/
American Theological Library Association  
http://www.atla.com/atlahome.html
Asociacion Para La Educacion Teologica Hispana  
http://www.aeth.org
Association of Religion Data Services  
http://www.thearda.com/
Bible Gateway  
Bibliotheca Religiosa IntraText  
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http://www.thecirclecawt.org/
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http://biblical-studies.ca/
Computer Assisted Theology: Internet Resources for the Study and Teaching of Theology  
http://users.ox.ac.uk/~ctitext2/theology/
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This volume, the second in the Edinburgh 2010 series, includes reports of the nine main study groups working on different themes for the celebration of the centenary of the World Missionary Conference, Edinburgh 1910. Their collaborative work brings together perspectives that are as inclusive as possible of contemporary world Christianity and helps readers to grasp what it means in different contexts to be ‘witnessing to Christ today’.

Claudia Währisch-Oblau, Fidon Mwombeki (eds.)

Mission Continues
Global Impulses for the 21st Century
2010 / 978-1-870345-82-8 / 275pp (approx)

In May 2009, 35 theologians from Asia, Africa and Europe met in Wuppertal, Germany, for a consultation on mission theology organized by the United Evangelical Mission: Communion of 35 Churches in Three Continents. The aim was to participate in the 100th anniversary of the Edinburgh conference through a study process and reflect on the challenges for mission in the 21st century. This book brings together these papers written by experienced practitioners from around the world.
REGNUM STUDIES IN GLOBAL CHRISTIANITY
(Previously GLOBAL THEOLOGICAL VOICES series)

Series Listing

David Emmanuel Singh (ed.)
Jesus and the Cross
Reflections of Christians from Islamic Contexts
2008 / 978-1-870345-65-1 / x + 226pp

The Cross reminds us that the sins of the world are not borne through the exercise of power but through Jesus Christ’s submission to the will of the Father. The papers in this volume are organised in three parts: scriptural, contextual and theological. The central question being addressed is: how do Christians living in contexts, where Islam is a majority or minority religion, experience, express or think of the Cross? This is, therefore, an exercise in listening. As the contexts from where these engagements arise are varied, the papers in drawing scriptural, contextual and theological reflections offer a cross-section of Christian thinking about Jesus and the Cross.

Sung-wook Hong
Naming God in Korea
The Case of Protestant Christianity
2008 / 978-1-870345-66-8 / xiv + 170pp

Since Christianity was introduced to Korea more than a century ago, one of the most controversial issue has been the Korean term for the Christian ‘God’. This issue is not merely about naming the Christian God in Korean language, but it relates to the question of theological contextualization—the relationship between the gospel and culture—and the question of Korean Christian identity. This book examines the theological contextualization of the concept of ‘God’ in the contemporary Korean context and applies the translatable of Christianity to that context. It also demonstrates the nature of the gospel in relation to cultures, i.e., the universality of the gospel expressed in all human cultures.

Hubert van Beek (ed.)
Revisioning Christian Unity
The Global Christian Forum
2009 / 978-1-870345-74-3 / xx + 288pp

This book contains the records of the Global Christian Forum gathering held in Limuru near Nairobi, Kenya, on 6 – 9 November 2007 as well as the papers presented at that historic event. Also included are a summary of the Global Christian Forum process from its inception until the 2007 gathering and the reports of the evaluation of the process that was carried out in 2008.
Paul Hang-Sik Cho

Eschatology and Ecology
Experiences of the Korean Church
2010 / 978-1-870345-75-0/ 300pp (approx)

This book raises the question of why Korean people, and Korean Protestant Christians in particular, pay so little attention (in theory or practice) to ecological issues. The author argues that there is an important connection (or elective affinity) between this lack of attention and the other-worldly eschatology that is so dominant within Korean Protestant Christianity. Dispensational premillennialism, originally imported by American missionaries, resonated with traditional religious beliefs in Korea and soon came to dominate much of Korean Protestantism. This book argues that this, of all forms of millennialism, is the most damaging to ecological concerns.

Dietrich Werner, David Esterline, Namsoon Kang, Joshva Raja (eds.)

The Handbook of Theological Education in World Christianity
Theological Perspectives, Ecumenical Trends, Regional Surveys
2010 / 978-1-870345-80-4/ 800pp (approx)

This major reference work is the first ever comprehensive study of Theological Education in Christianity of its kind. With contributions from over 90 international scholars and church leaders, it aims to be easily accessible across denominational, cultural, educational, and geographic boundaries. The Handbook will aid international dialogue and networking among theological educators, institutions, and agencies. The major objectives of the text are (1) to provide introductory surveys on selected issues and themes in global theological education; (2) to provide regional surveys on key developments, achievements, and challenges in theological education; (3) to provide an overview of theological education for each of the major denominational / confessional traditions; and (4) to provide a reference section with an up-to-date list of the regional associations of theological institutions and other resources.

David Emmanuel Singh & Bernard C Farr (eds.)

Christianity and Education
Shaping of Christian Context in Thinking
2010 / 978-1-870345-81-1/ 244pp (approx)

Christianity and Education is a collection of papers published in Transformation: An International Journal of Holistic Mission Studies over a period of 15 years. It brings to life some of the papers that lay buried in shelves and in disparate volumes of Transformation, under a single volume for theological libraries, students and teachers. The articles here represent a spectrum of Christian thinking addressing issues of institutional development for theological education, theological studies in the context of global mission, contextually aware/informed education, and academies which deliver such education, methodologies and personal reflections.
Kwame Bediako
**Theology and Identity**  
*The Impact of Culture upon Christian Thought in the Second Century and in Modern Africa*  
1992 / 1-870345-10-X / xviii + 508pp  
The author examines the question of Christian identity in the context of the Graeco–Roman culture of the early Roman Empire. He then addresses the modern African predicament of quests for identity and integration.

Christopher Sugden
**Seeking the Asian Face of Jesus**  
*The Practice and Theology of Christian Social Witness in Indonesia and India 1974–1996*  
1997 / 1-870345-26-6 / xx + 496pp  
This study focuses on contemporary holistic mission with the poor in India and Indonesia combined with the call to transformation of all life in Christ with micro-credit enterprise schemes. ‘The literature on contextual theology now has a new standard to rise to’ – Lamin Sanneh (Yale University, USA).

Hwa Yung
**Mangoes or Bananas?**  
*The Quest for an Authentic Asian Christian Theology*  
1997 / 1-870345-25-8 / xii + 274pp  
Asian Christian thought remains largely captive to Greek dualism and Enlightenment rationalism because of the overwhelming dominance of Western culture. Authentic contextual Christian theologies will emerge within Asian Christianity with a dual recovery of confidence in culture and the gospel.

Keith E. Eitel
**Paradigm Wars**  
*The Southern Baptist International Mission Board Faces the Third Millennium*  
1999 / 1-870345-12-6 / x + 140pp  
The International Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention is the largest denominational mission agency in North America. This volume chronicles the historic and contemporary forces that led to the IMB’s recent extensive reorganization, providing the most comprehensive case study to date of a historic mission agency restructuring to continue its mission purpose into the twenty-first century more effectively.
Samuel Jayakumar

**Dalit Consciousness and Christian Conversion**  
*Historical Resources for a Contemporary Debate*  
1999 / 81-7214-497-0 / xxiv + 434pp  
(Published jointly with ISPCK)

The main focus of this historical study is social change and transformation among the Dalit Christian communities in India. Historiography tests the evidence in the light of the conclusions of the modern Dalit liberation theologians.

Vinay Samuel and Christopher Sugden (eds.)

**Mission as Transformation**  
*A Theology of the Whole Gospel*  
1999 / 0870345133 / 522pp

This book brings together in one volume twenty five years of biblical reflection on mission practice with the poor from around the world. The approach of holistic mission, which integrates proclamation, evangelism, church planting and social transformation seamlessly as a whole, has been adopted since 1983 by most evangelical development agencies, most indigenous mission agencies and many Pentecostal churches. This volume helps anyone understand how evangelicals, struggling to unite evangelism and social action, found their way in the last twenty five years to the biblical view of mission in which God calls all human beings to love God and their neighbour; never creating a separation between the two.

Christopher Sugden

**Gospel, Culture and Transformation**  
2000 / 1-870345-32-0 / viii + 152pp

*A Reprint, with a New Introduction, of Part Two of Seeking the Asian Face of Jesus*  
Gospel, Culture and Transformation explores the practice of mission especially in relation to transforming cultures and communities. - ‘Transformation is to enable God’s vision of society to be actualised in all relationships: social, economic and spiritual, so that God’s will may be reflected in human society and his love experienced by all communities, especially the poor.’

Bernhard Ott

**Beyond Fragmentation: Integrating Mission and Theological Education**  
*A Critical Assessment of some Recent Developments in Evangelical Theological Education*  
2001 / 1-870345-14-2 / xxviii + 382pp

*Beyond Fragmentation* is an enquiry into the development of Mission Studies in evangelical theological education in Germany and German-speaking Switzerland between 1960 and 1995. The author undertakes a detailed examination of the paradigm shifts which have taken place in recent years in both the theology of mission and the understanding of theological education.
Gideon Githiga

The Church as the Bulwark against Authoritarianism
Development of Church and State Relations in Kenya, with Particular Reference to the Years after Political Independence 1963-1992
2002 / 1-870345-38-X / xviii + 218pp

‘All who care for love, peace and unity in Kenyan society will want to read this careful history by Bishop Githiga of how Kenyan Christians, drawing on the Bible, have sought to share the love of God, bring his peace and build up the unity of the nation, often in the face of great difficulties and opposition.’ Canon Dr Chris Sugden, Oxford Centre for Mission Studies.

Myung Sung-Hoon, Hong Young-Gi (eds.)

Charis and Charisma
David Yonggi Cho and the Growth of Yoido Full Gospel Church
2003 / 1-870345-45-2 / xxii + 218pp

This book discusses the factors responsible for the growth of the world’s largest church. It expounds the role of the Holy Spirit, the leadership, prayer, preaching, cell groups and creativity in promoting church growth. It focuses on God’s grace (charis) and inspiring leadership (charisma) as the two essential factors and the book’s purpose is to present a model for church growth worldwide.

Samuel Jayakumar

Mission Reader
Historical Models for Wholistic Mission in the Indian Context
2003 / 1-870345-42-8 / x + 250pp
(Published jointly with ISPCK)

This book is written from an evangelical point of view revalidating and reaffirming the Christian commitment to wholistic mission. The roots of the ‘wholistic mission’ combining ‘evangelism and social concerns’ are to be located in the history and tradition of Christian evangelism in the past; and the civilizing purpose of evangelism is compatible with modernity as an instrument in nation building.

Bob Robinson

Christians Meeting Hindus
An Analysis and Theological Critique of the Hindu-Christian Encounter in India
2004 / 1-870345-39-8 / xvii + 392pp

This book focuses on the Hindu-Christian encounter, especially the intentional meeting called dialogue, mainly during the last four decades of the twentieth century, and specifically in India itself.
Gene Early

**Leadership Expectations**

*How Executive Expectations are Created and Used in a Non-Profit Setting*

2005 / 1-870345-30-4 / xxiv + 276pp

The author creates an Expectation Enactment Analysis to study the role of the Chancellor of the University of the Nations-Kona, Hawaii. This study is grounded in the field of managerial work, jobs, and behaviour and draws on symbolic interactionism, role theory, role identity theory and enactment theory. The result is a conceptual framework for developing an understanding of managerial roles.

Tharcisse Gatwa

**The Churches and Ethnic Ideology in the Rwandan Crises 1900-1994**

2005 / 1-870345-24-X / approx 300pp

Since the early years of the twentieth century Christianity has become a new factor in Rwandan society. This book investigates the role Christian churches played in the formulation and development of the racial ideology that culminated in the 1994 genocide.

Julie Ma

**Mission Possible**

*Biblical Strategies for Reaching the Lost*

2005 / 1-870345-37-1 / xvi + 142pp

This is a missiology book for the church which liberates missiology from the specialists for the benefit of every believer. It also serves as a textbook that is simple and friendly, and yet solid in biblical interpretation. This book links the biblical teaching to the actual and contemporary missiological settings with examples, making the Bible come alive to the reader.

Allan Anderson, Edmond Tang (eds.)

**Asian and Pentecostal**

*The Charismatic Face of Christianity in Asia*

2005 / 1-870345-43-6 / xiv + 596pp

(Published jointly with APTS Press)

This book provides a thematic discussion and pioneering case studies on the history and development of Pentecostal and Charismatic churches in the countries of South Asia, South East Asia and East Asia.
I. Mark Beaumont

**Christology in Dialogue with Muslims**
*A Critical Analysis of Christian Presentations of Christ for Muslims from the Ninth and Twentieth Centuries*
2005 / 1-870345-46-0 / xxvi + 228pp

This book analyses Christian presentations of Christ for Muslims in the most creative periods of Christian-Muslim dialogue, the first half of the ninth century and the second half of the twentieth century. In these two periods, Christians made serious attempts to present their faith in Christ in terms that take into account Muslim perceptions of him, with a view to bridging the gap between Muslim and Christian convictions.

Thomas Czövek,

**Three Seasons of Charismatic Leadership**
*A Literary-Critical and Theological Interpretation of the Narrative of Saul, David and Solomon*
2006 / 978-1-870345484 / 272pp

This book investigates the charismatic leadership of Saul, David and Solomon. It suggests that charismatic leaders emerge in crisis situations in order to resolve the crisis by the charisma granted by God. Czövek argues that Saul proved himself as a charismatic leader as long as he acted resolutely and independently from his mentor Samuel. In the author’s eyes, Saul’s failure to establish himself as a charismatic leader is caused by his inability to step out from Samuel’s shadow.

Jemima Atieno Oluoch

**The Christian Political Theology of Dr. John Henry Okullu**
2006 / 1-870345-51-7 / xx + 137pp

This book reconstructs the Christian political theology of Bishop John Henry Okullu, DD, through establishing what motivated him and the biblical basis for his socio-political activities. It also attempts to reconstruct the socio-political environment that nurtured Dr Okullu’s prophetic ministry.

Richard Burgess

**Nigeria’s Christian Revolution**
*The Civil War Revival and Its Pentecostal Progeny (1967-2006)*
2008 / 978-1-870345-63-7 / xxii + 347pp

This book describes the revival that occurred among the Igbo people of Eastern Nigeria and the new Pentecostal churches it generated, and documents the changes that have occurred as the movement has responded to global flows and local demands. As such, it explores the nature of revivalist and Pentecostal experience, but does so against the backdrop of local socio-political and economic developments, such as decolonisation and civil war, as well as broader processes, such as modernisation and globalisation.
David Emmanuel Singh & Bernard C Farr (eds.)

**Christianity and Cultures**

*Shaping Christian Thinking in Context*

2008 / 978-1-870345-69-9 / x + 260pp

This volume marks an important milestone, the 25th anniversary of the Oxford Centre for Mission Studies (OCMS). The papers here have been exclusively sourced from Transformation, a quarterly journal of OCMS, and seek to provide a tripartite view of Christianity’s engagement with cultures by focusing on the question: how is Christian thinking being formed or reformed through its interaction with the varied contexts it encounters? The subject matters include different strands of theological-missiological thinking, socio-political engagements and forms of family relationships in interaction with the host cultures.

Tormod Engelsviken, Ernst Harbakk, Rolv Olsen, Thor Strandenes (eds.)

**Mission to the World**

*Communicating the Gospel in the 21st Century: Essays in Honour of Knud Jørgensen*

2008 / 978-1-870345-64-4 / 472pp

Knud Jørgensen is Director of Areopagos and Associate Professor of Missiology at MF Norwegian School of Theology. This book reflects on the main areas of Jørgensen’s commitment to mission. At the same time it focuses on the main frontier of mission, the world, the content of mission, the Gospel, the fact that the Gospel has to be communicated, and the context of contemporary mission in the 21st century.

Al Tizon

**Transformation after Lausanne**

*Radical Evangelical Mission in Global-Local Perspective*

2008 / 978-1-870345-68-2 / xx + 281pp

After Lausanne ’74, a worldwide network of radical evangelical mission theologians and practitioners use the notion of "Mission as Transformation" to integrate evangelism and social concern together, thus lifting theological voices from the Two Thirds World to places of prominence. This book documents the definitive gatherings, theological tensions, and social forces within and without evangelicalism that led up to Mission as Transformation. And it does so through a global-local grid that points the way toward greater holistic mission in the 21st century.
Bambang Budijanto  
Values and Participation  
Development in Rural Indonesia  
2009 / 978-1-870345-70-5 / x + 237pp

Socio-religious values and socio-economic development are inter-dependant, inter-related and are constantly changing in the context of macro political structures, economic policy, religious organizations and globalization; and micro influences such as local affinities, identity, politics, leadership and beliefs. The three Lopait communities in Central Java, Indonesia provide an excellent model of the rich and complex negotiations and interactions among all the above factors. The book argues that the comprehensive approach in understanding the socio-religious values of each local community is essential to accurately describing their respective identity which will help institutions and agencies, both governmental and non-governmental, to relate to these communities with dignity and respect.

Young-hoon Lee  
The Holy Spirit Movement in Korea  
Its Historical and Theological Development  
2009 / 978-1-870345-67-5 / x + 174pp

This book traces the historical and theological development of the Holy Spirit Movement in Korea through six successive periods (from 1900 to the present time). These periods are characterized by repentance and revival (1900-20), persecution and suffering under Japanese occupation (1920-40), confusion and division (1940-60), explosive revival in which the Pentecostal movement played a major role in the rapid growth of Korean churches (1960-80), the movement reaching out to all denominations (1980-2000), and the new context demanding the Holy Spirit movement to open new horizons in its mission engagement (2000-). The volume also discusses the relationship between this movement and other religions such as shamanism, and looks forward to further engagement with issues of concern in wider society.

Alan R. Johnson  
Leadership in a Slum  
A Bangkok Case Study  
2009 / 978-1-870345-71-2 xx + 238pp

This book looks at leadership in the social context of a slum in Bangkok from an angle different from traditional studies which measure well educated Thais on leadership scales derived in the West. Using both systematic data collection and participant observation, it develops a culturally preferred model as well as a set of models based in Thai concepts that reflect on-the-ground realities. This work challenges the dominance of the patron-client rubric for understanding all forms of Thai leadership and offers a view for understanding leadership rooted in local social systems, contrary to approaches that assume the universal applicability of leadership research findings across all cultural settings. It concludes by looking at the implications of the anthropological approach for those who are involved in leadership training in Thai settings and beyond.
Titre Ande

Leadership and Authority
Bula Matari and Life - Community Ecclesiology in Congo
2010 / 978-1-870345-72-9 xvii + 189pp

This book proposes that Christian theology in Africa can make significant developments if a critical understanding of the socio-political context in contemporary Africa is taken seriously. The Christian leadership in post-colonial Africa has cloned its understanding and use of authority on the Bula Matari model, which was issued from the brutality of colonialism and political absolutism in post-colonial Africa. This model has caused many problems in churches, including dysfunction, conflicts, divisions and a lack of prophetic ministry. Titre proposes a Life-Community ecclesiology for liberating authority, where leadership is a function, not a status, and ‘apostolic succession’ belongs to all the people of God.

Frank Kwesi Adams

Odwira and the Gospel
A Study of the Asante Odwira Festival and its Significance for Christianity in Ghana
2010 /978-1-870345-59-0

The study of the Odwira festival is the key to the understanding of Asante religious and political life in Ghana. The book explores the nature of the Odwira festival longitudinally - in pre-colonial, colonial and post-independence Ghana - and examines the Odwira ideology and its implications for understanding the Asante self-identity. The book also discusses how some elements of faith portrayed in the Odwira festival could provide a framework for Christianity to engage with Asante culture at a greater depth. Theological themes in Asante belief that have emerged from this study include the theology of sacrament, ecclesiology, eschatology, Christology and a complex concept of time. The author argues that Asante cultural identity lies at the heart of the process by which the Asante Christian faith is carried forward.

Bruce Carlton

Strategy Coordinator
Changing the Course of Southern Baptist Missions
2010 / 978-1-870345-78-1 xvii + 268pp

In 1976, the Southern Baptist Convention adopted its Bold New Thrusts in Foreign Missions with the overarching goal of sharing the gospel with every person in the world by the year 2000. The formation of Cooperative Services International (CSI) in 1985 and the assigning of the first non-residential missionary (NRM) in 1987 demonstrated the Foreign Mission Board’s (now International Mission Board) commitment to take the gospel message to countries that restricted traditional missionary presence and to people groups identified as having little or no access to the gospel. Carlton traces the historical development along with an analysis of the key components of the paradigm and its significant impact on Southern Baptists’ missiology.
OTHER REGNUM TITLES

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1994 / 1870345177 / 352pp

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**The Story of Faith Missions**
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Douglas Peterson
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*A Pentecostal Theology of Social Concern in Latin America*
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