

# EVANGELICAL REVIEW OF THEOLOGY

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## Evangelical Review of Theology



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# The Future of Evangelical Theology

Rolf Hille

Christian theology has a very impressive *history* of nearly two thousand years. But we are living in a secular world with a plurality of ideologies, philosophies and powerful religions; and so we need to ask: has Christian theology also an impressive *future*? Since the century of Enlightenment, and especially the religious criticism of the influential philosophers of the nineteenth century, the future of Christianity has been denied. The spectacular success of the modern sciences and the Industrial Revolution put the Christian faith, and the old privileges of Christian churches, aside.

Therefore it is no wonder that Christians were concerned to emphasize their unity, beyond all historical confessions and denominations, at the beginning of the twentieth century. When John Mott sent invitations for the first Conference on World Missions, in 1910 in Edinburgh, his main argument was that the Christian churches could have a future only if they were united in confessing their faith. At that time the mainline churches and the different denominations were willing to look forward to confirm the common ground of all Christian theology and to stand together in order to win the future for Christian theology and the Christian Church.

And so we have to ask today if it makes sense to proclaim one specific; and relatively new, form of Christian theology at the end of the twentieth century, with all its challenges to the Christian Church and its thinking. If we claim a future for evangelical theology, we have to clarify the way in which evangelical theology is rooted in Christian theology at all, and ask where the differences are that make it necessary to distinguish evangelical theology from (for example) Roman Catholic, Orthodox, Lutheran or Methodist, theology. What is the specific shape of *evangelical* theology?

## THE MISSIOLOGICAL SHAPE OF EVANGELICAL THEOLOGY

Evangelical theology is inextricably involved with the fortunes of the evangelical movement as a whole. Theology both influences the development of the evangelical movement, and is also dependent on the development of evangelicalism at the same time.

Evangelicalism is primarily an *evangelistic* and *missionary movement* within the worldwide Christian Church. It is a gathering of Christians who are committed to Christ and his mission throughout the [p. 4](#) world, transcending all orders of Protestant denominations. Evangelicalism unites Christians from different theological backgrounds and traditions and, to some degree, emphasizes by its missionary engagement new theological profiles within the diversity of historic Christian faiths. The fundamental factor of integration of those different Christian traditions which unite in the evangelical movement is their commitment to *world evangelization*, as expressed for example in the Lausanne Covenant of 1974.

Here I would like to examine how this fundamental commitment to missions is shaping evangelical theology, and why it is important that we should reaffirm the evangelical movement in its evangelistic task by assembling a biblical basis for a missionary theology. I think evangelical theology has a future *only in as far as it serves its missionary task*. One can have a future only if one has a real presence. And evangelical theology has a presence because mission is in God's time. Within the framework of biblical salvation, mission history is on God's agenda for this period of time. The Christian Church is created by the Holy Spirit through the word of the risen Lord. He, in his authority, has

put mission at the top of his agenda; and the only thing that we as Christians have to do is to remain in step with the Spirit and God's own purpose. The future of evangelical theology is not guaranteed by any academic standard or by any human thinkers, but only by the promises of the Lord himself. And so I propose to try, in what follows, to outline at least in part what it really means to define theology as a function of the mission of the Lord Jesus Christ. In order to accomplish this theological programme, I will give a systematic commentary on the Great Commission from the perspective of our question; what should evangelical theology be in order to have a future guaranteed by Christ?

## **THE CHRISTOLOGICAL AUTHORITY OF EVANGELICAL THEOLOGY**

Immediately before his ascension, Jesus proclaimed his lordship in the presence of his disciples: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me". By this, the Lord underlined within the Great Commission itself the fact that all theological truth is *personal* truth. This makes him tremendously different to all founders of religions or great philosophers of the past. Their mandate has indubitably ended with their deaths. Their words have to be gathered in literature and must be restored. The only influence they have in history is through the efficiency of the finalized traditions which have been restored. Those who follow them have to deal only with historical facts and figures. **P. 5** There is a significant contrast between such a closed situation, and the living process which pertains between persons who act and react.

Therefore evangelical theology must be aware that it has to deal not only with a great historical past, but with the living God who is present in the spirit of the risen Christ. Because Christ is given all power, theologians cannot confront his words only in terms of literature, but in interaction with the real Christ who reveals himself by his living Word. I think that is one of the deepest cleavages between evangelical theology and the so-called historical critical theologians who deal with the Bible only on the level of historical interest. There is a great difference between trying to restore a former teaching of a prophet or philosopher who has already died, and hearing the Word of the almighty powerful Lord who speaks and works his miracles throughout history. The words spoken two thousand years ago have the same relevance and dynamic power today because Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

Christ is the one who builds the bridges between transcendence and immanence, heaven and earth. By his incarnation, he sustains the ongoing relationship between God and men among his disciples and within his church. Because of this, evangelical theologians can never follow the atheistic statement of some modern science which claims that we should think *etsi deus non daretur*, as if God were not there; on the contrary, all real theology flows forth out of this powerful dynamic relationship between the teaching Christ and the learning disciple, between the revealing God and the reflecting theologian. This reality of interaction between Christ and the theologian, in all theological thinking and writing, demands as one consequence that the theologian respects the glorious presence of his Lord. Theological reflection can be done only in the attitude of a humble servant who hears his Lord's voice and bows before him.

Paradoxically, this attitude of servanthood is the foundation of every theological self-conscious and authoritative statement. The authority of the sending Lord is given to the apostles, and on the basis of their written testimony to all missionaries following in church history. Therefore theology has the supreme authority to defeat every ideology, religion, and philosophy that dares to direct opposition against Christ's word. Theology does not take place in the sense of a platonic dialogue in which nobody knows the truth but where the partners will find truth as they gather to answer one another and enlighten

one another by their questions. Instead of such an understanding of dialogue, Christian theology has a prophetic mandate. The Christian teacher or theologian has to proclaim the truth in a prophetic sense of the Old [p. 6](#) Testament prophets who spoke *ko amar Jahwe*, that is, 'So speaks the Lord Almighty'. And as long as theologians stay in this humble attitude before the Lord and proclaim his word, He reveals his power today through the words spoken in human weakness. The future of evangelical theology depends exclusively on the authority of the sending Christ who proclaims his gospel by his disciples.

## THE EVANGELISTIC PURPOSES OF EVANGELICAL THEOLOGY

The Great Commission commands us to disciple all people. This should be done by two instruments of grace: by *baptising* and by *teaching*. Baptism underlines the objective dimension in the process of christianizing a heathen, and teaching is a subjective application to this powerful sign of grace given in baptism. In the context of our theme, I do not want to emphasize here the objective side in terms of sacraments and teaching about baptism, but to ask the question: 'What is meant by Christian *teaching*'?

First we have to recognize and reflect upon the fact that the foundation of all theology lies exclusively in the mandate to teach which the risen Lord has given to his apostles. So Christian theology is implicated as one function of the overall missionary task of the Church. By teaching the gospel, people will recognize who God is in his Trinity and learn that they are to become aware of their sin and lostness. They hear the word of redemption, and the Spirit moves their hearts to repent and makes them into disciples of Christ. The Word of God proclaimed in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit is, in itself, the effective means of making a sinner into a child of God and an heir of the coming blessings. By the Word, the reality of heaven is brought to mankind, and *vice versa*: people are brought to Christ in order to become heirs of the heavenly kingdom.

Whoever denies that Christian theology is only a function within the process of discipling cannot be a theologian in the sense of the New Testament. Whenever theology becomes a *master* of Scripture, and separates from the church and its evangelistic tasks, it perverts itself.

The liberal understanding of theology cannot therefore be called Christian or evangelical, by definition; because the emphasis of liberal theology is to *liberate* human thinking from the authority of a given authentic revelation. Instead of leading people in the obedience of faith, it longs for liberation from any authority outside the rational dignity of the person. I do not wonder that the modern rationalism of the West tends to uproot the churches from their biblical foundation and ends in alienation from the historic Christian faith. One of its [p.7](#) consequences is declining churches. Liberalism, in its depths, will not agree to use the intellectual potential of man simply as a tool in the possession of a servant who is concerned to minister only his Lord's teaching. There is a fleshly fascination in leading people into the abandonment of heteronomic influences. And so every theologian has to decide whether he is willing to serve Christ in teaching others and to bring them, by his teaching, to Christian maturity; or whether he is to liberate them, in the name of the human capability of rational thinking, from God's revealed truth.

Last but not least, evangelical theology has its source in repentance of mind and intellectual behaviour. It comes *from* conversion and leads *to* conversion. The criteria for all theology that claims to be evangelical must be formed by biblical thinking and must be empowered by the Holy Spirit to make disciples and to build them up in maturity on the way of sanctification. It is not any particular academic standard that makes theology worthwhile and relevant, but only the biblical foundation of its content and the missionary purpose in which it is spoken. Evangelical theology cannot strive for the

scientific ideal of *sine ira et studio* (without deep personal engagement and commitment). Theology is no science in the modern sense of a purposeless enterprise on the intellectual level. Spiritual ambition makes not only the difference between evangelical and liberal theology, but also between evangelical and *Orthodox* theology. There is unity between Orthodox theologians and evangelical theologians in terms of the objective contents of Christian theology, which must be based on a biblical foundation. But there is an important difference between them, for evangelical theology is longing and praying instantly to promote revival. It is, in all its aspects of thinking and depths of reflection, longing for the repentance of non-Christians and the christianizing of the Christians by increasing sanctification of life. A good evangelical theologian looks forward to bearing eternal fruit by a humble ministry of the Word of God.

## **THE BIBLICAL CONTENTS AND THE PRACTICAL PROFILE OF EVANGELICAL THEOLOGY**

The Lord commands his disciples to teach all nations to obey everything he has told the apostles. The word 'everything' implies two principles for our understanding of the Scriptures. The Reformers of the sixteenth century emphasized their theological position in two fundamental hermeneutical tags: *sola scriptura* and *tota scriptura*. They were convinced that Christ has bound himself to the written word P.8 of Scripture. In Scripture, and only there, can his will be found. There is no other source of divine revelation where man can find true knowledge of God and his eternal will and the way of redemption. This entire godly truth is what is meant by the principle of *sola scriptura* (scripture alone). This principle has to be maintained in evangelical theology today, not only against the Roman Catholic doctrine of a combination between ecclesiastical tradition and Scripture, but also against the modern ecumenical approach to interreligious dialogue with non-Christian faiths.

It is indeed very humbling for the human wisdom that likes to put its confidence in the so-called 'eternal truth of reason' rather than in the contingent events of salvation history. But there is no true knowledge of redemption aside from the biblical revelation. Jesus is the only way to truth and life for every man on earth throughout history.

On the other hand, evangelical theology also has to defend the hermeneutical principle of *tota scriptura* against every form of liberalism that searches to find a new canon within the biblical canon. Every attempt to select within the Bible, between an everlasting authentic word of God and mere words of human writers, will be a failure. The history of Protestant theology throughout the last 250 years has demonstrated the chaos of theological opinions. Theologians who tried to build up theology on the basis of a selected or restricted Bible could not find a common basis for confessing Christ today. All attempts to develop theology by selecting between divine and human statements in the Bible, end earlier or later in a pure relativism. There is no convincing argument—even on the intellectual level—as to how a theologian possibly could, after a period of more than two thousand years, distinguish between those events of salvation history that really happened and those phrases in the Bible that were spoken by the 'historical Jesus'.

Evangelical theology has to refer to the whole of the Scriptures without any amendment to the Bible. This is a basis for evangelical theologians to become good stewards who can be trusted to serve in God's house and to make known all mysteries of God's revealed truth. They are not allowed to let any Christian untaught or ignorant into any aspect of the biblical revelation, beginning with predestination, creation, sin, redemption, and sanctification, and ending with the eternal consummation of God's kingdom. And if theologians teach and provide God's people with eternal truth, this

teaching is nevertheless a theoretical affair. For ‘all Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for all good work’ p.9 ([2 Tim. 3:16f](#)). Therefore, it is not the strength, but the *weakness* of the academic tradition of Western theology that it strives for the ideal of mere theoretical knowledge in terms of philosophy or even traditional theology. Biblical truth is very practical and every theological research must be validated by the spiritual relevance it has for the practice of godly living. The theoretical approach to theology leads to dangerous pitfalls. This is clear from the story of the early Church with its Hellenistic background, throughout scholastic theology in the Middle Ages and the period of the so—called ‘Protestant orthodoxy’ of the sixteenth and seventeenth century up to today’s scholars with their high academic standards.

Every intellectual decision insulated from the grassroot problems of the church, is at best inefficient and at worst positively dangerous for God’s people. A good theologian is one who struggles in a responsible position as teacher with all the temptations of his age, and searches in close connection with his fellow disciples for actual answers to be found in the Bible. Those scholars who hide themselves behind the walls of monasteries or modern universities are often incompetent in relevant questions of everyday life in the church. The opposite state of affairs is evident in the lives of those theologians who have shared as vital members of the Church the needs and the problems of a congregation. They have a fruitful public ministry in teaching and writing. Paul was an excellent theologian because he was such a dedicated missionary. Or one could cite the bishop of Hippo, Augustine; or the enormous outreach of the Reformers; or the ministry of John Wesley; or our brothers such as John Stott who have a fruitful ministry today.

The future of evangelical theology lies in this indispensable combination of solid biblical thinking, regarding and understanding the meaning of salvation history, and the capacity to apply this biblical knowledge to different situations in the church in a practical manner. For it is the practice of biblical truth that convinces the non-Christian world and makes our teaching and preaching effective for the hearer. The message will be heard when love is seen. Evangelical theology looks forward not to winning academic debates, but to winning for Christ those who are lost in their sins.

## **THE ECUMENICAL OUTREACH AND ESCHATOLOGICAL DRIVE OF EVANGELICAL THEOLOGY**

The Greek word *oikumene* means the totality of mankind living worldwide in a colourful diversity of nations, tribes and tongues within p.10 different societies, political systems, and cultures. This diversity is implied in our Lord’s own words when he compels us to invite nations to his kingdom, insisting that the apostles should ‘make disciples of all nations’ (compare for example the parable of the great banquet, in [Luke 14:15–24](#)). The different ministries of proclaiming, preaching, and teaching the gospel are spiritually one in their foundation in scriptural truth and its missionary purpose. But the ecumenical outreach of missions leads us to the point where we have to study sincerely the abundant variety of different gifts given by the Holy Spirit and the variety of ministries in the Church. Because of the very different situations of the peoples to be reached with the gospel, there is a need for different missiological applications in teaching the gospel. It is an ongoing process of Christian teaching, starting with the elementary truth of redemption to promote every Christian into the full potential of knowledge God has prepared for us. So the proclamation of the gospel leads to the necessity to distinguish between the specific input that has to be contributed by evangelists, pastors, and teachers in different ways. Evangelists and pastors are also teachers and must teach what the

gospel implies, what is the distinctive context of revealed truth that should be known and understood in order to be believed. In that sense, the Great Commission '*teach them*' is an unlimited request.

But an evangelist or pastor can teach others only after he has been taught and disciplined himself. And there is one of the main tasks of teachers, in the deeper sense of theologians. Theologians first should aim their research and teaching towards a solid Christian doctrine to provide for the next generation of evangelists and pastors.

I stress this because there is an ongoing temptation in all theological education not to train and teach evangelists and pastors, but only to reproduce theologians for an academic career. Let me say clearly that I am not denying the importance of intellectual training for every Christian worker, to enable him to fulfil potentially the apologetic task of [1 Peter 3:15](#) ('Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have'). But this intellectual apologetic task is that of defending the faith and sustaining the proclamation of the gospel by solid argumentation in different changing situations. The need for contextualizing the gospel in very different cultural situation requires a solid intellectual education in theology. And this apologetic outreach, which arises from an urgent search for those who are lost in sin and error, must be rooted in a basic and profound understanding of the Scriptures. Biblical thinking therefore must not only be planted in the consciousness of a [p.11](#) theologian, but must become his second nature and must shape his thinking and his attitudes very deeply, penetrating his unconscious personality. This is a life-long process and implies a deep commitment from every disciple to learning from his Master.

Anyone who is sent to teach what Jesus taught must carefully study the Scripture in order to become able to handle spiritual questions properly. This includes the capacity to connect biblical lines between the Old and New Testaments, and to recognize how the meaning of the revelation is to apply to a particular situation today. Furthermore, it is a matter of wisdom to study industriously the history of the Church and its mission to find spiritual wisdom. It is one of the characteristics of evangelical theology that it is not bound to any particular systematized forms of Christianity or theology, but includes knowledge and experience from different Christian traditions and tests them out in the light of the Scriptures. In this sense, evangelical theology is ecumenical theology with a broad aspect of freedom to prove everything and to retain the best. By such wisdom that arises from the study of history, evangelical theologians will be sensitive to problems that come up in similar situations in the Church today; and will become capable of avoiding the mistakes of recent generations. We should not repeat unvaryingly all the practices of former generations. Last but not least, there is a necessity to use all the tools of the practical sciences in terms of education, mass communication, theory of communication, sociology and so on.

But all these treasures of knowledge should be integrated into a clear perspective of discipling nations for Christ's sake. No theological knowledge and education should replace this eschatological awareness of the coming Christ, and the sense of responsibility to save the lost, and lead Christ's flock to maturity and into the likeness of Christ through sanctification.

The missionary outreach of theology can be threatened by a tendency for our teaching to become pure specialization. It has been said, harshly but with some truth, that 'a specialist in the area of theology is someone who knows everything about nothing'. If a theologian reflects for many years on the same subjects, and is doing research in only one area of one theological discipline, there arises a temptation to confuse one's own specific research subject with the mandate and needs of the whole Church. To stay firm against

temptation, every scholar should challenge himself every day by this provoking question: 'Why should anyone hear the gospel twice before everyone has heard the gospel once?'

Theologians have a tendency to sit down and remain seated, as the [p. 12](#) rabbis did in Jesus' time. But it was while Jesus was walking throughout Palestine that he taught and disciplined the apostles. Evangelical theology has to be *mobile*. It is the eschatological restlessness and the challenge of the unfinished task of reaching and penetrating every culture for Jesus Christ that gives theology a dynamic power. The urgent need of going into depth in different areas, and doing specific research programmes and projects to supply evangelists and teachers with profound background knowledge, must be balanced with the passion to reach everyone on earth for Christ.

It seems to me then, that evangelical theology should be shaped by these two dynamic dimensions: first, to go into biblical depth in order to be able to 'demolish arguments and every present pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and to take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ' ([2 Cor. 10:5](#)); then to be characterized by the restlessness of ambassadors with an urgent message to communicate. It is a pneumatical fact that every real Christian theology must lead to mission; for it is the Holy Spirit who has continually to guide and enlighten the theologian in his work of research and teaching, and it is the very same Spirit who involves himself in mission to accomplish the unfinished task of world evangelization.

In this context, I want to add one remarkable fact of which as theologians we should be especially aware. Since the period of romanticism, with its emphasis on originality and individual development, everyone who works as a scholar feels himself compelled to pioneer and publish something *new*. In many cases, the drive for originality leads theologians to heretical statements and sometimes even to heretical concepts of theology. In the Great Commission the Lord commands us to teach only what he has taught, not our own modern individual ideas. For this reason, evangelical theology has to remain conservative to be alert to protect the original Christian faith. But, as fallen beings, we evangelical theologians also feel sometimes the fleshly impulse to oppose the historical Christian doctrine in order to find our own profile in provoking the Church by strange and contested ideas. This should not be so.

What then is the answer to the temptation of becoming *stagnant* in a conservative and orthodox theology? Many theologians search for the answers in terms of liberal or syncretistic concepts. But the right biblical answer to this problem is not liberalism or syncretism, but mission. If he keeps in step with the Spirit who goes forth to reach the unreached, the theologian is compelled to think new thoughts, contextualizing the gospel to different nations in order to meet within [p. 13](#) the apologetic confrontations with new ideologies, religions, and philosophies the heights and depths of scriptural truth.

And so evangelists, pastors and theologians should not be at loggerheads, but have a mutual exchange. Evangelists and pastors need from time to time some fresh input of deepening doctrine and renewed knowledge for their ministry. Otherwise, theologians should occasionally cooperate with evangelists and pastors in grass roots experience of fulfilling the Great Commission. In this way, they ought to serve one another by performing a mutual service to build up the whole Church. Permanent contact between theologians and evangelists and pastors will help the theologians in theological education to distinguish between specific projects of research and things that are necessary to teach to every student of theology. They will recognize what research projects are useful and will have the promise of bearing fruit in the ministry of evangelists and pastors.

Evangelical theology has a future if it is moved by the Spirit to go forth and to recognize what we should say in this eschatological period of salvation history. That is to proclaim Christ until he comes. The future of evangelical theology is the coming Lord himself, who



will charge, prove and reward every theology; as Paul put it in [1 Cor. 3:12-14](#), 'If any man builds on this foundation [Jesus Christ] using gold, silver, costly stones, hay or straw, his work will be shown for what it is because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man's work. If what he has built survives, he will receive his reward.' To this climax of history, evangelical theologians may look forward with joy and comfort because the living Lord gives his promise also for their task of researching and teaching. 'And surely I am with you always,' he says, 'to the very end of the age.'

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# The Future of Evangelical Theological Education

James E. Plueddemann

## A VISION FOR THE FUTURE

Who is worried about the future of evangelical theological education? Theologians are usually enamoured of the ideas of the *past* and scarcely take time to reflect on the future. School principals are overwhelmed with *present* needs for funds, faculty, and facilities and don't want to be overwhelmed by hypothetical burdens of the future. Those interested in the future are professors of eschatology, arguing about whether the beast with the ten horns is the European Common Market, the Roman Catholic Church, or communist world domination.

Modern prophets seem strangely isolated from the pressing practical needs of theological educators. While futurologists prophesy catastrophic gloom and doom awaiting the world from the depleted ozone layer, drought, AIDS, and inflation, educators worry more about the future of the school mimeograph machine and whether the textbook order will arrive on time. Most people who study the future tell us how bad things are going to be, prescribing the drastic action we must take in order to survive the future.

Christians should have peace about the future because of their sure hope! From God's perspective the future is not out of control. But we must be reminded that the Lord of Creation uses his children to make a difference in the world. We are called by the power of God to change the world, not merely to adapt to changing gloomy future predictions. As theological educators, we must not merely react to the dire predictions of the future. We must, by the grace of God, *change* the future.

Theological educators can contemplate the future with three possible outlooks. They can actively continue as they are; they can react to problems as they arise; or they can take initiatives so that from a human perspective, the future will be *different* because of

what they do as educators. The first option is *active*, the second *reactive*, and the third *proactive*.

### **The Active View**

The active view of the future can be compared to the work of sailors on a ship. They mop the deck, mend the sails and polish the cannon. But no one on this ship knows where the ship should be going. The sailors keep very busy. In fact many are suffering from overwork and burn-out. **p. 15** Captains are encouraged to take management courses on how to efficiently organize sailors. Cooks learn how to serve less expensive and more nutritious food. Gunners learn how to load more rapidly. More efficient but directionless activity is the goal for the future of this ship.

Another metaphor to describe the active view is that of the race horse. Trainers work to teach the jockeys better riding skills. They work to improve the diet, training and breeding of horses. But in the end, the horses merely run around in circles.

Theological schools can get so caught up with the present needs of survival that a concern for the future is neglected. There are seldom enough teachers or enough funds to run a school, leaving little time for the leisure and luxury of dreaming about the future.

Accreditation standards can be guilty of promoting the active view. We can work to improve the quality of libraries, faculty credentials, standards for incoming students and increased credibility—without really making a difference in the future. By the grace of God, many good things come out of our activity. But maintaining and improving theological education, while necessary, is not an adequate goal for the future. We must improve the quality of theological education as a means to change the future of the church, society and even eternity. We must have a vision of what we want the future to be, not merely a picture of how to adapt to what others imagine in the future. Too often evangelical theological education has been visionless activism.

### **The Reactive View**

The fortress is an appropriate metaphor for many theological educators. They wait to see what the enemy does before they decide their strategy. Those living in a fortress don't need to strategize about the future. If the enemy attacks from one direction, the cannons will be moved to that side of the fort. If they come with tanks, use armour piercing shells. If they come with infantry, land mines and barb-wire fences will work. If the enemy uses airplanes, bring out the anti-aircraft guns. Strategizing becomes the activity of guessing what the enemy will do next.

It is important for theological educators to react to the heresies of the enemy. Many chapters in the Epistles are a reaction against heresies of the day. The Apostle Paul challenged Timothy to 'guard the Gospel'. Liberal theology which denies the deity of Christ, the inspiration and authority of Scripture, miracles, sin, and the need for the atonement has done tremendous damage to the Body of Christ over the centuries. **p. 16** The Evil One uses heresy as the primary weapon so there is a great need for educational institutions of the future to be strong fortresses. Future theological educators must be ready to react to unexpected theological attacks. But merely waiting to be attacked is poor strategy. Often the Enemy determines the complete curriculum for theological institutions. Students are taught answers to the heresies of the Middle Ages with little regard to current problems in the Church. While it is important for students to be aware of the theological problems of the past, future pastors need to teach in such a way as to grow strong Christians who will not be driven by every wave of heresy. Heresy is like sickness. But there is a difference between continually curing a sick person and promoting health. It is better to prevent sickness. While we need doctors to cure sick patients, we

also need those who will teach the basics of health. The fortress mentality waits for the next person to get sick in order to know what medicine to give.

Theological educators who react to false teaching build fortresses which protect the gospel from the last generation of heresies. But we must do more than wait for the next false teaching to arise, whether it be liberation theology, prosperity theology, or new age theology. Why wait for people to get sick before we think about health? We need theological educators who know how to react to heresy, but even more important, we need theological educators who know how to nurture healthy Christians, taking the offensive against the powers of evil.

### **The Proactive Way**

Theological educators with a proactive view take the initiative to influence the future. A proactive theological educator is both active and able to react to unexpected heresy. But the proactive educator sees beyond activism and the narrow horizons of present problems. A proactive theological educator does not wait to react to the next problem, but has a vision for what the student, the school, the church and society can be, taking steps to make the future happen according to the vision. There is a dearth today of this kind of visionary strategizing for theological education.

A metaphor which helps to describe the proactive view is that of commando soldiers parachuted behind enemy lines. The squad is given the two-fold task of strengthening the resistance movement and doing as much covert damage to the enemy as possible, all the while waiting for the invasion of the King. What a vision for theological educators! Our educational task is to prepare guerilla forces who can [p. 17](#) win some of the enemy with the Good News, teach the struggling but loyal resistance movement about the King, and blow up enemy bridges. The coming of the King is sure, so victory is sure. What an exciting task is ours to be training commandos for the King!

Such a metaphor could revolutionize theological education. Schools would see accreditation not as a necessary and onerous bother, but as a tool for evaluating and improving the effectiveness of commando training. Faculty would be motivated to publish books and articles, not from a 'publish-or-perish' mentality, but so that valuable information and enemy intelligence could be shared among commando trainers. Schools would cooperate with each other and pray for each other, rather than compete for students, finances or status.

### **A VISION FOR BEING EVANGELICAL**

The concept of what it means to be an evangelical has taken on a confusingly narrow technical meaning. British theologians may understand evangelicalism to be an American historical phenomena in reaction to 'modernism'. German church leaders might understand it to mean a specific Lutheran denomination. Fundamentalists often equate evangelicalism with the first slide on the slippery slope toward liberalism. Conservative reformed theologians tend to see evangelicalism as a recent schismatic event. Dispensationalists may limit evangelicalism to a specific brand of dispensationalism, and Pentecostals might not wish to consider themselves evangelicals. Latin American Christians may equate the word with Protestants in general. The average American might equate evangelicalism with money-hungry, immoral TV preachers or fight-wing politicians. Religious liberals might think of evangelicals as calloused bigots who are antipathetic to the social problems of the world.

If the term *evangelical* is so confusing, why bother with it? Is the Statistics Task Force of the Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization replacing the term with 'Great

Commission Christians'? These are defined as 'believers who take seriously the Great Commission'.<sup>1</sup> Such terminology terminology is helpful for those who wish to allow Latin American Catholics to participate in strategy consultations. One wonders, though, if Mormons might consider themselves to be Great Commission Christians? How does the LCWE task force define the word p. 18 'believer'? and what does it mean to 'take seriously' the Great Commission? Even Muslims believe many of the teachings of Jesus, and are concerned with 'going into all the world'. Using the criteria of 'being serious' about teaching what Jesus commanded in all the world, could Muslims also be called Great Commission Christians? The term *evangelical* must be defined with theological criteria.

It is important that the future of evangelical theological education be based on good theology. Bad theology will cripple the church and make the future of evangelical education superfluous. It is important that a word be used that stands for historic, orthodox, biblical Christianity. If we teach heresy, it is irrelevant that we use effective educational methods in a proactive manner. The recent conference on Evangelical Affirmations held at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School may be a healthy step in the right direction.<sup>2</sup> This conference defined *evangelical* as 'one who affirms the full authority and complete truthfulness of Scripture'. They also affirm that 'the incarnation, substitutionary death, and bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ constitutes the gospel through which a gracious God reaches out to all humanity.... All those who are not born again are lost'.<sup>3</sup> Evangelical Christians need to have a wholehearted commitment to theology that is clearly taught in Scripture, and gracious tolerance for differences in areas where Scripture is not clear. We must be intolerant of doctrines that contradict the clear teaching of Scripture, and tolerant with people who affirm teaching where Scripture is open to various interpretation.

Theological education is teaching about God—how to know and worship God, how to be adopted into his family, how to serve and love him. Theological correctness is more than a trivial denominational squabble; it concerns the correctness of our understanding of God and his plan for creation.

A proactive initiative for changing the future of theological education must be based on the objective truth of Scripture and historic orthodoxy.

## A VISION FOR EDUCATIONAL RENEWAL

A proactive vision of the future from an evangelical perspective is necessary, but not sufficient for promoting a healthy and growing P. 19 world-wide church. The learning/teaching process is the bridge between a proactive view of the future and the needs of the local church. The vision must be translated into educational aims and methods, or the vision will be powerless.

I stated in a previous paper, 'The Challenge of Excellence in Theological Education', that much theological education is not as effective as it could be. I suggested a paradigm shift, or a new way of thinking about knowledge and experience, about theory and practice.<sup>4</sup> After spending many hours in dialogue with theological educators from Asia,

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<sup>1</sup> 'The Amazing Countdown Facts!', *Mission Frontiers*, April–May 1989: 17.

<sup>2</sup> 'What Does It Mean to Be Evangelical?', *Christianity Today*, June 16, 1989: 60, 63.

<sup>3</sup> 'What Was Affirmed', *Christianity Today*, June 16, 1989: 63.

<sup>4</sup> Presented in Weissach im Tal, Germany, for the ICAA Consultation in June 1987, and subsequently published in *Excellence and Renewal*, ed. R. Youngblood (Paternoster, Exeter, 1988).

Latin America, Europe, and North America I am still convinced that renewal is needed and desired by most theological educators.

The ICAA *Manifesto on the Renewal of Evangelical Theological Education* is a worthwhile tool for generating dialogue between faculty, students and church leaders. The manifesto implicitly assumes felt needs in educational theory and practice for improving the future of theological education. Here are some examples of the educational concerns in the Manifesto.

Many theological educators feel that programmes are not adequately designed with ‘deliberate reference to the context in which they serve’. Many educators would like to do more to tie together the context with the subject matter. The effective teacher is a person who ties one end of a rope around the major themes of the local context, the other end around the truth of Scripture, and then through the power of the Spirit struggles to pull the two together.<sup>5</sup>

The manifesto also states, ‘Our programmes of theological education must orient themselves pervasively in terms of the Christian community being served.’ Yet many schools face a tension between the values of the church and the academic institution. I was consulting with a school in Africa where there was conflict between local pastors and the teachers. One teacher suggested that the school write two different goal statements, one to pacify the local pastors, and one to use for the scholars. While tension between scholars and practitioners is inevitable and healthy, most schools feel the need to do more to orient theological education to the needs of the church. p. 20

The investigations by Robert Ferris show that many schools are open and even anxious for aspects of renewal. He found the greatest discrepancy between actual and desired values in the areas of evaluating outcomes, having a holistic curriculum, and using creative teaching methods.<sup>6</sup>

## **PLANNING FOR RENEWAL OF EVANGELICAL THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION**

A desire to improve theological education is a most important step. Genuine change cannot be forced or legislated from accrediting agencies or from denominational boards. Renewal must come from the ‘inside out’ and not from the ‘top down’. Wholehearted renewal can’t be forced, even by the school principal or denominational president. The ICAA cannot legislate lasting renewal. A visionary leader *can* stimulate but not dictate renewal. But lasting renewal can come through dialogue—dialogue between faculty, administrators, church leaders and students. Dialogue can stimulate a shared vision for the future of theological education and then be a tool for strategizing ways to reach that vision.

It is best for faculty, administrators, church leaders and students to get away from the school for a week or a long weekend. It is difficult for the principal of a school to stay at the school and concentrate for several days without interruptions from cooks, family members, building contractors, prospective donors or plumbers. It may be best to begin with local personnel, but often a mix of people is healthy. For example, our Christian Education Department of Wheaton College went to Honey Rock camp for a long weekend.

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<sup>5</sup> This concept is explained more fully in the paper ‘Do We Teach the Bible or do We Teach Students?’ presented at the Evangelical Theological Society at Taylor University in the Spring of 1988.

<sup>6</sup> Robert W. Ferris, ‘The ICAA Manifesto and Renewal in Theological Education: Clarifying Values and Planning for Change’ (Paper presented at the ICAA Consultation, Wheaton, IL, 14 June 1989).

All the Christian Education faculty and select Christian Education students were with us. We invited a faculty member from the theology department, and another from the psychology department. Several Christian Education faculty from other seminaries also went with us. We spent the weekend without formal papers or presentations. We shared our aspirations for the field and strategized ways of achieving some of our hopes.

There is a need for some structure in such gatherings, but not too much. The purpose is not to try to coerce faculty to 'buy into' the personal agenda of one leader. True renewal cannot be manipulated p.21 by a crafty leader. A valuable agenda for the dialogue retreat might be to reflect on the following model.<sup>7</sup> For each of the questions it might be helpful to give people the opportunity to think individually, then in small groups and later in the large group. It would be ideal to spend several hours on each question. Ideas need to be recorded for the conclusions of the group. Comments can be recorded on large sheets of paper, on overhead transparencies or on a black board.

The areas for dialogue are illustrated by these nine boxes.<sup>8</sup> The dialogue boxes can be used in a cycle, every few months, each year, or every five years. The order of where to begin is not important. You may wish to begin with question three and then move to question two and then one. You may even wish to begin with question six: what are our dreams for outcomes in the lives of our students?

	Current Situation	Plan for the Future	What Happened	Actually
Context	1	4	7	
Educational Activities	2	5	8	
Outcomes in students	3	6	9	

1. *What is our present context?* What are the needs of the church? The aspirations of students? The areas of expertise of faculty? Financial needs and resources in facilities? Where are the unreached in the country? What are the expectations of the government toward education? What are the anticipations of family members? What are the economic strengths and weaknesses in the country? What are the abilities and experiences of incoming students? Perhaps some of these questions are not important in your situation, and you should think through other questions that are more helpful.

By starting with the present context, the educational planning begins in the 'real' world of the present. It is fine for far-away committees to dream long-range plans, but practical planning for the future begins p.22 with an understanding of current strengths and weaknesses of the faculty, finances, students, buildings, water supply, and so on. At some point, a realistic and practical plan must seriously consider the present context.

2. *What are our present educational activities?* List all the courses you teach along with the major readings, papers, and practical assignments in each course. What ministry

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<sup>7</sup> The questions have been adapted from a curriculum evaluation model by Robert Stake, 'The Countenance of Educational Evaluation', *Teacher's College Record* vol. 68, 1967, pp. 523-540.

<sup>8</sup> The model has been used by the author as a consulting tool for theological schools in Nigeria, Kenya, Zaire, Zambia, and Bolivia.

activities are built into the curriculum? What fellowship or discipleship opportunities are available for students and faculty? Think about the effects of the implicit curriculum. What are some of the influences of dormitory life, chapel services, meal opportunities, sports, and clubs? How does the library contribute to the learning of the student? If students are part-time, how does work experience outside of the formal education setting relate to the educational activities?

Do the educational activities reinforce each other? Is there a consistency between classroom activities, practical service assignments and the implicit curriculum of campus life? What could be done to make parts of the holistic educational experience strengthen each other?

3. *What are the present outcomes in the lives of the students?* Think about the students who have recently graduated. What are recent graduates doing now? Are some in ministry, church administration, further education, government, or in the private sector? What is their knowledge of the Bible and theology? What are their skills in preaching and teaching? What are their interpersonal and pastoral skills? Are you satisfied with their abilities in evangelism or church planting? What are their attitudes toward ministry? Are they continuing to study? Are their ministry skills improving? You can dialogue about your informal impressions about outcomes in the lives of students, or you can gather data through surveys.

Next, *evaluate* your answers to the first three questions. Look again at what you wrote on the black board, overhead transparencies, or on the large sheets of paper. What is important about your context? What are your current educational activities? What are the present outcomes in the lives of students? Then ask, 'Do these three logically fit together?' Are your educational *activities* tied to your *context* and to your *outcomes*? Use collective common sense. Think about the results of the school in the lives of the students. Will your graduates be able to make the contribution needed for the needs of your context? Do your answers to question three help solve the problems in question one?

It would be a good idea not to rush discussion on these first three questions. If possible, take a whole day to discuss not only how you [p.23](#) should answer the questions, but also to evaluate how the three parts of your programme build on each other, or how they do not tie together as they could. On the second day move on to the next three boxes. Think about the future. You may wish to plan for the next year, or for the next decade. Spend time in prayer, asking the Lord to give you wisdom and a sense of vision for the future. The future is dependent on the goodness and blessing of God. Questions about the future involve prayerful and visionary goal-setting.

4. *What are your assumptions and plans for the future context?* Some things about the context are out of your control. You are not in control of the economic or political stability in your country. But there are things you can hope to change. What are the assumptions about the nature of the church and the needs for evangelism in the future? What would you like the staffing situation to be in the next year or ten years? What do you expect the facilities to be next year or ten years from now? How many faculty could you anticipate for the future?

5. *What educational activities would you like to be pursuing in the future?* What are your hopes for the future? Would you like to add another academic concentration in counselling or Christian education? Should you upgrade the school to offer a bachelor's or master's degree? Would it be possible for you to offer a more structured internship as a part of the curriculum? Would it be possible to help faculty members do further education? Would you like faculty to spend more informal time in discipleship groups with students? Is there a short course faculty could attend to improve the quality of

teaching? Think about formal and non-formal educational activities. Ask the Lord to give you greater vision for the school.

Then ask if these activities fit your assumptions about the future context of the church, school and country. (Do your answers to question five tie in with the way you answered question four?)

6. *What are desired future outcomes in the lives of your students?* What kind of graduate would you like to see in the future? What kind of knowledge, skills, and attitudes would you like to see in your students? Should they be better at preaching, personal evangelism, interpersonal relationships? Should your students be better at organizing the educational work of the church? Would you like more of them to be able to get into advanced academic programmes? Spend time dialoguing about future outcomes. Prayerfully dream about what you would like the Lord to do in the lives of students through your educational programme.

Step back and *evaluate* your God-given wisdom in planning for the future. Does it make sense that you will have better preachers without [p. 24](#) a change in the educational activities? If outcomes in the lives of students are what you hoped for, will that help the church in your particular context? Try to make connections between all the boxes, as one question impacts another.

A year later it would be ideal if you could meet again and discuss what actually happened in your school as a result of your planning.

7. Were you able to predict the assumptions about the context? Did you finish the new classrooms? Did more prospective students apply for admission?

8. Did you actually carry out desired educational activities? Did you add the courses you hoped to add? Did you assign additional practical assignments for your course? Were you able to use new teaching methods in the course you taught? Did you institute better supervision for the internship?

9. Were the actual outcomes in the students what you hoped for? Did students get the kinds of jobs they desired? Did you see indications of as much spiritual growth as you anticipated? Did the outcomes in students make a contribution to strengthening the church?

We need a proactive, visionary view of the *future*, a solid commitment to *evangelical* theology, and Spirit-led *educational* planning. Without all three aspects theological education could become sickly with dangerous results for the church. With them, we can be optimistic about the future of evangelical theological education. We dare not fail! We must pray and work so that the future will be all that it can be.

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# Reflections on the Future of Theological Education by Extension

Richard Kenneth Hart



If I were to start this paper by trying to define what Theological Education by Extension (TEE) is, I am afraid we would soon be bogged down in an unwieldy analysis of the term. I would like to approach my topic in a different way. *First*, I will describe some of the present realities of TEE. I will leave you to fashion your own definition. *Second*, I will summarize what I believe to be the key ingredients for effective theological education. *Third*, I will point to the directions I believe TEE will be taking in the near future. *Fourth*, I will address four key areas in which we need to encourage one another.

There are numbers of realities that help us understand what TEE is. I would like to share six.

## THE REALITIES OF TEE

*Vision Driven.* As we look at TEE programmes worldwide, it becomes clear that they are vision driven. Each of the original members of various TEE associations brought with them their dream of making quality theological education available to the constituency they represented. Presently, class participants—students and tutors—bring their own aspirations for improved service in local churches. Participating church fellowships and denominations have their hopes that TEE will provide in-service training for their members.

*Extra-Seminary.* TEE programmes are generally apart from the seminary and off-campus. Sometimes seminaries and TEE programmes maintain good communication between one another and sometimes not. TEE programmes are often created by people working in linkages with local churches. To them TEE is an appropriate alternative to the seminary or Bible college. TEE classes are sensitive to the circumstances of church and community life and to the current political environment. This closeness to the constituency contributes to the possibility of rapid corrective change.

*Team Oriented.* The division of labour leads to relationships like those on a soccer team where each player fills a role necessary to the team's success. In committees the representatives of the constituencies participating in the TEE programme work out the operating policies. Instructional materials are planned by several persons. Textbooks and tapes are produced using writers, adaptors, editors, field testers, p. 26 printers, and distributors. Seminar leaders and class participants, through their weekly encounters, feel yoked together in pursuing course objectives. The local committee provides logistical support for textbook production projects and for class offerings.

*Teaching Materials.* The success of a TEE programme is largely determined by the quality of the teaching materials. The textbooks and the tapes are the teachers. In them the authors move through the learning steps. In order to grasp the course serious home study is necessary. In developing each weekly seminar, the course writer's concern is to make this group time catalytic to a fuller, integrated understanding of the week's work.

*Class Leaders.* Each course is shaped by the local class leader or tutor, who functions like a 'player-coach'. For the student the class leader becomes an interpreter of the learning materials, and the one who affirms each in their learning struggle. The leader also helps to clarify inter-relationships in the lesson material that assist learners in making applications. They function as player-coaches because in addition to leading the TEE class, they are playing key roles in local church ministry. For the TEE programme the class leader performs a special function by providing feedback for revising teaching materials.

*Adult Oriented.* TEE programmes try to be oriented to adult learners. Application is seen to be immediate. Students can be likened to skilled workers who bring their tools into the workshop for sharpening. Student impact can be seen on this week's church calendar. Each meeting of each course is viewed as a learning-teaching exchange. The seminar session is like riding a bicycle built for two. Each rider is necessary and each adds to the other. The tutor is like the rider on the front. He provides guidance, perspective, and energy. The students are like the rear rider. Their participation adds momentum, balance and the change to make new discoveries together. Classes sometimes almost celebrate the sweat of mastering new concepts and skills. Together tutor and students dissect, analyse, synthesize and evaluate practical applications.

These are the major activities that I see when I look at TEE programmes. The major ingredient to the success of any theological education programme (TEE or campus based), however, is not these realities by themselves. The key is the tension in which complementary forces are held. Think of a tennis racquet. It has a frame and strings. In order for the racquet to be useable, the string must be woven [p. 27](#) through the holes of the frame and be held tightly in place. This tension is what makes the best string and the best frame the best racquet.

The TEE student seeks to maintain the right amount of tension between congregational responsibilities and other responsibilities. There is the question of *available* time for study and *sufficient* time for study. There is the functional balance to discover between self-directed and other-directed study. There is the tension between biblical principles being uncovered and personal applications being discovered. There is the tension between the Master's model of discipleship and local working models. For the TEE programme as a whole there is the tension between operating costs and available resources.

Each item in these complementary forces needs to be kept in optimum relationship to its partner in order for the TEE student to achieve appropriate objectives. Combining all of these into a whole, we see that there needs to be a tension that weaves all of the forces into a changing, flexible, harmonious balance. Adjustments are made not to eliminate the tension, but to accommodate to the individual's service in the church.

In light of these realities and the tension in which they must be kept, where do I think TEE is headed? I believe that there are two channels in which education as a whole tends to move. These categories are true for theological education in general and TEE in particular.

The first tendency is to the *cloning* of approaches, procedures, processes, and programmes that have been gauged successful in other related settings. Those who develop a clone seek to copy the forms of the original. The belief is that one ought to be able to do the same thing, in the same way, in a group that has the same objectives but is in a different setting. Inputs are restricted to those which seem to be characteristic of the original.

Former activities that started as innovations become unalterable traditions. Educational quality is determined by how well courses, administration, and classes conform to the original. We talk in TEE about our programmes being compatible to the Guatemala model or the obedience-oriented model.

The second tendency that channels our efforts is values-generated innovation. Curriculum is value driven. Writers and tutors are encouraged to discover the appropriate learning activities for accomplishing the particular task that is rooted to the values to which the programme has committed itself. Individualization of the learning process is encouraged. [p. 28](#)

Clarity of perception of fundamental values will free personnel to be innovative. The Asia Theological Association (ATA) *TEE Accreditation Manual* lists six values held in common by TEE educators. As Asian TEE programmes keep these values freshly before them, the path is open to appropriate innovation.

I suspect that all of our programmes tend to reflect some of both tendencies. As we move into the future, the latter tendency needs to become the primary force in TEE.

## APPLYING INNOVATIONS

To what areas of TEE do we need to apply our innovations? I think there are four important focuses.

*Programme Coordination.* We need to let simplicity be our rule of thumb. Programme administration should fit into a briefcase. One colleague explained that with a minimum of software all student records, accounting, and correspondence could be located in a single laptop computer installed with a hard disk. Perhaps some programmers could be encouraged to develop 'shareware' for administering TEE programmes.

Another step to simplified administration is through clarification of aims and objectives. It is important that all involved in the operating of the TEE programme have a united commitment to targets and means. Periodically, it is important to work through the organization's understanding of its purposes in order to be satisfied that it is focusing its energies appropriately.

Every TEE programme has people available to it that can help it look at its objectives and picture how they might be stated in clearer terms. They function for the TEE organization like the focus knob on a slide projector. They sharpen the picture. This kind of specificity helps a programme to make the easy and tough decisions that keep in growing according to its plan.

We also need to be watching for the frequent birthing of new leaders. Policy boards and operating staffs need to be responsive to the desire of others to join with us in service. Opportunity and trust must be extended to newcomers. It is not necessary to have been with the organization since its inception in order to be a key leader!

*Tutor Development.* There needs to be a regular commissioning of new tutors. Some will have studied previously in the TEE programme, some will not have had prior experience. The question that needs to be asked is: 'Can this individual facilitate the study, discussion, practice and confidence building necessary to achieve the course objectives?'  
p. 29

Requirements for tutors vary from programme to programme. Once tutor candidates have been selected, however, they need to be given a basic training experience to orient them to the responsibilities and challenges of tutoring. Some programmes use a 48-hour residential workshop to prepare tutor candidates for guiding seminars.

Efforts need to be made to enhance the basic skill that tutors develop from leading seminars. Information ought to be shared among TEE programmes that list sources and means for nourishing active tutors. Gathering tutors for inspirational conferences is seen by some to be a questionable use of limited financial resources, but it helps to reinforce the internal motivations and commitments of tutors. These conferences reaffirm the priority of continuing spiritual growth which we hope our tutors will foster with our students.

As the geographical expansion of TEE programmes increases, it becomes more difficult to stay in close contact with each tutor. Regular letters can narrow the distance gap and stimulate them to continuing excellence.

*Instructional Materials Development.* This will continue to be a major focus of time, resources and creativity. Teaching materials need to reflect quality relative to the available human, production and financial resources.

Computer applications for development of teaching texts and tapes ought to become more widespread. A way of helping one another might be to popularize a basic computer, printer, software and photocopier system that would provide TEE programmes with desk top publishing capacity in their languages of instruction. I think of the Fiat Company of Italy. They have produced a standard Fiat automobile that has become the basic vehicle for Italy, Poland, Egypt, Russia, and other places. It is a simple vehicle, affordable and fixable. It would be great if we could help foster a simple, affordable and fixable computer setup for book production in the future. We cannot allow the normal human tiredness of revision and retyping to keep us from providing our students with suitable materials.

Video production needs to become a supplement to our printed materials. We need to see skills demonstrated before our eyes. Watching taped segments of teaching, preaching, visiting, and witnessing helps one discern appropriate and inappropriate ministry styles. Where mechanical video is not possible, human play-acting ought to be encouraged. A Christian Education class in an Asian context may demonstrate family devotions by bringing in a church family to simulate for students their daily family worship time. Questions follow that clarify the values and activities being emphasized. [p. 30](#)

When the basic curriculum has been developed, attention to book production does not cease. Often during the development of the TEE programme's courses, participants discover the need to be focusing materials on a second target audience. But to conserve resources, the programme continues to concentrate on the main target. When the first priority materials have been written, personnel begin shifting some of their course writing energies towards the new target.

Often supplementary resources need to be developed to support the existing curriculum. Frequently this discovery is made when the programme's textbook committee and curriculum committee take a hard look at course objectives, educational philosophy, design of materials, and practical theology. Materials may be discarded, substantially re-written or slightly changed. The intent is to provide teaching materials that contribute to the learning, teaching, reflecting, and serving processes of our students.

*Evaluation Services.* More and more churches will attest to the value of the TEE programmes as TEE students fill the leadership roles of local churches and denominations. Many will be licensed, commissioned, and ordained for various forms of ministry.

When these local churches and denominationally certified ministers desire to pursue further studies, they will face the inevitable barriers of relatively closed secular and theological training institutions. These institutions will naturally ask, 'In what ways do the previous study and work experiences of these persons relate to our objectives and course offerings?' I believe that evaluation services developed by TEE associations will need to become interpreters to these institutions in order to explain the viable relationship of TEE curriculum and campus curriculum.

There will be the temptation to accept the requirements of existing accreditation bodies that were designed for campus-based education. I believe that this would be inappropriate initially and disastrous in the end.

We need to concern ourselves with preserving the values crucial to TEE educators. There are the items that need to be examined as we evaluate ourselves. This is what ATA has done in developing its scheme for accrediting TEE academic awards. Theirs is a values based approach. The values remain constant. The door is open to programme innovations that reflect commitment to underlying values. The appropriateness of educational processes and activities is judged internally by the TEE programme and its stake holders.

The external services of the ATA visitation team verifies that these kinds of assessment activities have been made and necessary adjustments begun. p. 31

TEE programmes will seek to show that their students have the dynamic equivalency of various academic and professional awards. They will demonstrate that their programme completers have the professional competencies necessary for reliable church ministry. When one relates only to a local church, these considerations are secondary. But when local churches are in associations which relate to other organizations, for the sake of meaningful communication, evaluation and accreditation services are valuable.

We need to ascertain carefully if the principle of integral student involvement in ministry is a continuing reality. We need to develop assessment instruments that students can use to help them determine ministry strengths and directions for growth.

The key to innovation in theological education is regular spiritual renewal. Each time renewal comes, it is as if everything takes on a new look. When God's guiding hand moves in times of renewal, every aspect of the TEE programme has a change in its hue.

Theological education is never static. It can be increasing in relevance to its target audience or in a state of diminishing relevance. The pursuit of God enables him to renew and refresh our perspectives.

Renewal does not produce perfect people or perfect programmes. But it will keep us centred on Christ, responsive to the Spirit's guidance, and obedient to the Father's will. May the future find us faithful servants.

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# Theological Education in Europe

Helmuth Egelkraut

In order to perceive the real situation of Europe, one has to look at different parts of the continent, each by itself. For that purpose I divide Europe into three sections. Even so generalizations are unavoidable.

## **SECTION I: ROMAN CATHOLIC COUNTRIES IN THE WEST, AND GREECE**

We are here mainly concerned with southern and western Europe. The Roman Catholic and the Greek Orthodox Church have the traditional academic system of theological education. Since World War II evangelical national communities have come into existence mainly through foreign missionary influence. At the same time Bible Institutes or schools have come into operation. They can be found in all traditionally Roman Catholic countries, and are small in size, operating on a relatively low academic level, underfinanced, and dependent on foreign staff. In France there exist two graduate theological schools of evangelical persuasion. In all cases adequate theological literature in national languages is lacking. The schools operate mostly on their own, hardly ever seeking the fellowship of the schools in central or northern Europe. The long term growth and development of the

national evangelical churches and of the Christian in these countries depends to no small degree on the future shape evangelical theological training will take in these countries.

## **SECTION II: PROTESTANT COUNTRIES AND COUNTRIES WITH A LARGE PROTESTANT POPULATION**

These countries are located mainly in central, north-western and northern Europe. They all boast prestigious university departments for the study of theology and religion. Most ministers of 'main line' churches study there. They receive in some regions additional practical training in church-operated schools. At that time, however, their theological position is in most cases already established. There have always been individual evangelical professors at the state university theological faculties. On the whole, though, the historical-critical method prevails. In many cases it is also held that as a science theology must not be studied with the practical requirements of church work in view. Study demands a neutrality of the person concerned, a detached objectivity which does establish a distance between the object being studied and the person who does the studying. Thus there is hardly any spiritual counsel. To remedy the situation theological colleges have sprung up in the vicinity of the universities in recent P. 33 years. Most main line churches in Europe suffer greatly from the results of this preparation for the ministry. While the Church worldwide is growing faster than at any time in history, the Church in most European countries is stagnating or shrinking. Despite all this, due to God's grace there have always been some faithful ministers who graduated from the universities. But a revision of the traditional training for the ministry is urgently needed and will be decisive for the future of the churches.

During the last two centuries private Bible schools and theological colleges developed: first at the beginning of the nineteenth century for the training of missionaries, later in the course of the neopietistic revival at the end of the nineteenth century for the preparation of evangelists, pastors of non-mainline congregations and youth ministers. There are about 25 such schools in the U.K.; 24 have gathered together in the European Evangelical Accrediting Association; and there may be some two dozen or so schools besides, partly in Pentecostal (EPTA), partly in non-Pentecostal groups. Quite a few of them came into existence after World War II as the fruit of U.S.-originated missionary endeavours. Most of these schools have less than a hundred students; not a few have less than 60. Academically vast differences exist. Till about twenty years ago hardly any library resources had been developed by the schools of neo-pietistic origin. The last two decades have seen a shift in this regard. But good evangelical text books are still rare. After Lausanne 1974 the decision was made to develop evangelical theological text books in the German language. Hardly anything developed. This is not the least due to the lack of qualified faculty; but those qualified carry in many cases a far too heavy load to do writing on the side. Very little original research is conducted for the same reason. A number of these schools operate now on the M.Div. level. But in most cases their graduates are not allowed to enter the pastorate of main line churches. It is also very difficult for such schools to receive state recognition as institutions of tertiary education.

One problem for graduates going overseas either for advanced studies or for missionary service is that no degrees can be conferred (except in Britain). Strong endeavours should be made to establish a clear evaluation system for the transfer of credits and the recognition of training received.

In 1977 the European Evangelical Accrediting Association came into being, initiated through Dr. Bruce Nicholls of WEF. The idea of accreditation was difficult to introduce in a continent where the whole educational system has always operated under government

supervision. p. 34 Since then a number of schools have become accredited and a new consciousness of the value of good theological and biblical training, and outside peer evaluation, has arisen. Schools begin to formulate their mission.

The result of this situation is that the evangelical community is underrepresented in the theological debate, in church leadership and in the ministry of most churches. The evangelicals are also not as much noted in public affairs as they could be. There is a biblical and theological illiteracy among Christians. They are hardly capable, or totally incapable, of verbalizing their faith. In main line congregations pastors are responsible for congregations that number thousands. Careful counselling, and nurture in faith, as well as in witnessing, is not possible. In most cases their training has not prepared them for this.

### **SECTION III: EASTERN EUROPE**

Eastern Europe is in itself by no means homogeneous. There are Roman Catholic churches (Poland, Czechoslovakia, parts of USSR), Orthodox churches (Bulgaria, Romania, USSR) and Protestant churches (GDR, Poland, Baltic areas, Hungary, Romania, USSR). Scattered throughout are free and Pentecostal Christian communities. In all countries traditional schools of theology at university level still operate. But by no means do they train enough ministers for the needs of the traditional churches. There are, for example, three seminaries for 60 million believers in Russia.

All over Eastern Europe many people are open to the gospel. Many turn in repentance to the Lord and are being baptized. Exact numbers, however, are hard to get. The highest growth rate appears to be in Romania, which some call the Korea of Eastern Europe. Since there are not enough trained servants of the gospel, few are being disciplined. The result is much legalism. Not a few backslide. Christians are not able to engage in conversation with intellectuals and answer their questions. The pastors who are there are overburdened. Many Christians lack any missionary vision. In Central Asia, with its Muslim environment, many Christians are entrenched in their churches. What is needed is an increasing number of well trained ministers.

A closer look reveals the following picture. In Russia the Orthodox Church has recently consecrated about 100 laymen as priests since there are not enough trained theologians. There are about five thousand Baptist churches with 500,000 believers and no seminary. A sort of TEE programme has been developed, but it is still in the p. 35 beginning stages. A seminary is planned for Kiev. The All Union Baptist churches have received permission to start a seminary at Moscow.

More difficult is the situation of the German stock Lutherans who have hardly any theologically trained pastors. Laymen and tradesmen with experience in Christian work are being ordained. Even prelates and bishops have no training. Here too a TEE programme is being initiated. In Russia the situation seems to be the worst, with many congregations having no trained leaders. In Poland the national Pentecostal church has a fully developed Bible Institute, and there is also a Lutheran seminary at Warsaw. In Hungary a Reformed and a Lutheran seminary are in operation at a medium academic level. Czechoslovakia still has a Protestant faculty at Bratislava. The pastors graduating from there have learned how to think. In Romania there are two theological faculties and a vigorous Bible Institute licensed by the government and operating under the auspices of a Pentecostal church in close liaison with the Church of God. In Yugoslavia a fully developed Bible College is in operation under government charter. It draws students from nine countries who enter the country legally and may return to their home countries. Albania has no school and the situation in Bulgaria is unclear. Besides there are other types of pastoral training, less or not at all structured, mostly of the apprenticeship type.

The Pentecostal schools are all in contact with EPTA and teachers from the West are invited to assist. In the GDR three seminaries exist besides the state university faculties in theology (at Rostock, Berlin, Greifswald, Leipzig, Jena).

All over Eastern Europe there is a lack of theological literature in the vernacular. In some countries the government permits less students to enter seminaries than could be accommodated.

Whether the present harvest can be brought in depends in no small measure upon the number of well trained and mature Christian leaders. It seems that under the present political and economic constellation the next decade will be of decisive importance for the re-evangelization of Eastern Europe.

But indeed this is true for *all* of Europe. So far, evangelical institutions for biblical and theological training have not co-operated much. Only recently have schools drawn together on regional and national levels. EEAA and EPTA have proven to be means of wider fellowship. Many schools in southern Europe, and also in Scandinavia and Britain, have not been brought into the wider continental fellowship nowadays of the need for a new evangelization of Europe, in addition to reaching those with the gospel who flock into Europe p.36 from many parts of the world and adhere to non-Christian religions. Whether this will happen depends on the question of whether enough qualified evangelists, disciplers, shepherds, teachers and leaders will be found. In view of this it seems important to draw closer together.

This will also be necessary in order to find ways of higher theological training for future teachers. The European Evangelical Accrediting Agency could play a major role here. The same is true for the international recognition of evangelical theological training received in Europe. Any effort which can help in bringing this to pass will render a great service to the whole of Europe.

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## **Theological Education in Latin America: A Personal Perspective**

**William D. Taylor**

Latin American theological education owes a debt to North American theological education, because earlier missionaries had a vision for training. That vision too many times was culturally bound into established moulds; we all tend to teach and institutionalize as we were taught and institutionalized. Bible institute graduates started Bible institutes, and seminary graduates started seminaries. More recently, TEE proponents from the North started TEE programmes in Latin America.

This means that the Two-Thirds World inherited many Western categories: institutional models, curriculum, grading systems, terminology, theory over practice, and theological categories—a hermeneutic, systematic divisions, pedagogical/homiletical models, and theology as theory.



And so today, in the Two-Thirds World, one of the greatest and most creative movements taking place is in the area of contextualization—theological and institutional. We see a rapidly changing picture, although only God knows how many theological education programmes are operating today. This is how the situation has developed:

1970:	16,000,000	Evangelicals	(?)
	75,000		churches
	60,000	[80%] without	'trained leaders'
	15,000	[20%] with some kind of	'trained leaders'
1988:	37,500,000	Evangelicals	
	225,000		churches
	175,000	[78%] without	'trained leaders'
	50,000	[22%] with some kind of	'trained leaders'

The number of schools varies, with a three-part categorization: Bible schools, seminaries, and TEE programmes.

*Mexico:* over 100 schools

*Guatemala:* 23 Bible schools, 6 seminaries, 6 TEE

*Brazil:* 50 Bible schools, 80 seminaries, uncounted TEE

*El Salvador:* 15 Bible schools, 3 seminaries, 12 TEE

Theological education in Latin America is carried out in the context of [p. 38](#) the evangelical churches of Latin America: exploding church growth coupled with biblical ignorance; a church of the poor, but with upward social mobility; a dependent church, searching for its own identity; a historically apolitical church now finding its social conscience; an evangelical church, 75% charismatic; a church with a new cross-cultural vision. Theological education in Latin America is lived in the context of Latin American historico-socio-economic-cultural realities. This includes:

The development of underdevelopment, leading to hopelessness in political-economic experiments;

A continent still in search of political stability;

Phenomenal natural resources coupled with international debt;

Devastating inflation aggravated by endemic corruption;

A population explosion caused by those who can least afford it;

The power of spiritism (45% of Brazilians actively practising, with up to 70% involved in some ways, and 40,000 spiritist centres in Rio de Janeiro);

The seduction of secularization.

## **THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION IN LATIN AMERICA**

What are the significant issues?

First, there is a need for the constant development of new programmes to meet the tremendous need for servant leaders of the churches. There is no way that current centres can keep up with the needs. Allied to this is the search for contextualization, both theological and institutional, requiring an examination of educational presuppositions and the excessive dependence on the theoretical, Greek models of the North.

Theological contextualization may include:

- re-examination of evangelical hermeneutics
- revival of more biblical theology
- development of new systematic categories
- a biblical response to Liberation Theology
- substantive response to the explosion of spiritism, teaching believers spiritual warfare
- examination of biblical social responsibility
- response to secularization
- a new study of the miraculous for today
- new approaches to ecclesiology p. 39
- careful response to the changing Roman Catholic Church
- sensitive study of biblical discipleship to solidify the numerical church growth

There is also a tension between *access* (making theological education available to as many as possible at the lowest costs) and *excellence* (a tricky term usually seen as education for upper levels, but it does not have to be that alone).

The relationship between residential and extension programmes is moving from the adversarial relationship of the past to a spirit of cooperation. This also means greater incorporation of non-formal education into formal structures.

There is a growing felt need and desire for evangelical theological education accreditation, networking and cooperation. Evangelical theological associations exist in the Caribbean and Brazil—both related to ICAA; with two other regional organizations unrelated to ICAA.

The struggle to finance and sustain theological education within the context of raging inflation, violence and poverty remains a problem; as does the fundamental need to re-examine theological education models exported from foreign lands: educational structures and systematic theological categories, with excessive dependence upon theoretical training ‘for’ ministry and little ‘in’ ministry. Finally, all of this takes place alongside the frustrating brain drain, complicated by the absence within Latin America of evangelical theological education on a doctoral level.

If these are the realities, what trends can we expect to see in future? I would suggest the following:

- the proliferation of new schools and programmes
- the marriage of TER and TEE to meet growing needs and combine ministry visions
- the development of theological educational networks on both a continental and a global scale
- the founding of a Latin America Evangelical Accreditation Association related to ICAA (which could also founder on the distrust that characterizes too many centres and leaders)
- the growth of culturally sensitive international scholarship programmes, moving not only to the North, but also East and West p. 40
- ongoing theological and institutional contextualization that may threaten some in the North
- the rise of missionary training centres, either as a quality programme of existing schools, or in the foundation of new and creative programmes integrating formal and non-formal education
- field experience. Less following of the theoretical model of North America

- the possible emerging of doctoral-level theological education in Latin America
- the reality that theological education in Latin America will continue to be economically dependent upon external finances, and even then will operate on limited budgets, faculty and facilities.

## INTERDEPENDENCE

We must see the mutual ongoing debt we owe to each other: South to North, but also North to South, and East to West.

Most of the creative work on contextualization and educational renewal is coming from the South. In the South accreditation bodies are truly evangelical and not secular or just religious.

We must strive to greater interdependence in these areas:

- curriculum and content
- exchange of faculty and international sabbaticals (not merely between Tübingen, Basel, Cambridge, Oxford and the like)
- contextualization lessons
- educational methodology
- renewal trends
- building of trust and networking between institutions and their leadership
- student exchange, recognizing academic credit taken in strong schools in the South. Students from the North might be able to take a year abroad with full credit
- sharing of audio-visual aids (transparencies, video and so forth)

Schools in the North must be careful in their scholarship programmes, offering them to tested people of true quality; providing adequate shepherding during their studies; encouraging ongoing contextualization, even allowing them to do assignments related to their home culture and needs. The schools must be flexible in the testing and p. 41 measurement of their objectives; must allow some work in the mother tongue of students; and must vow not to recruit the best to stay in the North as faculty.

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# Tensions in North American Theological Education

Bruce C. Stewart

I wonder how Elijah and Elisha planned the curriculum of the schools of the prophets. It would seem that Old Testament Studies had the highest priority, and that the study of Hebrew produced far less trauma for their students than for ours. Did they have a Department of Pastoral Theology? Was their experience in building a dormitory Field Work in Church Building? Was their borrowing of tools an assignment in Pastoral Administration? Is it significant that it took a miracle to continue their programme? One thing, at least, that we learn from this biblical model is the necessity of continually seeking God's help in the successful functioning of a seminary.

In the history of North American seminaries, Andover Theological Seminary was organized in 1808 as a corrective to the liberalism that was developing at Harvard Divinity School. The founding of new seminaries was one approach to tensions, and it has been duplicated many times.

Some ninety years ago William Rainey Harper, the founding President of the University of Chicago, wrote an essay entitled 'Shall the Theological Curriculum Be Modified, and How?' in which he expressed his concern that seminaries should prepare men to relate to and deal with the changing issues of the day and the real needs in the lives of their people. His criticism of Protestant ministers and seminaries continues to have relevance.

Before we look at specific areas of tension it would seem appropriate to cite a contemporary evaluation of the state of theological education. In an on-going dialogue at Andover Newton Theological Seminary, Max L. Stackhouse has written, 'Theological education is in the midst of a series of efforts to define its focus.... On the one hand, what happens in theological education seems too narrow, too self-satisfied, too geared to the maintenance of unimaginative ministries, and too cafeteria-like; on the other hand, it seems so diffuse, without governing vision, purpose, intensity or centre. The various parts do not integrate into a compelling vision of ministry.'<sup>1</sup>

To this we might add the words of David S. Schuller: 'Too many students experience seminary education as a disparate series of p. 43 education hurdles, lacking a centre and adequate integration.... In spite of the fanfare with which institutions greet each curricular shift, suspicion grows that the levels of curricular reform may not have been fundamental enough to touch the real problem.'<sup>2</sup>

In identifying areas of tension in North American Theological Education, I am reflecting the responses of 26 seminary presidents to the questions: 'List some current tensions that concern you in North American theological education today', and 'What is your approach to globalization?'

## THE ACADEMIC AND THE PRACTICAL

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<sup>1</sup> Stackhouse, Max L., *Apologia: Contextualization, Globalization and Mission in Theological Education*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1988, p. 15.

<sup>2</sup> Schuller, David S., Editorial Introduction, *Theological Education* 17 (Spring 1981), p. 8.

By far the most cited area is *the tension between the academic and the practical*: between intellectual theologizing and pastoral ministry; between classroom/research competency and relational/administrative functioning; between *theoria* and *praxis*.

Helmut Thielicke illustrates this problem in *A Little Exercise for Young Theologians*. A young man who worked well with youth in his church was led to consider going to seminary so he could develop his service and love for God and people. When he returned home after the first semester, his rapport with his peers was severely damaged; he was critical of their lack of scholarship, and tried to impress them with what 'the latest investigation has produced on the subjects of myth, legend and form-history'. Thielicke continued, 'Under a considerable display of the apparatus of exegetical science and surrounded by the air of the initiated, he produces paralyzing and unhappy trivialities and the inner muscular strength of a lively young Christian is horribly squeezed to death in a formal armour of abstract ideas'.<sup>3</sup>

While he sees this as only a symptom of a more important lack of unity, Edward Farley admits that 'the students' and ministerial graduates' version [of the problematic character of theological education] is that the theological school did not adequately prepare them for the nitty-gritty problems and activities of churchly life, that the academic and the practical were never really linked.'<sup>4</sup> p. 44

During the past fifty years there has been an increasing trend towards relocating the issue of practical experience from the post-seminary period into the seminary itself. Many approaches have been initiated to bridge this gap: internships or fieldwork, case study pedagogies, interdisciplinary courses, and bringing on campus pastors and other church leaders to tell it like it is.

One contribution to this area of tension is the diminishing number of seminary students whose objective is the pastorate. Historically, theological education was to prepare men to serve as pastors; today, a growing percentage of students are involved in or preparing for other areas of service. The M.Div. degree which prepares for the parish ministry has a declining percentage of students (from 79.6% in 1970 to 53.3% in 1987) which may tend to de-emphasize or dissipate practical theology courses.

Responses to this concern vary. Eastern Mennonite Seminary has an exploration in ministry programme in which persons not yet in seminary can test their call to ministry in practical settings. In a less structured way, our seminary along with many others would emphasize the importance of students being involved in ministry before they come to seminary; their effective ministry would lead their pastor or others in the church to encourage them to consider seminary. We would also expect that they would be seriously involved in ministry while they are attending seminary. Here is a vital link between the academic and the practical. Lois LeBar has aptly said, 'Content without experience is empty; experience without content is blind.'

Larry Richards has made a valid observation that 'example leadership reproduces itself. Seminaries train as well as teach. The "hidden curriculum" of the learning setting has a greater impact on the learner than the "content curriculum" which is being taught in the instruction.'<sup>5</sup> This is not to say that students do not learn in the classroom, but their model is a lecturer and not a pastor; therefore, we should not be too surprised if seminary graduates excel in teaching, but not in pastoral care and administration. Richards

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<sup>3</sup> Thielicke, Helmut, *A Little Exercise for Young Theologians*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1962, p. 8.

<sup>4</sup> Farley, Edward, 'The Reform of Theological Education as a Theological Task', *Theological Education* 17 (Spring 1981), p. 93.

<sup>5</sup> Richards, Larry, *A Theology of Christian Education*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Pub. Co., 1975, p. 159.

continues, ‘To equip a person for ministry in the Body, that person’s training must be like the ministry he is being trained to undertake.’<sup>6</sup> Richards suggests a model in which faculty members serve in local churches and students p. 45 serve and take some courses in the context of the congregation. At Covenant Seminary Donald MacNair actually walked students with him in planting churches as part of the Evangelism Practicum. One of our basic commitments as a Seminary is for our professors to have pastoral experience so that instead of being seen as ‘specialists’ they can train and teach from the perspective of pastors; they continue to serve in local churches as models for their students in bridging the gap between campus and parish.

## PROFICIENCY AND SPIRITUALITY

Somewhat related to the tension between the academic and the practical is the *tension between academic performance and spiritual formation*—between development of professional proficiency and development of spirituality.

At this point Farley calls for a drastic reassessment of direction. He argues that changes to meet both academic and practical demands are merely cosmetic—that the real need is theological—that the increasing multiplicity of departments and specializations has moved the seminaries even farther from their primary task of the study of divinity to alternatives that lack unity and coherence.

By ‘divinity’ Farley means ‘not just an objective science, but a personal knowledge of God and the things of God in the context of salvation. Hence, the study of divinity [theology] was an exercise of piety, a dimension of the life of faith.’<sup>7</sup>

I am not sure that Farley’s thesis applies to approaches to spiritual formation which are programmed on many campuses since in most cases spiritual formation is developed as yet another discipline, with classes, seminars, retreats, and the like. However, there does seem to be a growing concern that the minister be a man of God, not merely a competent clergyman—that he would minister to people out of his apprehension of God’s grace to him, that he may not be able to say, as Paul wrote, ‘Lest when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway’ ([1 Cor. 9:27](#)).

In *The Religious Life of Theological Students*, B. B. Warfield says that a student of theology cannot be either a student or a man of God; he must be both. He writes, ‘I am here today to warn you to take seriously your theological study, not merely as a duty ... but as a p. 46 religious exercise, itself charged with religious blessing to you; as fitted by its very nature to fill all your mind and heart and soul and life with divine thoughts and feelings and aspirations and achievements ... out of which you draw everyday enlargement of heart, elevation of spirit, and adoring delight in your Maker and your Saviour.’<sup>8</sup>

The basic element of seminary education is the same as any expectation for spiritual growth; it is a life fully committed to Jesus Christ, a life in which personal devotion is a daily anticipation and practice, a life in which joyful obedience is given to God’s Word, a life in which selfless service is given to Christ and to his people and for his sake. Such a

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<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 160.

<sup>7</sup> Farley, Edward, *Theologia: The Fragmentation and Unity of Theological Education*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983, p. 7.

<sup>8</sup> Warfield, Benjamin B., *The Religious Life of Theological Students*. Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., (original date) 1911, p. 9.

lifestyle will permeate Academe, and will focus both study and training in the perspective of ministry to Christ.

## OLDER STUDENTS

A third area of tension is caused by *the increasing age of seminary students*. Fewer and fewer students are coming to seminary right out of college. The average age of entering seminary students has increased to 31, and it is not unusual to find students in the fifties. 20–30% of these applicants are second (or third) career people. Most of them are married; most of them have children; most of them are working, at least part-time. This, in turn, means that a rapidly increasing number of our students are part-time students. Resulting tensions include:

a. *Problems in scheduling*: older students may take 4–7 years to complete a regular 3-year programme. Renewing study habits and working part-time reduces the load of classes they can take. Work or family responsibilities may make it difficult for them to attend some classes. North American Baptist Seminary has set up clusters of classes at times most convenient for them.

b. *Need for new courses*: older students may require a wider spectrum of courses or services because of their peculiar interests or strengths or commitments; these new courses and practica will further complicate an already extended schedule.

c. *Problems in recruitment*: older students are more affected by regionalization. Location of home and job are major components in choosing a seminary. To recruit students from a distance, seminaries p. 47 assume additional responsibilities in helping to secure housing and employment.

d. *Demand for credit for experience*: older students may already have experience as teachers, pastors, missionaries, or counsellors, and want graduate credit for it. While there is a general trend in education (both in ATS and on the state level) to give such credit, experience in itself is not necessarily pedagogical. We need to make sure there is proficiency.

e. *Lack of Community*: older students will tend to come to class and then go home without the normal interaction of bull-sessions and social contact with the seminary family. Denver Seminary is seeking to meet this need by scheduling a new approach to chapel and worship in which they can be involved.

f. *Need for more student aid*: older students with larger families have greater financial needs. Scholarship and other student aid programmes need to be expanded so that these students do not have to extend their time in seminary too far.

## MISSION AND MARKET

A fourth area of tension is *between curriculum and programmes which are mandated by the school mission and curriculum and programmes which are driven by the market*.

Many seminaries have proliferated programmes extensively in recent years. Tensions arise when new programmes are initiated primarily to attract students or dollars. Leon Pacala writes on this point, 'Of even more serious concern for the future of the enterprise, an increasingly student-enrolment-driven-system will carry with it the temptation for theological schools to concentrate on student numbers to the detriment of concern for the quality and promise of future seminarians.'<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Pacala, Leon, 'Reflections on the State of Theological Education in the 80s', *Theological Education* 18 (Autumn 1981), pp. 30, 31.

Other questions need to be faced: Will new programmes require too much of an already over-worked faculty? Will students tend to become mere statistics whose main function is to balance the seminary budget? How does each new proposal fit into the mission statement? The President of Denver Seminary commented, 'We believe we must have a strong sense of mission, and respond to the market only where it p. 48 clearly fits with the mission of the seminary.' The President of Trinity Evangelical Divinity School appropriately points out that faculties and staff need to be educated to the realities of meeting seminary budgets. For the health of the institution, faculty members may have to be willing to increase course loads and advisees.

## GLOBALIZATION

Another tension is *in the area of globalization*. It is especially fitting for us to wrestle with this in the context of the meeting of the Lausanne II Congress in Manila.

Tensions develop even in defining globalization. In contrast to those who see globalization mainly as human development or interfaith dialogue, our evangelical seminaries would see its major thrust as obedience to the Great Commission. While we acknowledge that in many foreign countries the Christian faith was and still is identified with Western culture, and that this has caused misunderstandings and problems, we would emphasize the continuing need to prepare people to present the gospel effectively throughout the world, and to train them to have an intimate knowledge of the cultural context and its implications.

While we are increasingly sensitive to this need, many of us are slow to accept the changes in curriculum and programmes which will really prepare someone to serve in the multi-cultural milieu in North America or in the Two-Thirds World. The traditional M.Div. curriculum is already beset with pressure to add new courses to an over-crowded programme without diminishing its basic core courses. Since the Bible is a cross-cultural book with a message to all peoples, seminarians should have cross-cultural courses and experiences along with a multi-cultural perspective which is infused into other existing courses. Many of our evangelical seminaries (Westminster Seminary, Dallas Seminary, and Columbia Graduate School of Missions) are offering degrees in inter-cultural studies; Fuller Seminary and Reformed Seminary have doctoral level courses. ATS challenges us to see that 'globalization is to be a central rather than a peripheral issue in theological education, and that there are hard choices which need to be made in curriculum planning'.<sup>10</sup> We face a tension between our history, which primarily p. 49 prepared ministers for middle-class white churches, and our future, which calls us to prepare people for multi-national ministry.

Within most of our seminaries there is a wide diversity of denominational and ethnic backgrounds among our students. Many of us have faculty from the black or Hispanic communities. Our interaction within these contexts is a natural place to begin to develop appreciation for and understanding of other cultures. In addition we need consciously to plan ways to enable our students to have a world vision so that whether they serve in ministries in North America or throughout the world they will not be bound by a parochial or provincial concept of the church. We should encourage representatives of other cultures on to be on our campuses as guest professors or special speakers. If some of our faculty are able to spend time in another culture, they may be able to bring the flavour of it back with them.

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<sup>10</sup> *Globalization: Theological Education for the Whole Church* (a monograph prepared by the Task Force for Globalization of ATS in 1986), p. 7. See also *Theological Education 22* (Spring 1986).



Many of us encourage international students to attend our seminaries. This is possibly a learning experience for our students, but I wonder how effective it is for the foreign student. It is quite costly, either for him, his church or the seminary. He is learning in a culture far different from the one where he is preparing for ministry. Statistics show that he has less than a 50% likelihood of returning home after his study in America. Are we doing a disservice to international students and their home churches by encouraging them to come? Some of our seminaries (International School of Theology, Erskine Seminary, Fuller Seminary) sponsor and support extension seminaries in the Two-Thirds World. Would we be aiding students more by helping them to attend seminaries in their own culture?

A number of other areas of tension were mentioned. Yet, like the writer to the Hebrews, I conclude, 'What shall I say more? For time would fail me to speak of ...' *tensions between seminary objectives and church expectations, concerns to meet rising costs without raising tuitions unrealistically, the question of inerrancy, issues in the area of feminism, recruiting acceptable numbers and quality of students—including minorities, and recruiting and retaining qualified faculty.*

This paper is not to be considered a comprehensive treatment of the topic. But hopefully, it may stimulate our thinking and discussion, and may lead to further study, and constructive responses, to these tensions.

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# **Training Asians in Asia: From Dream to Reality**

**Bong Rin Ro**

On 9 July 1989, at the Central Union Church in Manila, the Asia Graduate School of Theology (AGST) held its first commencement for eleven graduates in the presence of over three hundred people. Among these graduates, seven received their Ed.D. in Christian Education and four the Master of Theology (M.Th.) in Biblical Studies. The vision of training Asians in Asia, which many evangelical theologians have dreamed, had become reality in the history of the Asian Church.

## **PROLIFERATION OF THEOLOGICAL SCHOOLS**

Asians are heard to say that if a Western missionary can bring \$10,000 from his home country, he can start a new seminary. Consequently, numerous theological schools have

been established in different countries of Asia. The 1988 Directory of Theological Schools in Asia<sup>1</sup> and the latest survey shows that there are at least 1076 such institutions.

Australia	81
Bangladesh	3
Burma	61
China	12
Hong Kong	24
India	159
Indonesia	104
Japan	75
Korea	165
Malaysia	19
New Zealand	11
Pacific Islands	21
Pakistan	15
Papua New Guinea	12
Philippines	227
Singapore	18
Sri Lanka	9

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<sup>1</sup> Bong Rin Ro, *1988 Directory of Theological Schools in Asia* (Taiwan: Asia Theological Association, 1987), pp. 3–33.

Taiwan	33
Thailand	25
West Asia	2
Total	1076

One of the common characteristics of most of these theological schools is their low academic standard; therefore we must upgrade these schools in order to meet the needs of the rising academic standards of Asian society. [p. 51](#)

The Asia Theological Association (ATA) has upgraded the quality of education in two different ways: accreditation and AGST. ATA has given accreditation to 45 theological institutions in twelve countries; some 70 other schools have expressed their desire to receive accreditation from ATA. AGST is a joint effort of 17 evangelical seminaries in Indonesia, the Philippines, Japan, and Korea to offer post-graduate degrees.

### **BASIC ISSUES IN THE ASIAN CHURCH**

The concept of training Asians in Asia must be understood in the context of the Asian Church. According to a survey conducted by ATA, eleven church leaders cited seven basic issues confronting the Asian Church. They described the issues as:

1. Need for grass-roots evangelism
2. Lack of trained leadership
3. Need for lay training
4. Contextualization
5. Christian social responsibility (holistic approach)
6. Theological issues: Asian theology, dialogue with other living religions, human rights
7. Spiritual renewal<sup>2</sup>

Let us then look into the lack of trained leadership and need of lay training in the Asian Church.

### **SHORTAGE OF TRAINED LEADERSHIP**

One of the major hindrances to the growth of the Asian Church is the lack of trained spiritual leaders. The large Batak Church (HKBP) in North Sumatra which has approximately 1.5 million members, including children, has only 287 parish ministers—a ratio of one pastor serving 5,000 members. One of the church districts which consists of 43 churches with 10,591 members has only one ordained pastor.<sup>3</sup>

Another Lutheran denomination in North Sumatra (GKPI) with 117,000 members and 600 churches in 1982 had only 68 ordained [p. 52](#) pastors and 23 evangelists. The

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<sup>2</sup> 'Basic Issues in the Asian Church', *Asia Theological News* (May, 1978), pp. 4–11, 17–19.

<sup>3</sup> David Baker, 'OMF and Theological Education', *East Asia Millions* (Aug./Sept. 1986), p. 88.

Protestant Church in Sabah in East Malaysia had 130 churches and 12,000 members with eight pastors and 160 lay leaders. Among 2,200 churches in Taiwan, some 500 do not have pastors.<sup>4</sup>

In India, the second most populous nation in the world with 730 million people, 400 villages have a ratio of one pastor to 8 churches. Another 200 villages have a ratio of one pastor to 180 churches. The ratio between full-time Christian workers and population is one to 120,000.<sup>5</sup>

Revd Samrit Wongsang, vice moderator of the Church of Christ in Thailand (CCT), also pointed out a dearth of leadership in his country:

Eighty ministers have to serve 263 local churches throughout the country. Many churches are able to serve holy communion only once a year, because they cannot afford to hire a full-time worker.<sup>6</sup>

Eighty per cent of the Thai churches are located in the rural areas and eighty per cent of these churches do not have pastors. It is difficult to expect church growth without adequate spiritual leadership of pastors and lay leaders.

An inevitable consequence of this shortage of Christian workers is the large percentage of drop-outs among baptized converts from the Church. For example, most Christians in Taiwan came from Buddhist and folk religious backgrounds, and became Christians through English Bible studies, English camps, and other student activities.

Dr Allan Swanson, veteran Lutheran missionary in Taiwan, in *The Church in Taiwan: Profile 1980*, cited the alarming statistics that the drop-out rate among the Mandarin speaking churches was 5.1 out of 6.1 converts while among the Taiwanese churches, it was 2.3 out of 3.3 converts. When these young converts married and set up their own families, they disappeared from the Church. The stronger family ties within the Taiwanese churches help to sustain this lesser drop-out rate.<sup>7</sup> p. 53

Nevertheless, Dr Swanson alluded to the lack of a teaching ministry within the Church as one of the main causes for this loss of new converts. He published a subsequent book, *Mending the Nets*, in which he made numerous suggestions on how to nurture the believers. This critical problem of drop-outs represents a typical situation in other Asian countries.

## **ASIA GRADUATE SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY (AGST)**

In June 1984, nineteen delegates from fifteen seminaries in seven Asian countries met in Hong Kong to establish the Asia Graduate School of Theology (AGST). With AGST serving as an umbrella institution several evangelical graduate seminaries throughout Asia (Korea, Japan, India, Indonesia, Philippines, Taiwan, and Singapore) can now jointly offer a cost-efficient, culturally-adapted, post-graduate degree in theology, Biblical studies, missiology, and Christian education.

AGST now offers the following graduate degrees: Th.M., Th.D., D.R.E., and D.Min. There are 43 AGST students studying for these degrees in the Philippines, Indonesia and Japan.

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<sup>4</sup> Bong Rin Ro, 'More Pastors Needed for Local Churches', *Asia Theological News* (Jan.-March, 1982), p.2. See 'Asian Pastors in "Western Paradises"', *Asian Theological News* (Jan.-March, 1986), p. 2.

<sup>5</sup> 'The Pastor: Key to Renewal', *Asia Theological News* (April-June, 1983), p. 2.

<sup>6</sup> Samrit Wong Sang, 'The Local-Rural Thai Church Issue', unpublished paper (Bangkok: Church of Christ in Thailand, 1981), p. 14.

<sup>7</sup> Allan Swanson, *The Church in Taiwan: Profile 1980* (Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1982), p. 225.

The AGST in Korea will commence the Th.M. programmes in church growth and missions as well as in church history in September 1991. AGST will also start its External Master of Divinity in India in January 1990. There is a possibility of setting up other AGST programmes in Taiwan, Singapore/Malaysia, and Thailand in the future.

There are four objectives in the AGST programme:

1. *To supply faculty for theological schools.* If an Asian theologian has received a post-graduate degree from a school in the West, many theological schools in Asia will seek his teaching services. Thus, one may find a well-trained theologian teaching at three or four institutions. With such a dire shortage of well-trained evangelical theologians throughout Asia, we cannot continue to look to the West to supply educators for the thousand or more theological schools in Asia.

2. *To curtail the 'brain drain' to the West.* Statistics compiled by the National Youth Commission in Taiwan show that of 80,000 Taiwanese students who studied overseas from 1950 to 1983, more than 69,000 of them (86%) failed to return to Taiwan.<sup>8</sup> Possibly due to the pending take-over of Hong Kong in 1997 by mainland China, more than 100 p. 54 Chinese pastors have left that city for the West during the past three years.<sup>9</sup> Well-trained Chinese pastors from Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore, and the Philippines are migrating to the West in large numbers. In fact, more Chinese theologians live in 'Western Paradises', especially in North America, than in all of Asia.<sup>10</sup>

In 1989 there are more than 2000 Korean churches, 900 Chinese churches, 165 Japanese churches, 156 Vietnamese churches, and many other Asian ethnic churches among 5.1 million Asians in North America. The Asian population there will reach 10 million by 2000 A.D.

The ratio between 1,530 Korean churches and the Korean immigrant population in North America in 1985 was 1:605 while the same ratio between churches and population in South Korea was 1:1,396. Although the Korean Church has lost hundreds of her pastors to the West, 169 theological schools with 10,000 students have annually produced 3,000–4,000 Christian workers to replace the ones who left Korea.<sup>11</sup> But this is not the case with other countries in Asia, where foreign missionaries still must fill the gap.

Thousands of other well-trained pastors from the Philippines, Indonesia, Thailand, India and other Asian countries have likewise migrated to the West. The American Consulate in Madras reported that in the late 1970s the 'brain drain' among Indian theological students was 90%.<sup>12</sup> This is a primary reason why hundreds of churches in India do not have pastors.

While well-trained Asian pastors are immigrating to the West, new missionaries from the West are coming to Asia to reach Asians. This is certainly a paradox.

The solution to this severe problem is to establish our own theological schools throughout Asia. Through programmes like AGST we can retain many more theologians and church leaders for Asia.

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<sup>8</sup> Asia Graduate School of Theology brochure, produced by Asia Theological Association in Taiwan, 1985.

<sup>9</sup> Frank Allen, Minister-at-large of SEND International, reported at the EFMA/IFMA Asia Brief Seminar in Chicago, April 2, 1986.

<sup>10</sup> Bong Rin Ro, 'Asian Pastors in "Western Paradises"', pp. 2–3.

<sup>11</sup> 1985 Directory of Korean Church in North America, produced by Christian Culture Co., L.A., 1985, pp. 36–47, 79–88.

<sup>12</sup> Bong Rin Ro, 'More Pastors Needed for Local Churches', p. 2.

3. *To provide more economical training for Asians.* It costs approximately US\$36,000 to train a Singaporean student who has a Th.M. degree and wants to pursue his Ph.D. at Cambridge University for p. 55 three years. The annual expense for an Indian student who is studying at a well-known seminary in California is approximately \$12,000.

In contrast, training a Filipino theologian in the Philippines costs one-fifth of what it costs to train him in the West. Thus by training Asians in Asia we will be able to train far more students with the same amount of the Lord's money.

4. *To encourage cultural adaptation of theological education.* Because of the political, economic and cultural differences between Asia and the West, Asian theological students studying in the West often discover that much of what they learn is irrelevant to their own Asian contexts. Western evangelical theological schools have emphasized the inerrancy of the Scriptures and orthodox theology versus liberal and neo-orthodox theologies. But these are not major issues in Asia. Rather, the prevalent areas of concern are poverty, suffering, injustice, communism, and non-Christian religions. For this reason, contextualization is crucial. By training Asians in Asia, we will be able to contextualize theological education.

## PRIORITIES FOR MODERN MISSIONS IN ASIA

It has been my privilege to work with theological schools in Asia for the past twenty years. In coordinating evangelical theological education under the sponsorship of Asia Theological Association, one question has repeatedly come to my mind over the years: 'How can we Christians who represent a mere 3% evangelize the billions of non-Christians in Asia with the Gospel of Christ?' It is obvious that we cannot depend on the 10,000 Western missionaries to evangelize Asia. We must find a better way. It is my firm conviction that *the chief service of Western missionaries is to train Asian Christians in Asia*, so that these nationals can reach their own people on the grass-roots level with the gospel.

And so I propose for Asia four suggestions for missions in the coming decades.

1. The burden of communicating the gospel and making disciples in the Third World must primarily be the nationals' responsibility.
2. Effective church growth in the Third World will depend on the creative and spirit-filled leadership of pastors and lay leaders.
3. The top priority of missionary work in the Third World in the coming decades should be the training of nationals. So we must train the national, give him responsibility, and *trust* him to do the job.
4. We must *train Asians in Asia* in order to curtail the brain drain, to p. 56 save the Lord's money, to deal with the particular Asian issues which they face, and to produce leaders in quality and quantity.

## CONCLUSION

St. Paul in the first century faced a situation in Ephesus ([Eph. 4](#)) which offers many similarities to modern Asia today. Ephesus was the largest city in the Roman Province of Asia with 500,000 people. Asia today contains 2.8 billion or 58% of the world's population. Ephesus was a religious city with the huge temple of Diana ([Acts 19:34](#)), one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. At present, the continent of Asia is permeated with the living religions of Buddhism, Hinduism and Islam.

It was a sinful city, as Paul described it in [Ephesians 4:19](#): 'they, having become callous, have given themselves over to sensuality, for the practice of every kind of impurity with

greediness'. In Asia we find the sins of political injustice and bribery as a way of life, wanton killing of dissidents and economic disparity whereby a few live in luxurious opulence while the masses starve.

The Ephesian church that consisted of both Jewish and Gentile Christians ([Eph. 2:11–13](#)) was small in size, lacked discipleship training ([Eph. 4:14](#)), and later lost its first love ([Rev. 2:4](#)). The Asian Church consisting of less than three per cent of its total population is divided by denominationalism and provincialism, and is in desperate need of discipleship training and effective leadership.

St. Paul's message to the Ephesian church is relevant to Asian Christians today:

He gave some as apostles, some as prophets, some as evangelists, some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ ([Eph. 4:11–12](#)).

How can the 3% minority of Asian Christians reach the gigantic population of 3 billion people in Asia with the Gospel? One of the best ways to achieve this goal is to produce more Asian church leaders, in quantity as well as quality, by training Asians in Asia.

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**Bong Rin Ro is Acting Executive Secretary of the World Evangelical Fellowship Theological Commission. p. 57**

# New Light on Theological Education in Africa

Paul Bowers

The phenomenal growth of African Christianity has rightly focused attention on the role of theological education in Africa. As churches multiply, and multiply again, the provision of trained leadership for such rapidly expanding communities has become a matter of increasingly urgent interest. And yet the descriptive study of theological education on the continent remains very much in its infancy.<sup>1</sup> Programmes of theological education in Africa—like African Christianity itself—are lively, diverse, and proliferating. But they have also been very poorly documented.

For example, a decade ago only two continental reference sources on theological schools were available. One knew of 152 theological schools in Africa, the other knew of 189.<sup>2</sup> Yet when the Accrediting Council for Theological Education in Africa (ACTEA)

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<sup>1</sup> A much more detailed version of this material appears, under the same title, as Number 9 in the series ACTEA *Tools and Studies* (Nairobi: ACTEA, 1989), with considerably more statistical data and extensive supporting notes. [This publication is in turn a revised and corrected version of an article in the *East Africa Journal of Evangelical Theology* 6.2 (1987) 13–26.] Copies of ACTEA *Tools and Studies* No. 9 may be ordered, prepaid, at US\$3 per copy, from: ACTEA PO Box 60875, Nairobi, Kenya (cheques made payable to 'ACTEA').

<sup>2</sup> The first reference is to the publication of the Theological Education Fund, *Directory: Theological Schools and Related Institutions in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, Latin America & South Pacific* (8th ed. Bromley, Kent:

launched its operations in 1976, it soon found the number of theological schools on its own address list passing the 200 mark and then the 300 mark.

It quickly became apparent that many more theological schools were in existence in Africa than anyone had ever documented. It also became obvious that the data necessary for a reasonably accurate description of theological education on the continent did not exist.

Today this situation has changed decisively. In 1979 ACTEA began its [p. 58](#) own systematic collection of information on theological education in Africa, resulting in the publication of the *ACTEA Directory of Theological Schools in Africa*, the first edition in 1982, and the much-enhanced second edition in 1985.<sup>3</sup> The latter lists altogether 742 schools, nearly four times the documented number available before 1982, with a wealth of detailed information on individual schools.

ACTEA's new *Directory* has been widely welcomed by librarians, researchers, and academic administrators as a handy reference tool in a hitherto neglected field, and has quickly established itself as a standard. But the full significance of the *ACTEA Directory* lies in more than its practical utility as a reference source. Equally important, I suggest, is that here for the first time has been offered a sufficiently sizeable body of statistical data to permit some reasonable generalizations about theological education in Africa. Here are materials upon which may be laid the foundations of a more accurate and comprehensive representation of this key movement within modern African Christianity.

This potential contribution of the *ACTEA Directory* has yet in fact to be exploited. To date the *Directory's* resources have not been utilized for obtaining the statistical generalizations about theological education in Africa now possible. The intent of this article, therefore, is to draw attention to this body of material, and to highlight some of the generalizations which it makes possible, in order to shed new light on theological education in Africa and thereby to stimulate further study of this important phenomenon.

The *Directory* data base covers all parts of the continent (41 countries), all theological traditions (Catholic and Protestant), and all academic levels (from vernacular Bible schools to post-graduate university programmes). The data base generally includes any institution in Africa engaged in regular training for church-related [p. 59](#) leadership roles. Detailed information is presented on more than 70% of the schools, under eleven data categories.<sup>4</sup>

Since the information on each school was provided by that school, the material is generally as reliable as the reports supplied (as the *Directory* carefully points out). Systematic on-site verification was not attempted, but where unscheduled verification has occurred it suggests a generally high degree of reliability. The *Directory* also states

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TEF, 1974). The second reference is to the publication of the Association of Evangelicals of Africa and Madagascar, *Directory of Bible Training Institutions in Africa* (NAIROBI: AEAM, 1976).

<sup>3</sup> 2nd. ed. Nairobi: ACTEA, 1985. This edition of the *ACTEA Directory* is now out of print. ACTEA has also issued an *ACTEA Directory Supplement 1988*, containing more than two hundred changes, corrections, and additions to the second edition of the *Directory*. The *Supplement* may be ordered at US\$3 a copy from the address given in note 1 above. A third edition of the *Directory* is projected.

ACTEA is a network and support service for evangelical theological education in Africa, now linking more than 190 theological schools and programmes on the continent. Approximately one-eighth of the schools are involved in ACTEA's accreditation service. ACTEA is a ministry of the Theological Commission of the Association of Evangelicals of Africa and Madagascar (AEAM).

<sup>4</sup> Since information was gathered wherever it could be found, from a variety of sources and in whatever form it was available, the amount of information in the *Directory* for each school is not uniform. The absence of particular data for a school is normally owing to this factor and not to any deliberate failure by a school to report the data. Hence the absence in the *Directory* of particular data about a school is in general not statistically significant.



that not all known schools have been listed. Some schools functioning in hostile settings requested that their names not be published. And many more schools undoubtedly still remain undetected and undocumented. It is possible that the *Directory* covers no more than two-thirds of the theological institutions actually operating on the continent.

Taking all such qualifications into account, it is evident that the material in the ACTEA *Directory* cannot entirely support detailed statistical analysis. But the quantity of data presented is such, and the degree of apparent reliability such, that reasonable generalizations are frequently possible—largely for the first time.

## DISTRIBUTION

While the ACTEA *Directory* lists schools in 41 African countries, more than half of these institutions cluster in only four countries, namely Nigeria (130), South Africa (111), Zaire (85), and Kenya (66). It is doubtless not by chance that these same countries represent the major centres of Christian population on the continent. Using Barrett's 1980 estimates on Africa's Christian population, the following table emerges.

	% of Afr. Chr. pop.	% of Afr. theol. schools
Nigeria	17.5%	17.5%
South Africa	11.2	15.0
Zaire	13.0	11.5
Kenya	5.7	8.9
Totals	47.4%	52.8%

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Sorting the schools by major language areas emphasizes the preponderance of anglophone theological schools on the continent. Interestingly, the distribution of schools matches in percentage rather closely the distribution of the Christian population among the major language areas.

	% of Afr, Chr. pop.	% of Afr. theol. schools
English	64.9%	69.9%
French	25.7	26.5
Portuguese	5.4	2.4
Arabic	4.0	1.1

## FOUNDING

The statistics underline the common impression that the number of theological schools in Africa has mushroomed in recent years. With data on the year of founding available from 353 presently existing schools, fully 79% were begun since 1950, just under 63% since 1960, and nearly 40% since 1971. The following table, showing the number and percentage of presently existing schools sorted by the periods in which they were founded, accents the rapid growth pattern of recent decades.

	Number of schools	% of total
Before 1900	12	3.4%
1900-1939	30	8.5
1940s	32	9.1
1950s	57	16.1
1960s	82	23.2%
1970s	104	29.5
1980-84	36	10.2

In part of course the rapid increase in schools from 1950 onwards parallels the rapid growth of the Christian community in Africa. But the growth must also have been stimulated by the urgent leadership training needs which rapid Africanization has generated in the churches in recent decades, and perhaps also by the greater value which African church leadership seems to place on theological education.

## LIBRARIES AND TEACHING STAFF

Nowhere are the development needs of Africa's theological schools perhaps more vividly on display than in their library statistics. With library data available from 271 schools, the average library size is 4,596 books. Had the *Directory* not chosen to omit library figures **P. 61** reported below 100, the actual average would have been definitely lower.

Leaving aside the libraries of universities and university colleges, only 15 schools throughout the continent have libraries of 15,000 volumes or more, and eight of these are in South Africa (the largest reports 45,000 volumes). Even when one has granted that

libraries are not everything, and that the quality of use is even more important than the quantity, the figures for theological libraries in Africa remain hardly short of appalling.

If the statistics for theological libraries in Africa are discouraging, the statistics on teaching staff at theological schools in Africa are distinctly encouraging. With staff data available from 438 schools, the average number of teachers per school, full-time and part-time, is 7.3. This yields the truly remarkable teacher/student ratio for theological schools in Africa of 1 to 6.1, strikingly better than the accepted norms in comparable Western educational institutions. In the degree that low teacher/student ratios suggest enhanced learning opportunities, one may identify here a decisive strength incumbent African theological education.

Equally encouraging is the progress now documentable in the Africanization of teaching staff on the continent. Among 333 schools which distinguished between African and expatriate teaching staff in the data collected, Africans averaged 60.1% of the total staff. This means that there are better than 3 African teaching staff members for every 2 expatriate. These figures document a notable achievement in the ongoing development of theological education in Africa.

## STUDENTS

Theological schools in Africa tend to be modest in size. With data available from 423 schools, the average enrolment is 44.7 students. Only 22.2% of the schools have an enrolment of 60 or more, contrasting with 31.7% with an enrolment of less than 20. Only 11 schools on the continent have 200 or more students, the majority of these being university departments of religion or theology (the largest enrolment anywhere reported is 353).

While these low student enrolment figures permit the enviable teacher/student ratio present in theological schools in Africa, they perhaps also suggest excessive proliferation of theological schools on the continent. This in turn may imply that inefficient utilization of facilities and staff, and hence also of finances, is a significant overall pattern in theological education on the continent. [p. 62](#)

If the average enrolment given here for theological schools in Africa is applied to all schools listed in the *Directory*, it suggests a total of 33,182 residential theological students in Africa—or one for every 6,102 African Christians. This may be compared, for interest, with a recent calculation of 23,887 students in theological education by extension (TEE) courses in Africa.<sup>5</sup> When these figures for residential and extension students are then combined, one gets an (admittedly very rough, but also conservative) total of 57,069 theological students of all types on the continent—or 1 for every 3,548 Christians. Put like that, the leadership situation for the church in Africa is, at least statistically, perhaps a little more hopeful than might have been expected.

## EVANGELICAL SCHOOLS

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<sup>5</sup> J. Hogarth, K. Gatimu, and D. Barrett, *Theological Education in Context: 100 Extension Programmes in Contemporary Africa* (Nairobi: Uzima Press, 1983) 170. This may be compared with the figure of 20,974 TEE students given in W. Weld, *1980 Supplement to the World Directory of Theological Education by Extension* (Wheaton: Cameo, 1980).

The *Directory* material also permits some statistical generalizations on evangelical theological schools in Africa, using as a sample those schools listed in the *Directory* as affiliated with ACTEA. Altogether 93 schools in the *Directory* fall into this category.<sup>6</sup>

In geographical distribution, the highest concentrations of evangelical schools in the sample are to be found (in descending order) in Nigeria, South Africa, Kenya, Zambia, Ghana, and Zaire. These six countries account for 71% of the evangelical schools in the sample. In founding dates evangelical schools follow closely the general pattern for all schools. For example, 18.9% were founded before 1950, and 81.1% since, compared with 21% and 79% respectively for all schools on which data was available. As to libraries, evangelical schools average 4,486 volumes per school (matching closely the figure of 4,596 for schools of all theological traditions).

In number of teaching staff, the evangelicals are slightly ahead of the general pattern overall, with an average of 8.5 staff per school, compared with 7.3 per school overall. In Africanization of staff, however, the evangelicals are distinctly behind the general pattern, with Africans at ACTEA schools constituting 48.4% of the overall staff, p. 63 compared with 60.1% for all schools, in teacher/student ratios the evangelicals are modestly ahead, with 1 teacher for every 5.1 students, compared with 1 for every 6.1 students generally.

In student enrolment the evangelical schools approximate the general pattern, with an average of 42.8 students, compared with 44.7 for all schools. But in the ratio of theological students to the Christian community being served, the evangelicals appear to be strikingly ahead of the general pattern. A careful, conservative count through the *Directory* suggests at least 298 schools which are identifiably evangelical in their sponsorship. If the average enrolment per school in the ACTEA sample is multiplied by this number, the resulting figure for residential evangelical theological students in Africa is 12,763. Using Barrett's estimate of some 36,711,000 evangelicals in Africa in 1980,<sup>7</sup> this would mean one residential evangelical theological student for every 2,876 evangelical African Christians, a figure remarkably better than the general pattern in Africa of one residential theological student for every 6,102 Christians. At least in these terms, the response of the evangelical Christian community in Africa to its own leadership training needs would appear to be surprisingly in advance of the response of the African Christian community as a whole. Here then is new light on theological education in Africa, at least in its broader external Outlines. There is much that can be derived from the data in the ACTEA *Directory*,<sup>8</sup> and of course there is much more that one would like to know, beyond what may be calculated from that *Directory*.<sup>9</sup> The descriptive study of theological education in Africa is still in its infancy. But here at least is a beginning, a preliminary profile.

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<sup>6</sup> See note 3 above for current figures on ACTEA-related institutions.

<sup>7</sup> D. Barrett, ed., *World Christian Encyclopedia* (Oxford: OUP, 1982) 782. The figure used here combines those which Barrett gives for evangelicals under both the 'Protestant' and the 'Anglican' categories.

<sup>8</sup> See the reference in note 1 above to the much fuller version of this material, under the same title, in ACTEA *Tools and Studies* No. 9.

<sup>9</sup> For example, in 1986 ACTEA published in its *Tools and Studies* series an opinion survey of evangelical theological educators in Africa, with altogether 355 individuals in 66 schools responding to 48 questions. In 1987 ACTEA published, in the same series, a comparative survey of curricula in 36 evangelical theological schools in Africa, sorted by some 35 subject categories. An earlier number in the series surveyed textbooks used in theological colleges in Africa.

Paul Bowers, deputy administrator of the Accrediting Council for Theological Education in Africa (ACTEA), has served in theological education in Africa since 1968, first in Nigeria and more recently in Kenya. He holds a Ph.D from the University of Cambridge, England. In addition to his work with ACTEA, Dr Bowers currently lectures at Scott Theological College and at Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology in Kenya. p. 64

# Renewal of Theological Education: Commitments, Models, and the ICAA *Manifesto*

Robert W. Ferris

During the twelve month period from August 1988 to August 1989 I had the privilege of studying the growing worldwide movement toward renewal of ministry training in evangelical theological schools. The project undertaken consisted of four parts:

1. Clarification of the meaning of 'renewal' as advocated in the ICAA *Manifesto*.
2. Identification of evangelical theological schools which demonstrate values advocated in the ICAA *Manifesto*.
3. Survey of ways in which the ICAA *Manifesto* has been used to promote renewal values in theological education.
4. Development of guidelines for implementing a programme of renewal in existing theological education institutions.

Research procedures have included:

1. A review of recent literature to identify the background and present context for renewal of evangelical theological education.
2. A survey of ICAA member agencies, to determine level of commitment to renewal of theological education and use of the ICAA *Manifesto* as a stimulus toward renewal. (All six ICAA member agencies responded to my questionnaire.)
3. A survey of institutions accredited by ICAA member agencies, to determine level of commitment to renewal of theological education, commitment to renewal values advocated in the ICAA *Manifesto*, and awareness of ICAA and the *Manifesto*. (A nine page questionnaire instrument was sent to 242 accredited institutions, with a 67% rate of response.<sup>1</sup>) p. 65

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<sup>1</sup> Distribution of the questionnaire instrument was limited to accredited institutions, since I believe it is fair to assume that those institutions would be most likely to be aware of programmes promoted by our regional agencies and are the schools by which we would prefer to be known and judged. In recognition of the mutual agreement between Asia Theological Association (ATA) and the Philippine Association of Bible and Theological Schools (PABATS), Philippine Bible colleges accredited by PABATS were included in the ATA sample. Because North American graduate theological schools are not represented among ICAA member agencies, furthermore, the survey was broadened to include schools affiliated with the (North American) Fellowship of Evangelical Seminary Presidents.

Survey instrument distribution and responses were as follows:

4. Identification of institutions which, in some respect, demonstrate renewal values. (Ten institutions were identified, representing five of six ICAA member agencies).
5. On-site visits to selected institutions, to identify factors contributing to implementation of renewal strategies.

It has been a busy—but good—year. I must express my deep appreciation to ICAA for the cooperation and support given to this project. I trust the findings will be useful to you and to the cause of renewal of evangelical theological education.

## MATTERS RAISING QUESTIONS AND CONCERN

My report is a ‘bad news, good news’ story. The findings of my survey of ICAA member agencies would qualify, on the whole, as bad news. All six agencies agreed that renewal is needed in theological education (that is good news, I should think), but agency leaders described themselves as only ‘somewhat familiar’ with the ICAA *Manifesto*<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, three out of six agencies report they have made no use of the *Manifesto*, have not found the *Manifesto* a significant stimulus toward renewal, and have no plans to use it in the future. Those findings raise concern and beg for clarification. **P. 66**

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Agency	Sent	Received	Rate
American Association of Bible Colleges	87	52	60%
Accrediting Council for Theol.Ed. in Africa	18	12	67%
Asia Theological Association	47	38	81%
Caribbean Evangelical Theological Association	20	9	45%
European Evangelical Accrediting Association	22	10	45%
South Pacific Association of Bible Colleges	14	14	100%
Fellowship of Evangelical Seminary Presidents	34	26	76%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>242</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>67%</b>

<sup>2</sup> That is, when asked ‘Would you say you are familiar with the ICAA *Manifesto*?’, the modal response was ‘somewhat familiar.’ Two agency leaders reported they are ‘very familiar’ with the *Manifesto*, while three said they are ‘somewhat familiar’, and one reported he is only ‘slightly familiar’ with this document.

I also asked agency leaders to rate the frequency with which renewal values (as stated in the *Manifesto*) are evidenced among the schools of their region. On a seven-point opinion scale (1 = No Schools and 7=All Schools), respondents tended toward a mid-range assessment of renewal values in affiliated institutions. (Mean across all twelve renewal values was 4.12).<sup>3</sup>

When asked to rate the priority they would assign to promoting renewal values within their region, on the other hand, agency leaders responded somewhat more positively (mean across twelve values was 5.22, with 1=Unimportant and 7=Highest Priority). Mean scores have little meaning when the number of subjects is only six, however, and closer examination shows that four of the twelve items yielded a bimodal response pattern.<sup>4</sup> This seems to indicate differences in values among ICAA member agencies, and suggests a topic for fruitful conversation around our dining tables.

One would expect that these two items would be negatively correlated—that is, when a renewal value is relatively common the priority attached to its promotion would be minimal, while values which are rarely demonstrated would merit higher priority in promotion. Surprisingly, correlation between these items is rather weak. This raises questions regarding the way we establish the educational services agenda of our accrediting agencies and poses yet another topic for informal discussion.

I wish I could assure you that the bad news is limited to findings of the ICAA members survey, but that is not the case. Analysis of survey responses received from 161 institutions accredited by ICAA member agencies reveals that ICAA is a well-kept secret. Fewer than one respondent in four (only 24.5%) reported they are ‘very aware’ of our international association.

Even more discouraging, over 85% of theological educators responding for our accredited institutions indicated they are not familiar with the basic contents of the *Manifesto* (72.4%) or they are not sure of p. 67 its contents (12.8%)! Since ICAA adopted the *Manifesto* at its 1983 meetings (also held in Wheaton), one wonders why it has received so little exposure over the past six years. Are we really ambivalent in our own commitment to the values the *Manifesto* expresses? (Perhaps we affirm these values publicly, but manage to overlook them when forming our programmes and budgets.) Does the length and style of the text inhibit the usefulness of the *Manifesto*? Or has preoccupation with maintenance of our agencies precluded attention to issues which, in fact, lie close to our calling and mission? These are not questions to pass over quickly.

## **RENEWAL IS A FELT NEED AMONG OUR SCHOOLS**

Enough of the bad news! I am pleased to report there is plenty of good news as well. My questionnaire on ‘Renewal of Evangelical Theological Education’ obviously touched a sensitive nerve with many school leaders. The 67% rate of return on the instrument must be considered gratifying by anyone familiar with standards of postal survey research. Furthermore, although the questionnaire instrument was nine pages long(!), 94% of respondents were the chief executive officer (president, principal, or dean) of their

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<sup>3</sup> Some items were reported to be more common than others (‘Integrated Programmes’ were relatively common—mean=5.33; ‘Continuous Assessment’ was reported to be rare—mean=2.83). There were also significant differences between regional agencies (highest across twelve values=5.00; lowest=3.25). This *may* accurately reflect educational development in these regions, but I am inclined to discount it as variation among raters.

<sup>4</sup> Bimodal patterns showed up in prioritization of ‘Integrated Programmes’, ‘A Christian Mind’, ‘Equipping for Growth’, and ‘Cooperation’.

institution. This is not a questionnaire which was tossed to a secretary or junior instructor to complete. Beyond that, fully 55% of respondents requested a report of the findings of the study *despite the fact that there was no check-off space on the instrument to accommodate that request*. In light of all this, it seems conservative to conclude that the leaders of our Bible and theological schools are interested in renewal.

When I asked theological educators if renewal of theological education is needed, they answered with a resounding affirmative.<sup>5</sup> I next asked if present approaches to ministry training are serving us well, or if major change is needed. Respondents were less emphatic, but still clearly affirmed that major change is needed.<sup>6</sup> That leads one to wonder what theological educators mean by ‘renewal of theological education’—what is it they intend to affirm? When I asked that p. 68 question, I was unable to discern a consensus.<sup>7</sup> When I presented the twelve points expressed in our *Manifesto*, however, respondents were emphatic in identifying themselves with those values.<sup>8</sup> This strongly supports the opening statement of the *Manifesto* prologue, which reads:

The fundamental presupposition of the *Manifesto* is the perception that today there is a wide agreement among evangelical theological educators on the need for renewal in theological education and on an agenda for such renewal.

It is not encouraging, however, to realize that some of our accrediting agencies lag behind schools in their region in commitment to the ideals we profess.<sup>9</sup>

Having established that renewal values are important to theological educators, I next asked if those values were demonstrated in their schools. Although respondents obviously wanted to provide a positive report, they consistently rated demonstration

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<sup>5</sup> Mean response was 5.55 on a scale of 1 to 7 on which 1 = ‘Strongly disagree’ and 7 = ‘strongly agree’. It is noteworthy that 83.6% of respondents identified their opinion at points 5, 6, or 7 on the continuum.

<sup>6</sup> Mean response was 4.95 on a 7 point scale with 1 = ‘Present Approach Serves Well’ and 7 = ‘Major Change is Needed’. Even though opinions were more distributed, 72.5% of respondents still located their position at points 5, 6, or 7 on the opinion scale.

<sup>7</sup> Content analysis of responses the open-ended item yielded seven categories with more than 5.0% representation. If responses were evenly distributed across eight categories (i.e. the seven listed, plus ‘Other’), each would represent 12.5% of the total. Actual distribution produced no category with a response greater than 17.9%. The most common responses were:

‘Refocus training on meeting the needs of the Church’ 17.9%

‘Refocus on applying biblical truth to social/cultural context’ 15.2%

‘Stronger integration of the present curriculum’ 15.2%

<sup>8</sup> Respondents were presented with a statement of each renewal value in turn, then asked, ‘Is this quality important to you?’ Responses were indicated on a seven point opinion scale, with 1 = ‘Unimportant’ and 7 = ‘Extremely Important’. Mean response across twelve renewal values was 6.23.

<sup>9</sup> Compare the ICAA agency respondents’ mean ‘priority’ response of 5.22 with institutional respondents mean ‘importance’ response of 6.23!



lower than the level of importance assigned to renewal values.<sup>10</sup> I believe this gap between affirmation of renewal values and demonstration of those values in our institutions accounts for the high level of interest observed in this study.

Perhaps renewal values are under-represented in our training programmes because they have not received appropriate attention from the faculty and administrators of our schools. To check this [p. 69](#) possibility, I asked theological educators if the faculty of their school has ‘deliberately worked on developing’ each renewal value in their training programme within the last five years. Apparently that is not the problem, for respondents affirmed that implementation of renewal values has received faculty attention.<sup>11</sup>

When I asked theological educators if they can identify other schools which demonstrate renewal values to a high degree, however, fewer than half indicated they could so so.<sup>12</sup>

This presents a very interesting picture. Theological educators affirm renewal values, but admit that demonstration of those values in their own institutions falls short of their commitment. This disappointing status exists despite deliberate efforts to realize these values. Furthermore, theological educators do not know of other schools that are doing better.

The situation described presents a golden opportunity for renewal of ministry training. Renewal values are in place, and educators are eager for change. All they lack is models that show them how to implement the values they affirm.

Let me add one more piece to the picture. The survey instrument stated clearly that the values presented were taken from the *Manifesto*, adopted by ICAA. At the end of the survey instrument I asked if respondents would ‘like to know more about ICAA and its efforts to promote renewal of evangelical theological education’. Fully 92.4% of respondents requested more information.

This is good news for ICAA and for our regional agencies! If our agencies can move definitively to help schools experience renewal of ministry training programmes, we can realize our own objectives and meet a deeply felt need among our principal constituency. We do not need to drum up enthusiasm; we need simply to provide the educational services member institutions are crying for. These are certainly exciting days for theological education! [p. 70](#)

## RENEWAL MODELS EXIST

I have more good news, besides. In our midst, some schools have mustered the courage and creativity to experiment with alternative models of ministry training. Without doubt,

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<sup>10</sup> See Appendix A for a comparison of mean responses for affirmation and demonstration of renewal values, by value and region. It is noteworthy that the largest discrepancies are seen in two values—‘Outcomes Assessment’ and ‘Creativity in Teaching’—and that these discrepancies exist across all seven agencies included in the study. It is safe to conclude these are areas in which our schools would appreciate help.

<sup>11</sup> Affirmative responses Varied from 93.0% (who claimed to have worked on strategies for spiritual formation) to 62.0% (who state their faculty has considered means of promoting student self-direction in learning). No renewal value was reported to have received ‘deliberate’ attention from the faculty of fewer than 62% of responding schools.

<sup>12</sup> Responses varied from 48.0% identification of one or more other schools which demonstrate ‘Cultural Appropriateness’, to only 17.5% identification of another school that demonstrates ‘Developmental Focus’. Across all renewal values, furthermore, missing responses for this set of items was unusually high, ranging from 29% to 41%. If missing responses are not factored out, therefore, even fewer educators are able to identify schools which model these values.

the most encouraging—and stimulating—aspect of my study this year has been the opportunity to visit schools around the world which are taking deliberate and positive strides toward renewal of theological education. Overall, these schools are rare, but they do exist. Furthermore, the ten schools I visited are not alone; it would be easy (and very profitable) to add ten more to these. It is important for us to be aware of the exciting alternatives which are being explored today, and to be ready to tell others about the training models they represent.

On the basis of survey responses and conversations with theological educators, ten schools were identified which illustrate this phenomenon.<sup>13</sup> Between the first of January and the end of April, this year, I visited each of these institutions. My intention was to spend at least four days on each campus. In that time, I found, I could identify those aspects of training which are most creative and demonstrative of renewal values, and I could explore the factors which contributed to development of these innovations. While on campus, I would draft a case study which described the programmes of qualities of interest, and the factors contributing to their development. Before leaving campus I would request the president or principal to review the case study, providing correction or adding detail as necessary.

There obviously is not time this evening to discuss ministry training at all of the above listed schools, but I will highlight three.

*Conservative Baptist Seminary of the East (CBSE)*—For years Conservative Baptists in the eastern United States have felt the need for a seminary of their own. Because several fine evangelical seminaries exist in that region, however, they recognized that any new institution must offer an alternative approach to ministry training. Part of the impetus for developing a new seminary, furthermore, was the conviction that traditional models transfer responsibility for ministry preparation from the local congregation to the seminary. Conservative Baptists in the east believe that ministry preparation is the responsibility of the local church. They conceived, therefore, a seminary which sees its mission as enabling local churches to train their own ministers.

In order to provide seminary training in congregational context, CBSE has adopted an internship model. Students applying to CBSE must bring with them the endorsement of a local congregation which agrees to p. 71 provide an internship setting for the student. Strategic to that agreement is the further provision that the church will assign two internship supervisors—one member of the pastoral staff, plus one active layperson—to oversee the student's seminary programme. The supervisors are expected to meet weekly with the student, and are responsible for guiding and development of the student's interpersonal skills, spiritual maturity, and ministry gifts. The supervisory relationship is both highly formative and a major source of constructive stress in the seminary programme, CBSE provides training for internship supervisors, and ready support from seminary staff.

To ensure that training centres on the congregational context, formal instruction is offered only one day each week. To implement a one-day class schedule and still provide acceptable, graduate level instruction, CBSE's administrators have introduced several interesting innovations. The school year has been extended from eight to eleven months, and vacation periods have been shortened or eliminated. (Churches, they reason, run a fifty-two week calendar; why should seminaries be different?) This allows the seminary to offer three fifteen-week 'semesters' each year, instead of two. By this innovation alone they have extended the three-year seminary programme from six semesters to nine,

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<sup>13</sup> No entry found in print copy.

allowing students to complete their training in the normal time by taking only ten units each semester, instead of fifteen.

Next, CBSE administrators have recognized that seminary students are adults, and thus adult education strategies are appropriate for their instruction. On this basis, students are required to take at least three units of work each semester through learning contracts. The contracted learning is related to (but distinct from) subjects studied in class, and the learning contract must be approved and graded by the Classroom instructor. By requiring students to take three units of contracted learning each semester, a full-time class load is further reduced from ten units to seven. Classes for seven units *can* be scheduled on one day per week, although it is an exhausting day for students and teachers alike. Students still have class preparation to do the rest of the week, but a one day schedule *is* possible. Furthermore, it achieves the Seminary's objective of focusing the internship congregation as the centre of ministry preparation.

There is much more to tell about CBSE. The Seminary presents a genuinely creative model of ministry training, and one which deserves our thoughtful consideration.

*All Nations Christian College (ANCC)*—The roots of ANCC reach back into the nineteenth century, but during the 1960s the school faced p. 72 declining enrolments and possible closure. At that point a creative Principal conceived a different approach to missionary training. His patient and careful implementation of that vision must rank among the most significant stories of renewal of ministry training in our day.

At ANCC, husbands and wives prepare together for missionary service. (Why shouldn't they, since they serve together?) The two-year curriculum includes lectures on the Old and New Testaments, theology, history, missiology, cross-cultural life and ministry, and is supplemented with practical training in many skills useful to the missionary—including public speaking, photography, and pulling teeth. It is the role of the tutor at ANCC, however, which sets the institution apart.

Each student is assigned a tutor who assumes total responsibility for the academic, spiritual, interpersonal, and ministry skills development of that student. (Tutors typically are assigned nine to eleven students each year.) Although lecturers are expected to propose assignments for their classes, each student's assignments for all classes are given—and graded—by his or her tutor. In this way tutors are able to tailor assignments for all classes to address the specific development needs or ministry interests of each student.

To facilitate development of spiritual life and interpersonal skills, ANCC provides an active community life. Students live on campus, and are involved with the staff in manual labour, recreational activities, daily coffee hours, and frequent parties. Three times a week each staff person meets with his or her tutorial group for Bible study, sharing, and prayer. In addition, tutors schedule formal interviews with students for at least an hour every three weeks. The broad range of contacts thus provided allow the staff to effectively address the preparation of students for missionary service.

ANCC's innovative programme deserves a more detailed description. Suffice it to say that theological educators who question the wisdom of a tutor assuming such wide ranging responsibility for student development need to consider the training effect. Most will be impressed to learn that ANCC annually receives inquiries from 1000 applicants for 100 available places in its entering class. The school obviously is doing many things which deserve the attention of other theological educators.

*Union Biblical Seminary (UBS)*—CBSE offers a model of a new institution which, from its inception, opted for an alternative approach to ministry training. ANCC was a school in crisis when it introduced an alternative approach to missionary preparation, The

experience of p. 73 UBS, however, was different from both of these. In 1983 UBS was a widely recognized, highly regarded graduate seminary with an Indian president, a growing student body, and a new campus. Everything seemed in place for a strong theological education programme—there was no need to change.

Several on the faculty, however, desired something better. In response to this longing, and as a routine check on students' preparation for ministry, a senior student was invited to survey the Seminary's alumni. The findings of that study were not encouraging, and further dialogue was initiated with church leaders to develop a picture of UBS alumni in ministry.

Four findings emerged from the expanded study: (1) UBS alumni were recognized as very knowledgeable; (2) UBS alumni were good preachers and expositors of the Scriptures; (3) UBS alumni were generally weak in interpersonal skills; and (4) UBS alumni were ineffective pastors. The faculty decided that this was not good enough, and so set about to develop an alternative approach to ministry training which would address the interpersonal and pastoral training needs of students, while preserving the Seminary's well established emphasis on biblical and theological studies.

In 1987 UBS implemented its new B.D. curriculum, which runs thirty-four and a half consecutive months. First year students are required to come to campus on 1 June, six weeks prior to the normal mid-July opening date, for an 'Orientation Session'. During the Orientation Session, focus is placed on intensive instruction on theological study skills, the study of biblical languages, and principles of leadership in the local church. To train students to think theologically, field trips to points of historic and religious interest are scheduled, followed by periods of guided reflection.

Building on the Orientation Session, the first academic year focuses on developing sound methods of biblical study and cultivating the gifts and skills of ministry.

Following the first year, each student is required to enter a thirteen and a half month internship which is carefully supervised by a local pastor. Twice during the year the student receives on-site visits from members of the UBS faculty and on two other occasions the student is scheduled to return to the UBS campus. Because UBS faculty note that graduates tend to neglect continuing study after entering ministry, students are required to complete eight units of course work through extension during their internship. By placing students in ministry and requiring them to study, the UBS faculty hope students will develop the disciplines of study in ministry. p. 74

On 1 June of the third year, at the conclusion of the internship period, students return to campus for a six-week 'Reflection Session'. Each student brings to this session a full report of his or her internship, plus three case studies describing situations which the student observed or participated in during the internship. During the Reflection Session, students take turns in sharing reports and case studies with their faculty and peers, and reflecting theologically and pastorally on the experiences described.

The final year of the B.D. programme focuses on integrating the student's internship experience with theological study, and extending the student's skills in biblical and theological reflection.

There are many other aspects of this creative programme which merit the attention of theological educators, but the innovative integration of campus and internship study at UBS must be applauded. In pioneering this model, the administration and faculty of UBS has challenged each of us to re-examine our training priorities and assumptions. They have demonstrated, furthermore, that a school need not be new or in crisis to move decisively toward renewal and change.

## **FACTORS COMMON TO SELECTED SCHOOLS**

As I travelled around the world to visit the schools listed above, I was always watching for constants—factors which occurred in several (if not all) of the institutions I visited. I recognize that the educational modes developed in Regina or Jos or Pune or Adelaide may not be transferable to another situation, but perhaps factors exist which characterize institutions committed to renewal of theological education. If so, then these may provide insight for administrators who desire to see renewal of ministry training in their own institutions.

So far, I have identified seven factors which appear constant across the ten institutions I have visited. If I am able to extend this research to other schools, perhaps this list will be expanded or narrowed. I offer these observations, however, for your discussion and reflection:

1. All selected schools have a strong missions emphasis.
2. Renewal of ministry training is embraced and promoted by the chief executive officer (president, principal, or dean).
3. Careful attention is given to the school’s constituent church and its training needs.
4. Focus is placed on training outcomes (i.e., the effectiveness of graduates in ministry), with freedom to adapt programmes and processes to improve graduate effectiveness. [p. 75](#)
5. Conscious effort is given to spiritual formation and ministry skills development, sometimes linked with deliberate attenuation of academic stress.
6. Faculty make themselves vulnerable to students through individual and small group mentoring and through involvement with students in ministry.
7. Administrators and faculty are aware of adult education principles, and design instruction for adult learners.

Some of these ‘constants’ reflect implementation of renewal values, while others suggest fundamental changes in the way we go about training for ministry. Most of those changes are threatening and involve risk. Nevertheless, I am optimistic. We have seen that theological educators desire renewal. They recognize that the values we affirm are right. If we now can show them that change is possible—and that others are experiencing the renewal they desire—I believe renewal will flourish.

ICAA, and our regional agencies, now face a great challenge. We have noted before that accreditation agencies can be impediments—or agents—of change. My data indicate that the desire for renewal is so intense among our affiliated institutions, I suspect change will come with our help or in spite of us. I pray that we will have the courage to be agents of renewal, to the honour of Jesus Christ and the strengthening of his church.

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**The research reported in this study was underwritten by a grant from the Billy Graham Center, Wheaton College, A full report of the research is available from the Center Director. Dr. Ferris served for twenty-two years as a missionary with SEND International. [p. 76](#)**

**Affirmation and Demonstration of Renewal Values  
(Comparison of mean responses)**

Renewal value	Regional agency	US-SEMS n=26	AABC n=52	ACTEA n=12	ATA n=38	CETA n=9	EEAA n=10	SPABC n=14	Total n=161
Cultural Aff		5.500	5.692	6.250	6.289*	5.667*	5.400	6.214*	5.870*

Appr Dem o		4.577	4.904	5.333	4.811	4.556	4.600	4.929	4.825
Attent Aff		6.115	6.000	6.250*	6.027	6.000	5.700*	6.071	6.031
To Dem Ch		5.346	5.173	5.000	5.222	5.111	4.600	5.571	5.195
Flex Aff		5,920*	6.115*	6.167*	5.947	6.000	5.500*	6.214	6.013*
Strat Dem		4.917	4.846	4.917	5.056	5.000	4.200	5.500	4.936
TAff h e o		6.923	6.808	6.909	6.816*	6.556	6.667	6.714	6.805
Grou Dem nd		6.160	6.000	6.273	5.811	6.000	5.889	6.231	6.013
OutcomeAff s		6.077*	6.180*	6.167*	6.263*	5.778*	5.889*	5.571*	6.089*
Asse Dem ss		4.385	4.840	4.167	5.027	3.778	4.100	3.714	4.551
Spirit Aff		6.692	6.490	6.667	6.684	6.778*	6.400	6.786	6.619
For Dem m		5.731	5.627	5.833	5.921	5.333	5.800	5.929	5.750
Holistic Aff		6.500*	6.353*	6.583*	6.579*	6.444	6.300*	6.714*	6.481*
CurriDem c		5.385	5.196	5.250	5.447	5.556	4.800	5.286	5.294
Service Aff		6.000	6.423*	6.500*	6.500*	6.444*	6.400	6.571*	6.394*
Orie Dem nt		5.200	5.385	5.167	5.211	5.222	5.500	5.429	5.300
Creative Aff		6.160*	6.231*	6.250*	5.816*	5.667*	5.800*	6.286*	6.069*

Teach Dem h	4.640	4.712	4.250	4.395	4.333	4.100	4.714	4.531
Christ'n Aff	6.679	6.712	6.667	6.514	6.000	6.400*	6.929	6.631
World Dem dv	5.808	5.712	5.833	5.629	5.286	4.900	6.643	5.731
Develop Aff	5.615	5.788*	5.917*	6.135*	5.778*	5.889*	5.643	5.843*
Focus Dem s	5.038	4.635	4.583	4.838	4.222	4.444	4.769	4.722
Cooperat Aff	6.000	5.569	6.000	6.316	5.667	5.600	6.071	5.900
Spirit Dem t	5.400	4.824	5.083	5.500	5.000	5.400	5.714	5.220

Total number of cells=84

In 84 cells (100%) Level of Affirmation-Level of Demonstration>0

In 42 cells (-50%) Level of Affirmation-Level of Demonstration>01

In 11 cells (-13%) Level of Affirmation-Level of Demonstration>01.5

In 3 cells (-4%) Level of Affirmation-Level of Demonstration>02

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ICAA *Manifesto* on Renewal of Evangelical Theological Education

#### 12 Renewal Values

1. Cultural appropriateness
2. Attentiveness to the church
3. Flexible strategizing
4. Theological grounding
5. Outcomes assessment
6. Spiritual formation
7. Holistic curricularizing
8. Service orientation
9. Creativity in teaching
10. Christian world view

11. Developmental focus

12. Cooperative spirit

No. 15	June/July	1st Semester	2nd Semester	No. 15 June 1
1st year				
13½ month internship study				
3rd year				

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**Robert W. Ferris, formerly Dean of the Asian Theological Seminary, Manila, and recently Missionary Scholar in Residence at the Billy Graham Center, Wheaton, Illinois, is now teaching at Columbia Biblical Seminary, South Carolina, USA. p. 78**

# An Evangelical Theology of Pluralism: A Personal View

Christopher Lamb

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## INTRODUCTION

We are in urgent need of a theology of pluralism. But for this we look in vain to the Fathers (or Mothers) of the church. Augustine's use of the text 'Compel them to come in' echoes down the centuries. Nor is the Dissenting tradition of much help in Britain. We are also, however, heirs to the Enlightenment, to a democratic humanism with all its differing effects. The worst of these may be the privatisation of religion which disables our city fathers and other legislators from considering religion seriously at all. I sat with others recently considering a paper on Equal Opportunities produced by a working party from a local education authority. This group of people had managed to handle the subject of preserving and promoting minority cultures in schools, and the issue of enabling children to feel proud of their inherited traditions, without once mentioning the subject of religion in a paper which was concerned with beliefs and values on every page. Many of our secular contemporaries find religious issues embarrassing and problematic to deal with. Consequently they are in danger of leaving us the victims of a crass materialism, a *pleonexia* ([Col. 3:5](#)) or 'ruthless greed which is nothing less than idolatry'. Yet this same humanist tradition can also be an invaluable counterweight to totalitarian forms of religion, and has probably preserved us from the fate of nations like Iran. What is more, Christianity, like some forms of Buddhism and Sikhism, has an inbuilt critique of religion which can contribute to a proper Christian humanism. This is something of the context in which RE. is taught, and why it has become the storm centre of the contemporary debate about Christianity and other faiths.



## **THE SCHOOL IS NOT THE CHURCH**

In such a situation the school must be allowed to have its own integrity. The school is not the church, or even an extension of the P. 79 church, but a secular institution, or at most (in the case of voluntary aided schools) a concern of the church in partnership with teachers, parents and the local authority. It follows that the responsibilities of the Christian school teacher are not the same as the responsibilities of the Christian minister, and what the latter is free and indeed obliged by his or her calling to do is at some points not open, in fact is prohibited, for the teacher to do. I have in mind the explicit use of the school classroom for open evangelism, and the attempt to secure the allegiance of children to a particular set of opinions and a faith community which is external to the community of the school, even though there may be overlap with it. If anyone is tempted to support such use of the classroom, let him simply imagine his reaction to the use of the classroom to recruit pupils to Marxism, Islam, or humanism. It is not in the long-term interest of the church to allow the school to become the battleground for competing ideological movements.

Of course, we have to recognize that this creates problems for the church school or indeed any other confessional schools. It may be that no school may be fully neutral in the sense of enshrining no set of universally accepted values, but equally one must surely agree that the school is not simply an extension of the church, the Mosque, or the political party. It has its own role and its own integrity. If this is not accepted, all education is put at risk. There must be preserved an area where children can examine and think for themselves, without undue pressure from mature minds, the status and significance of different religious beliefs.

It follows that the answer to the question 'is our ultimate aim in teaching religion to win people for Christ?' is rather complex. Our ultimate aim may indeed be that, but it is unlikely that the teacher, especially in the Primary school, will see the final outcome of his or her work. The teacher must be content to be part of a process, to be a link in the chain of accumulating probability. Any pressure, so easily applied without intention, may destroy the fragile freedom of the child. We have to be aware that what may be called evangelism can actually in fact be destructive of the true apprehension of the Gospel. Only the methods, and the sensitivity, of Christ himself are proper for the preaching of the Gospel which is centred on him.

## **BUT IS NEUTRALITY POSSIBLE?**

This does not mean that the teacher is obliged to conceal his or her faith and to pretend to be neutral when he is not. When appropriate, and in accordance with the maturity of the children concerned, it will P. 80 be entirely right for the teacher to declare his or her own personal allegiance to Christ, and the consequences which he perceives as flowing from that. In teaching older children, it may actually be necessary for the teacher to declare his own interest and commitment before embarking on the teaching of religious education or other topics which concern human values, so that children are aware from the outset of the particular angle from which he views such things. Nor need such statements be merely defensive, since everyone who comes to the position of a teacher in society must have some thought-out sense of values and some reasonably coherent understanding of how the world works and whether religious faith has a legitimate place in it, and if so what kind of religion is valid. It can only benefit children to be exposed to a straightforward statement of the standpoint of the one who is teaching them so that the

problems of 'objectivity' in all teaching can be exposed. There is ultimately no 'value-free' exposition of such subjects as history, literature, or philosophy.

The same honesty and openness which characterises the teacher's explanation of his or her own religious standpoint, or lack of it, should characterise his or her treatment of religion in general. We should note here that this is not confined to the RE classroom, but will overflow into history, literature, and geography in particular. No one can teach Milton or Blake without some understanding of Christian faith. No one can teach about the Crusades, the Reformation, or the Holocaust without dealing with the subject of religion, and this treatment must be coherent, and as far as possible, objective, based on well-established facts. In particular it is of the utmost importance that a proper distinction is made and consistently maintained between examining the behaviour of religious people, and examining the doctrines which they hold. Far too often Christians have compared the ideals of the Christian Gospel with the worst behaviour of others, ignoring evidence which did not suit their argument. It has to be recognised, without any qualification, that 'there is none that is righteous, no not one' and that Christians, no less than anyone else, have been seduced by the 'myth of innocence'. If we examine the record of the Western Christian Church we find it is, in places, truly appalling. I need instance only the treatment of Jews and of alleged 'witches', the discrimination against Christian dissent, and in more recent days the rebuff given to Afro-Caribbean Christians migrating to this country, which ensured that most of them formed their own churches instead of joining the mainstream established churches. Nor, of course, are other religious groups free from similar faults. The contemporary conflict between Jew and Muslim in the Middle East, between Hindu and Sikh in North [p. 81](#) India, and between Hindu and Buddhist in Sri Lanka, are equally reprehensible and closely paralleled by Catholic/Protestant hostilities in Northern Ireland.

However, that very reference immediately provokes the comment that 'such a conflict is not really about religion at all, and it is not in fact between religious people. People are just using religion as a means of dividing society, and promoting their own ends'. Precisely. Religion has been, and will continue to be, corrupted by its followers. What we should examine in the school setting is both the behaviour of religious people, which is a continuous theme in history, and also the convictions which have been held by religious people, and which continue to inspire not only some of the most heroic and admirable acts in our world, but also some of the worst.

### **TRUTH ELSEWHERE?**

If you ask the question 'is there truth in other religions?', the answer to me is quite straightforwardly: Yes. If this were not so there would be no possibility of communicating Christian truths to people of other faiths and religious traditions, since there would be no prior understanding, no vocabulary even, in which you could express the Christian faith itself. Consider the problems of translation. As soon as you begin to translate the New Testament into a language like Urdu you are instantly aware that the only words available to you for such central concepts as 'God', 'Spirit', 'Faith', etc are words which are Arabic and Islamic. They are saturated in Islamic meaning and yet there is no alternative to using them. The same is true of course of translations into Hindu, Chinese and many other languages. Once you have moved away from the languages in which Christianity has traditionally been expressed, (and of course they were once 'pagan' languages too), you are always and everywhere faced with the problem of finding common ground in the vocabulary and expressions which you use in order to convey the meaning of the Christian faith. To say therefore, as Karl Barth did once to the Sri Lankan Methodist D. T. Niles, that 'Hinduism is unbelief', and that he knew it was so *a priori*, is simply nonsense. Karl Barth

regarded himself as at liberty to pass judgment on Hinduism without ever examining it. He might equally well, without examining it, have concluded that there must be at least an understanding of the nature of faith within Hinduism, or else the translation of the New Testament and the Christian message into the languages of Hinduism would simply be impossible. His purpose, it is true, was an attack on all religion as a series of human attempts to control God, including the **P. 82** Christian attempt, but the Christian inclusion is easily forgotten, even by Barth himself.

## **TYPES AND SHADOWS**

This is not to say that there is no new thing in Christianity. Of course there is, and Christians are committed to the proposition that in Christ God has expressed himself perfectly, and that all things find their fulfilment in him. If this be so we should be looking for the things which need their fulfilment. We should, in the manner of the author to the Hebrews, be grasping for types and shadows which are perfectly fulfilled in the person of Christ. We should therefore treat other faiths as Judaism is treated in that letter, not as enemies of the Christian faith but as—however chronologically related to Christianity—forerunners of it.

This is not to say, as will be evident from some paragraphs above, that all religious viewpoints can be treated equally positively. To begin with, there are plain and obvious contradictions between many of the great faiths, and even where they appear to agree, further research reveals that the meaning of similar terms is in fact significantly different. It has been argued for example that different faiths actually set out to answer different questions, and are asymmetrical not merely in their social structure or their manner of worship, but even in the intellectual expression of their beliefs. In Judaism and also in Islam, for example, the word ‘theology’ is not a positive word but a deeply negative one in many quarters, simply because of its connection with philosophy. Theravada Buddhism rejects it because God has no place in that system. Apart from this, there are doctrines in different faiths which are plainly antithetical to Christianity, such as the finality of the prophet Muhammad in Islam, and the absolute inspiration of the Qur’an on which it rests; such as the doctrine of immortality in Hinduism; or the doctrine of the unreality of the person in Buddhism. However, this point has to be held in balance with the point above about common ground. All these doctrines would need to be carefully stated before their rebuttal by Christians would carry real weight. Nor are they always so absolutely inimical to Christian truth. There can be, for example, a partial rapprochement between the Buddhist concept of ‘anatta’ and the Christian understanding of the infusion of the Holy Spirit, as demonstrated by the Methodist scholar Lynn de Silva. In a similar way Kenneth Cragg is able to show that even the Muslim concept of Jesus is not so foreign to Christian thought as some have assumed. **p. 83**

Very often the obvious and traditional Christian understandings of other faiths will prove to be at best caricatures of the religion concerned. For example the allegation that Hinduism is essentially idolatrous can be dealt with piecemeal in the following way:

- a) There is no such thing as Hinduism, but rather a collection of religious traditions characteristic of India owing allegiance to no central authority, and no single statement of faith.
- b) Idolatry is itself repudiated by many Hindus as an infantile stage of religious development.
- c) Idolatry is, arguably, a feature of all human life, not excluding Christianity, where the worship due to God may in practice be offered to the Virgin Mary, the Bible, some

charismatic Christian preacher, or even the Christian nation, to say nothing of more secular alternatives, like money, sex, violence, war etc.

d) If one argues that the use of physical images is particularly dangerous, it may be suggested that the obvious limitations of such representations of the divine are actually less misleading in the long run than the shibboleths of contemporary Christian discourse, which may seriously mislead by their very plausibility as expressions of the divine.

## A MISSIONARY THEOLOGY

My own understanding is that our search should be for a missionary theology in tandem with our theology of pluralism. In the past we have attempted to create a Christian society and failed. No one can point to any period in the past and say 'that was a truly Christian time in our history'. At any period of history it is evident that deeply un-Christian things were going on. In this I do not exclude the Reformation, which saw Martin Luther writing vitriolic pamphlets against the Jews, and acquiescing in the savage suppression of radical political movements which took a Christian banner and Christian inspiration. But the Reformation was in no sense a missionary movement, and demonstrated no concern for the world outside Christian Europe. As I see it the fundamental question is whether we shall be an outward-looking church or a defensive church. A defensive church will be anxious to put up the barriers for the self-protection of those left within it. An outward-looking church will take on the entire world for Christ and learn to understand it so that so that it may bring all things under his sway. His sway, however, is not an imperialist one, and this is perhaps the fundamental issue at stake. How is the proper authority of the **P. 84** Christian Church to be exercised? Jesus spoke of his kingdom not being of this world, and of being its servant, giving his life as a ransom for many. If this is the characteristic Christian way then we will have to recast our ideas of how, whether as teachers or as others, we exercise power and control over the lives of other people. When Jesus said 'I am the way, the truth and the life, no one comes to the Father, except by me', he was not making a statement about other faiths but pointing out the path which had to be followed to the Father. 'The way' he talks about is surely the way of the cross, not merely the process of baptism and formal membership of the church, which may or may not produce lives characteristic of 'the way'. It is surely that way which matters in the end, and it will not be brought about by any kind of censorship, or any attempt to bend people into a particular Christian mould. Children, like adults, must be free to respond to the message and the person of Christ, for he can outshine every other light. Education must be so offered that children are free both to know and to respond to the Christian perception of reality without being coerced, manipulated or indoctrinated into any religious or philosophical viewpoint.

Let us change the image. We attempt to offer Christian hospitality, a hospitality of heart and mind. The contemporary situation of religious pluralism could tempt us into one of two wrong courses of action. We could close and barricade our doors, to protect those within our walls and to shield them from 'alien influences', and all the things which might disturb, upset, or corrupt them and their faith. But if we did so we would stifle and stagnate, and who would want to join us, or be able to do so, our doors being shut? Alternatively, we could move out of our own home and abandon any attempt to live there, joining the multitudes who drift to and fro. Then we would have nowhere that we ourselves were at home or where we could offer hospitality. Like so many of our own contemporaries, we would cease to know who we were. Our only feasible alternative is to stay at home but to keep 'open house', offering Christianity because we have nothing else to offer. Some will be very discontented with such a prescription, feeling perhaps that it

is unadventurous, or self-satisfied, or both. I have to confess that in my own explorations I have found nothing which tempts me to shift from a fundamental Christian allegiance and a fundamental commitment to seeing the world in the light of God made known in Christ. As David Jenkins says, 'God is as he is in Jesus; and therefore there is hope'. To the charge of self-satisfaction I have a different answer, which is simply that we seriously need to have an open house, an open heart and an open mind, in order that we may discover just what Christianity actually means. One of the continual p.85 surprises in our discipleship is the discovery, quite suddenly and even catastrophically, that we do not really understand what we believe and that its significance has escaped us yet again. We are like unmathematical, un-physics-trained people repeating the formula  $E=MC^2$ , correctly but without understanding. We are like children parroting Shakespeare. So much of our history proves that we do not know what our Gospel really means in daily life, and we are compelled to learn its meaning with those with whom we would share it.

The parable here is Jonah. Jonah was the accredited prophet of God who was eventually, reluctantly, compelled to preach to the Ninevites, but who is in every respect the moral and spiritual inferior of the pagan sailors and the people of Nineveh as portrayed in the book. Yet it is Jonah who is the vehicle of the word of God and its guardian. And it is God's word through Jonah which brings the Ninevites to repentance. There could hardly be a clearer statement in the Judeo-Christian scriptures of the significance of election. The question of election, of the vocation of God's people, is central in this whole debate, but election never meant that those chosen of God are better than others, but that they are chosen for the sake of others and entrusted, even burdened with the Christian Gospel for the sake of others. On this hinge, on this particularity, our whole understanding of ourselves as God's people ultimately turns, and with it our whole Christian understanding and practice of religious education.

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## The Future of ICAA

Tite Tiénou

The year 1990 marks the beginning of the second decade of life for the International Council of Accrediting Agencies for evangelical theological education. This seems therefore an appropriate time for attending to the question of ICAA's future. I wish to explore this topic under three headings: celebration, challenge, and call to action.

### CELEBRATION

It would be imprudent to consider ICAA's future without first taking account of its past. And in focussing on the past, I wish to speak in terms of celebration, because we have now reached an important milestone in ICAA's history, the completion of a decade of service. This is a fitting time for us to pause and celebrate God's goodness to us, for enabling ICAA

with increasing effectiveness to serve the needs of evangelical theological education worldwide.

ICAA was founded under the auspices of the Theological Commission of the World Evangelical Fellowship in March 1980, at a special international consultation on evangelical theological education held at Hoddesdon, England. The founding members of ICAA (ACTEA, AABC, ATA, CETA AND EEAA) are all still very active in their respective regions and in the affairs of ICAA today.<sup>1</sup>

Organizations such as ICAA are created through a delicate convergence of people, ideas and circumstances. This is not the place to enumerate all who laboured to see ICAA become a reality. But we should note that the immediate impetus came from ACTEA in Africa. ACTEA took the decision to call for the creation of such a body during its 1978 meetings at Miango, Nigeria, and wrote officially to its sister bodies to that effect on 22 December 1978. Somehow the time was right; and less than fifteen months later, ICAA was formally launched.

The founding vision of ICAA was to facilitate international cooperation in evangelical theological education. This is reflected in the fourth purpose stated in the constitution:

To promote a sense of community among institutions and programmes of evangelical theological education worldwide for mutual stimulation and enrichment. p. 87

Since its founding, ICAA has engaged in a wide range of activities in keeping with this original vision. International consultations were held in conjunction with the ICAA meetings, at Hoddesdon, England (1980); Chongoni, Malawi (1981); Katydata, Cyprus (1983); and Weissach, Germany (1987). Papers read at these consultations have been published as books, which have offered stimulation to evangelical theological education worldwide.<sup>2</sup>

In addition to consultations, ICAA initiated a Library Development Programme in 1981, and this continues to benefit theological schools throughout the Third World. In 1982 ICAA adopted terms for associate membership status. This action allowed ICAA membership to be broadened, so that now six associate member organizations also participate in the affairs of ICAA.<sup>3</sup> In 1983 ICAA adopted its *Manifesto on the Renewal of Evangelical Theological Education*.<sup>4</sup> This document has proved of major significance. In 1984 ICAA initiated coordinating services for TEE worldwide. Four years later the *ICAA Compendium* was published. And so, despite the reference to accreditation in its name, ICAA's

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<sup>1</sup> The full names of these bodies are: Accrediting Council for Theological Education in Africa, American Association of Bible Colleges, Asia Theological Association, Caribbean Evangelical Theological Association, and European Evangelical Accrediting Association. In 1988 the South Pacific Association of Bible Colleges (SPABC) was also admitted to full ICAA membership.

<sup>2</sup> Paul Bowers, ed., *Evangelical Theological Education Today: 1—An International Perspective* (Nairobi: Evangel, 1982), and *Evangelical Theological Education Today: 2—Agenda for Renewal* (Nairobi: Evangel, 1982). Robert Youngblood, ed., *Cyprus: TEE Come of Age* (Exeter: Paternoster, 1984), and *Excellence and Renewal: Goals for the Accreditation of Theological Education* (Exeter; Paternoster, 1989).

<sup>3</sup> These are: The Committee to Assist Ministry Education Overseas (CAMEO), USA; Evangelical Association for Theological Training (AETTE), Brazil; Education Division, Church of God (USA); International Correspondence Institute (ICI), Belgium; Program for Theological Education by Extension (PTEE), Jordan; Overseas Council for Theological Education and Missions (OCTEM), USA.

<sup>4</sup> *Theological Education Today* 16:2 (April–June 1984), 1–6; reprinted in *Evangelical Review of Theology* 8:1 (April 1984), 136–143. Spanish and French versions have also been issued.

accomplishments over the years testify to the fact that its scope is much more comprehensive. As one ICAA publication puts it:

ICAA is concerned with the whole range of functions by which evangelical theological education might fruitfully collaborate at the international level.<sup>5</sup>

## CHALLENGE

While we may legitimately celebrate ICAA's past, we cannot afford to **p.88** ignore the many challenges which it is about to face in its second decade. I highlight here those that I consider the most crucial.

In a general way, the essential challenge of ICAA's second decade could be simply stated: to recover and expand the original vision which led to ICAA's creation. Here are some specifics of what that would mean.

As we have seen, ICAA was inaugurated to attend to much more than accreditation, as its constitution and early documents testify. Consequently, the first challenge before us is to move forward in making ICAA a full service agency, not limiting its role merely to providing avenues for international recognition of degrees. The fact is that *icaa's* larger role is unique. It is, as far as I know, the only established medium for international contact and collaboration in all aspects of evangelical theological education. If its function were to be restricted to accreditation, what person or organization would carry out this larger purpose? Accreditation is surely a vital element of ICAA's original vision; but it is not the only one, nor should be. ICAA is called primarily to humble servanthood, not to regulatory authority or empire-building. Developing a full range of services for evangelical theological education internationally bespeaks servanthood; limiting ourselves to accreditation can promote for us an unfortunate image of merely being the international academic police.

ICAA should also continue to strive to become truly international in perspective, in membership representation, and in staffing. To date, Hispanic Latin America is not effectively represented, nor are the evangelical theological educational structures of Britain, Canada and the USA. In this day of globalization of theological education, we should diligently work to keep ourselves international in fact as well as in appearance.

ICAA needs to nurture a sense of community and cross-fertilization among all forms of evangelical theological education worldwide. It should promote the modes for such fellowship and a sense of mutual identity. Similarly ICAA should establish itself as the forum for informed reflection and discussion within theological education worldwide. While ICAA has already made some contribution in these areas, I am suggesting here that we should become much more actively engaged.

The next challenge for ICAA concerns its role in the renewal of evangelical theological education. Here it must continue to articulate an effective ongoing call to renewal in this critical area of the church's life. ICAA should function not as reinforcement for traditional patterns, but as a true catalyst for renewal. (In doing so, however, it must not **p.89** become a forum for castigating some forms of theological education while favouring and promoting others.)

In light of the above, TEE presents yet another challenge for ICAA. In keeping with its vision, ICAA should furnish evangelical TEE with international networking and support services, and confirm an integral role for TEE within ICAA, alongside residential structures.

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<sup>5</sup> In the preface to *Evangelical Theological Education Today: 1—An International Perspective*, 4.

If ICAA accomplishes that, it will render a major service to contemporary theological education.

Lest you should think that I am calling ICAA to abandon accreditation altogether, I hasten to add that accreditation itself remains a challenge for us. ICAA should continue to nurture the means to ensure that our accreditation programmes are achieving the highest operational quality, and are therefore deserving of full public credibility. We must not allow our accreditation services to be cheapened by inadequate standards, inadequate procedures, or inadequate administrative practices. Nor, with respect both to TEE and to residential accreditation, should we endanger the larger enterprise through a careless assumption that credibility can be achieved simply through a forceful assertion of quality. Quality may be asserted, but credibility must be won, by a persuasive demonstration of quality as judged by the wider public. This is just as essential a component of accreditation as is the component of quality. Our accreditation systems must take this component of credibility fully into account.

Another important challenge for ICAA has to do with relationships. ICAA must cultivate effective relations with other international evangelical bodies and movements, encouraging wider familiarity with ICAA's existence and role, demonstrating that ICAA can be a useful, necessary and reliable partner in achieving the larger evangelical agenda. This includes, first and foremost, good relationships with our parent body, the Theological Commission of the World Evangelical Fellowship, as well as with its study unit on theological education, and with WEF itself. We must also build relationships with regional and continental bodies, international evangelical funding agencies, and the Lausanne movement. The challenge here is that ICAA must begin to play its needed role within the larger international evangelical context.

An added benefit of ICAA's increased international visibility would be that effective contact and dialogue could be established between First and Third World structures for evangelical theological education. Such contact and dialogue should also be established with evangelical missions structures, especially those now embracing Third World missions initiatives.

As ICAA recovers and expands its original vision, it should help to [p. 90](#) sharpen the concern for theological education within the evangelical world. By this I mean that ICAA must become the voice for theological education on the global scene. We should begin ongoing measures to help international evangelicalism better improve its understanding of the strategic importance of theological education. In the arena of competing emphases in international evangelicalism, the significance of theological education is often eclipsed. May we seize the opportunity given us.

## **CALL TO ACTION**

Having looked at some of the challenges for ICAA in its second decade, we are now ready for some specific proposals. My call to action will reflect the challenges already outlined.

1. In order to facilitate a sense of community, mutual familiarity, and common purpose, I submit that ICAA should re-establish its newsletter from earlier days, or produce a similar internal publication.

2. I propose that ICAA issue an international directory of associations and agencies involved with evangelical theological education. In addition to being a handy, needed reference tool, such a directory would serve to identify ICAA's intended constituency worldwide, and provide information about it. Such a document was issued in 1982, listing 23 bodies, but it was not widely distributed. A greatly expanded edition is now needed. Further updated editions could be issued on a regular basis.



3. ICAA must continue its series of international consultations on a biennial basis. We must make sure that these consultations attract wide representation and address key issues of the larger agenda of evangelical theological education. In this connection, ICAA welcomes the joint workshop between North American seminary leaders and Third World theological educators at Lausanne II in Manila. We must also seek an early opportunity to sponsor a broad consultation involving mission umbrella agencies such as IFMA and EFMA, the Third World Association of Missions Agencies, and comparable bodies from Europe and elsewhere.

4. In order to enlarge its membership, ICAA should actively recruit associate members from around the world. We should also grant our associate members a more effective voice in the direction of ICAA affairs. For example, the ICAA associate membership should be granted representation on the ICAA executive.

5. We need to accord priority to improving cordial cooperative relationships with our parent body, the World Evangelical Fellowship [p.91](#) Theological Commission. To achieve this, we should for example request a permanent representation of ICAA on the executive committee of the Theological Commission.

6. I also suggest that ICAA aggressively bolster its public relations in order to increase its visibility. If we do not attend to this, ICAA may be no more than a well-kept secret.

7. It is of urgent importance that we should republish the ICAA *Manifesto on the Renewal of Evangelical Theological Education* in a handy, attractive format, in order to facilitate wide distribution. We should also actively promote familiarity with its contents among our constituency, and find the means to focus commitment among theological educators to its practical implementation, lest the *Manifesto* remain one more document filed in the archives.

May God grant ICAA's second decade to be even more fruitful than its first.

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**Dr. Tite Tiénou, from Burkina Faso, has been chairman since 1981 of the Accrediting Council for Theological Education in Africa, and is currently also chairman of ICAA. This paper comes from an address given on the occasion of his installation as ICAA chairman in June 1989. [p. 92](#)**

## Book Reviews

### THE STEEPLE'S SHADOW: ON THE MYTHS AND REALITIES OF SECULARIZATION

*by* David Lyon

(London: SPCK, 1985, £3.95; Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1987)  
\$9.95. Pp. 165.

Reviewed by Rex M. Rogers, Cedarville College, Cedarville, Ohio, USA. Printed with permission.

Sociologists and theologians should interact more often than they do. They should have no trouble identifying topics in which they both have a legitimate professional interest, and probably could aid the other's scholarship more often. Secularization is clearly one of those topics.

British evangelical sociologist David Lyon has performed a great service for students of religion and society in offering them a carefully organized summary of scholarly literature addressing the perplexing social process known as secularization. Add to this his capable analysis distinctly from a Christian perspective, and one has an excellent launching pad for further research. The author mostly avoids social science jargon and tells a story he acknowledges is complex and paradoxical.

He recognizes that over the last two hundred years the social influence of organized Christianity has waned: 'the steeple's shadow has shrunk drastically' (p. 1). Indeed, secularization questions the very future of religion in modern society. Some propound what Lyon labels the 'strong' version of the secularization thesis, arguing that religion will inevitably, inexorably, and irreversibly decline in the face of advancing modernity. Most who hold this view evidence some intellectual commitment to an evolutionary perspective of historical development and borrow heavily from Max Weber's description of modern industrial society as 'disenchanted' and 'rationalized'. Consequently, any currently identifiable religious activity is dismissed as merely a blip on an otherwise downward spiral.

Lyon's burden is not to deny secularization, nor its effects upon organized Christendom, but to demonstrate that the 'strong' view of secularization is built upon certain myths: that there is no place for religion in modern, rationalized society, that Christianity's most important social function is to provide cohesion or a sense of togetherness within a society, that there was once a 'golden age' of faith from which Western society has declined, and that secularization is an automatic result of modernity. He identifies one of the primary p.93 problems of secularization studies as 'secularization of what?'. In other words, conclusions about the extent and significance of secularization will depend to a large extent on how one defines religion. Is religion limited to the activities and health of the institutional church? Or is religion also manifested in the folklore of the masses—what David Martin calls 'subterranean theologies'? Or is religion simply a meaning system—symbols, rituals, or ideas to which individuals ascribe philosophic significance? Lyon notes that the best known secularization scholars use the first definition of religion, but he asserts that this is a far too limited perspective. Man is *homo religiosus* and, therefore, will always develop religious affirmations, whether he recognizes them as such or not.

It is Lyon's Christian understanding of the nature of man in relation to God that leads him to believe that secularization never stands alone. Paradoxically, secularity is not religiously neutral. For Lyon, 'the problem with "secularization" is not that it is a false notion, but that it has all too often been discussed without reference to its partner "sacralization". People, things, events, and processes are bestowed with "sacred", even as the tide of Christian influence ebbs from Western societies' (p. 96).

Lyon emphasizes sacralization to remind social observers that although secularization may exist, a secular society does not and never will. Religious expression is always present in some form, even if by default. Consequently, although secularization is a social force, it is not relentless and displays a variety of faces in different cultural settings. Although secularization may be considered an especially challenging 'modern' problem, it is not uniformly evident across class, generation, or other social groupings.

Secularization is not in itself, according to Lyon, a threat to Christianity, but he does call for a more erudite understanding of sacralization. This is the point at which sociology and theology may mobilize their collective strengths. What sociology recognizes as sacralization, theology may consider idolatry. Reviving an interest in idolatry—not just graven images, but any substitute for God—could pave the way to greater encouragement of the Christian world view in the twentieth century.

By asserting that 'secularization should both be taken seriously, and be seriously criticized' (p. 115), Lyon avoids both the gloom that pervades Os Guinness's *The Gravedigger File* (1983), and the triumphal attitude of Francis Schaeffer's *The Christian Manifesto* (1981). The Christian reader is neither unduly discouraged, nor dangerously lulled to sleep. p. 94

This must, therefore, come highly recommended to virtually anyone desiring to know more about the religious experience of modern society. It is, in fact, a book length literature review and, coupled with its bibliography, offers the reader a ready reference to, and Christian critique of, contemporary secularization study.