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# **THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION, Spring 1993**

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## Introduction

*William E. Leshner and Robert J. Schreiter*

This is the third volume in a series on the globalization of theological education that has been commissioned by the Task Force on Globalization of The Association of Theological Schools. The first volume consisted of a number of studies assessing the current state of the discussion on globalization in theological education and what further directions it might take. A second volume presented six case studies of how certain member schools of the ATS had developed discussion and programs in globalization.

This third volume focuses further on programs for globalization. It responds to a question that comes frequently from faculty in theological schools: How do I incorporate a global perspective in the course I teach? To respond to this query, the Task Force on Globalization envisioned two consultations on the teaching of the theological disciplines from a globalized perspective. The first consultation was held March 13-16, 1992 near Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Six papers were commissioned for this consultation. They all deal with teaching the introductory course in the so-called “classical” theological disciplines of Old Testament, New Testament, general church history, Canadian church history, U.S. church history, and theology. Each writer was asked to give his or her understanding of globalization, speak of the special issues globalization raises for the discipline under consideration, methodological and pedagogical issues, and sketches and suggestions toward how the introductory course might be taught. They were encouraged also to provide bibliography to support the course. These six papers comprise this third volume on globalization.

A fourth volume, with papers on teaching the introductory course from a globalized perspective in selected “practical” disciplines, will be published after the March 1993 consultation.

In reading through the six essays, the reader will discern that a certain framework for thinking about globalization and the classical theological disciplines begins to emerge. First of all, how one attends to *perspectives* immediately causes perceptual shifts in all of the disciplines. These perspectival shifts are more than cognitive in nature; they grow out of commitments of struggle by the students (Bowe), or from the perspective of the asymmetries of power transsecting the space in which a discipline is considered (Gonzalez). They may affect profoundly how the discipline is named (Eaton). And perhaps even more importantly, they affect the narratives upon which communities found their identities (Daniels, Fraser). Perspectives generate readings of texts and histories that have been altering Christian self-understand-

ings. Readings through the prisms of race, class, and gender are already becoming familiar to us and contribute significantly to a globalized understanding of these disciplines.

Indeed, as these readings create new questions and suggest different organizations of our knowledge, they interact with forces that are reshaping every culture economically, socially, politically, and culturally. Attending to this process that is impinging on every culture (Schreiter), albeit in distinctively different ways (Gonzalez), is in turn giving us a surer grasp on globalization. What is becoming clearer is that globalization is not so much a single lens that yields a new gaze on our world; rather, it is more like a kaleidoscopic gaze that keeps certain elements constantly in the picture, but in different configurations as different cultures and historical epochs are focused upon. It makes us attend to the *process* of globalization and keeps us from looking for a new *steady* state of affairs. A global focus is one that is aware of these relational shifts.

Another common factor emerging in all the papers, but especially prominent in those by Bowe and Fraser, is the classroom itself as a locus of globalization. This is so not only because of their experiences of living on a globalized planet (although that is certainly evident and central to the teaching situation), but also because of the kinds of questions they learn to ask of themselves and one another, and the kinds of readings they learn to identify together. Globalization is as much a set of attitudes as it is any body of knowledge. How these attitudes are inculcated and supported will be as important for students as any discrete items of information they may absorb.

Finally, while globalization is about attitudes, there are now many materials available to aid the globalization process. The six essays are a veritable cornucopia of bibliography that teachers in these disciplines will find useful. The suggestions for teaching and the syllabi presented should also spark the imagination of our colleagues. It is the hope of the Task Force on Globalization that these essays will not only aid those teaching in these disciplines, but will also add to the conversation about globalization that continues to grow in theological schools.

# Teaching the Introduction to the Old Testament from a Global Perspective

*Wade Eaton*

## **Introduction**

**I**t is useful to begin this paper with a few remarks about the context in which it is written. This will help to clarify why certain perspectives are presented and certain strategies are promoted. In many ways, the Evangelical Seminary of Puerto Rico is distinctive when compared with seminaries and theological schools in the U.S.A. and Canada. The consequences of this fact will become clearer in the course of the paper.

The Seminary was established in 1919 as a joint venture by five sponsoring churches: Baptist (Northern), Methodist, Presbyterian, Church of Christ (Disciples of Christ), and Evangelical United (U.C.C.). More recently, there has been official participation by the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America. The Seminary has been, since its birth, an ecumenical venture, but the separate identities of the participating Churches is maintained. Adjunct professors offer courses in the polity and theology of the sponsoring Churches for their students, and such courses are a requirement for the M.Div. degree.

The present full-time faculty is made up of nine persons: three women and six men. Of these, six persons are Puerto Rican, two are North American, and one is Dutch in origin. The ecumenical character of the Seminary is also reflected in the faculty. There are representatives of the following traditions: Baptist, Wesleyan Methodist, Presbyterian, Methodist, Anglican, and Roman Catholic. Finally, mention should be made of the fact that the course in Post-Biblical Judaism is taught by an adjunct professor who is also the rabbi of the local Conservative synagogue.

Although the Seminary has been ecumenical since its inception, ecumenism in the Puerto Rican Church at large, at least at the moment, is a fragile enterprise. Furthermore, although there are Jewish, Islamic, and Buddhist communities in Puerto Rico, inter-religious dialogue is almost non-existent.



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The student body (first semester, 1991/92) is made up of about 165 persons, most of whom are engaged in part-time studies. In the M.Div. program (the larger of the two degree programs offered), 63% of the students are men and 37% are women. In the M.A.R. program, 64% of the students are women and 36% are men. (We are also host to a D.Min. program which is under the direction of McCormick Theological Seminary, and so is not considered in this analysis. Although there are six sponsoring churches, there are, in fact, students from 20 denominations; they range all the way from a variety of Pentecostal Churches to the Roman Catholic Church.

There is also student representation from outside Puerto Rico. Recently there have also been students from the U.S.A. and Germany who wished to spend a semester or two in a Latin American context.

Perhaps one of the most notable features of the student body is the enormously high number of students who function as “student pastors” during their seminary studies. This means that few can carry a full-time academic load, but it also means that few can isolate their academic studies from the on-going life of the churches.

The dominant cultural heritage of the wider Puerto Rican community is Spanish—more specifically, the culture of the Spanish Caribbean. There is little trace left of the indigenous culture, since the original people were virtually annihilated very early on by their Christian conquerors. This stands in marked contrast with Central America and part of South America, where the indigenous culture is still a real and lively presence. Puerto Rico, like the rest of the Caribbean, has also been strongly affected by African traditions, especially in its popular culture.

As one would expect in a traditional Latin American setting, *machismo* is still a powerful cultural force, not only in the community at large, but in the church communities as well. The struggle for genuine gender equality has only recently begun, and there is still much to be achieved.

In brief, we are, for the time being at least, the only accredited Latin American member of ATS. The first language of most students and the language of instruction is Spanish. Consequently, the most accessible secondary resources for their studies come from Latin America and Spain.

Finally, since the invasion and annexation of Puerto Rico in 1898, there has been the enormous impact of North America at every level of social and economic life. The influence, particularly of North American capitalist culture, is widespread and

pervasive. Not all this occurred in an informal or accidental way. For example, shortly after the invasion, there was an active recruitment of various North American missionary groups by the military occupation forces to promote both the subversion of Spanish and Roman Catholic sentiment and the “Americanization” of Puerto Rico.

The consequence of these social and cultural changes has been the perception that the current political status of Puerto Rico is highly ambiguous and problematic. Perhaps most people perceive Puerto Rico as a colony, with all the various relationships of dependence which the term implies. There is, however, no consensus on strategies for resolving the ambiguity. Of those critical of the *status quo*, the majority would opt for statehood, while an articulate minority would opt for independence. Thus, another minority opinion (those who desire the *status quo*) continues to exercise decisive political power.

This brief description offers some understanding of the very particular social, cultural, religious, and political context in which we go about the task of theological education as we near the beginning of a new century. It also reveals an interesting fact: we have been “globalizing” theological education without being altogether conscious of what we were doing. We have simply been trying to develop a theological education that responds to our perceived needs.

### **”What’s in a Name?”<sup>1</sup>**

When poor, innocent Juliet asked the question, she wanted desperately to believe that names are not important. But even she could grasp that in the real world names do make a difference. And we as spectators know how crucial names are: if her lover had not been named Montague, there would be no play—at least not the tragedy that Shakespeare actually wrote.

Anyone familiar with biblical traditions knows that names are very important indeed. Names may reveal a good deal about individual character. Names may even disclose something about role or destiny. Moreover, the change of a name can have significant consequences. The number of narratives in Genesis alone that turn on the giving or changing of a name is remarkable.

The meaning of this observation is clear: language is our means for organizing our perception of reality. On this account names and terminology are of enormous importance. As modern linguistics has so clearly demonstrated, language gives us our world. This is the perception that lies behind the struggle to develop inclusive discourse. If masculine language is seen as representative of both genders, the mes-

sage that is communicated at an unconscious level is obvious: what is masculine is normative. Thus, one might well question the title of the essay I was asked to prepare: Teaching the Introduction to the Old Testament from a Global Perspective. Is the name “Old Testament” any longer defensible?

During the last decade or two, largely as a result of the Jewish-Christian dialogue both within and without the academic community, many Christians have begun to feel uneasy with the term. Jews have certainly expressed their displeasure with it.<sup>2</sup>

The reasons for this situation are not too difficult to discern. The term “Old Testament” is, of course, fairly late; as far as we know, it was first used by Melito of Sardis, ca. 180 C.E.<sup>3</sup> It became increasingly common with the formation of the early Christian collection of normative writings. Jesus and his first followers were simply using the Scriptures of their community. Even as the Church became increasingly gentile, it continued to use names like “Scriptures” or “the Law and the Prophets.”

Once the Church had become mainly gentile with its own distinct religious identity, to appropriate the Scriptures of Judaism and then name them the “Old Testament” seems more than a trifle arrogant. In fact, it sounds more like expropriation or theft.<sup>4</sup> It could only have happened when the Church denied the religious validity of the Jewish community and defined itself as the *only* legitimate heir of the promises to ancient Israel and early Judaism. At one stroke, the notion of supersessionism affirmed the superiority of Christianity and relegated the Jewish community to a group of second-class human beings. For that reason, if for no other, the term “Old Testament” ought to be abandoned.

The notion of supersessionism has permeated the atmosphere in theological studies for generations. It is not hard to remember the time when the received wisdom of theological studies taught that everything important and true happened in pre-exilic Israel. Postexilic Israel was nothing more than a time of “decadence.” (No one bothered to point out that this was the time that actually produced the Scriptures as we now have them.) This era thus ended with the deadly, arid legalism which Jesus so strongly opposed. Such a position is possible only if we ignore the literature of the sages.<sup>5</sup>

The whole argument is historically faulty and filled with inconsistencies. How could a “dead” religion have produced Jesus of Nazareth and his movement for the renewal of Israel? Furthermore, for a “dead” religion, post-biblical Judaism has proved to be a fairly lively corpse. For nearly 1,500 years rabbinic Judaism has produced a

notable spirituality and it now seems to be undergoing something of a renaissance. At present, the growing Jewish contribution to academic Biblical Studies and Theology is both astonishing and impressive.

The time has come for Christians frankly to admit that the doctrine of supersessionism has contributed to more than 1,500 years of murderous anti-Judaism—with a concomitant degradation and subversion of the Gospel and of Christianity. There has been some acknowledgement of this in various Churches—Roman Catholic, Anglican, and Protestant—but it does not seem to have affected very much the kind of language we use. How long will it take, for example, to eradicate supersessionist language from our liturgies? “Old Testament” simply carries too much negative theological freight to be useful any longer.

The term is theologically incoherent for a simple reason: the one whom the Church recognizes as its Lord was born, lived, and died a pious and faithful Jew. If the Church’s confession that the Risen Lord is none other than Jesus of Nazareth, then the denial of an on-going, valid vocation for Judaism is nothing less than a subversion of our own foundations. This also means that because of Jesus of Nazareth the relation between the Church and Judaism is qualitatively different from its relations with the other world religions.

There is another aspect of the matter of terminology which few Christian teachers of Jewish Scriptures seem to have noticed. The term “Old Testament” is also highly problematic for Christian students. In the case of my own seminary, many students, if not most, come from conservative communities where the whole Christian Bible is called the “Word of God.” On the other hand, the name “Old Testament” suggests something deposed and out-of-date, something with no continuing relevance. The result is a strange sort of affirmation: although the community that produced the texts has no continuing validity, its Scriptures do. It ought not to be surprising that students cannot fit the two notions together in a theologically compelling way. So often the students seem to settle for a kind of schizophrenic solution: they try to live with two contradictory visions. The usual, traditional solution is to claim that all of genuine value in the Jewish Scriptures finds its completion or fulfillment in Christian tradition—that is, a variation on the supersessionist theme. Yet it does not take long to discover that early Christian writings only draw on a limited amount of the traditions of Judaism.

Why, then, carry the rest along as authoritative “Word of God”? It is a good question. Would it not be more honest, and theologically consistent, to recognize that the Jewish Scriptures are the testimonies of a *continuing* community of faith, on whom we depend for our knowledge of the vision of God shared by Jesus and his first followers, and whose religious values are of continuing importance for the Christian faith? In other words, Jewish traditions enable us to talk more authentically of the One whom Jesus called his Father. But such a perspective is possible only if we use those traditions without expropriating them and denying the religious validity of the historical community that produced them. Instead of the usual arrogance, perhaps a touch of humility on the part of Christians is in order.

In recent years, some suggestions have been made to rectify the situation. Roland Murphy has suggested the double term, “Old Testament/*Tanakh*.”<sup>6</sup> It is a thoughtful article, but the question arises: why not at least turn the order of the name around? Positively, it is clear that Murphy wishes to acknowledge the continuing validity of the Hebrew Bible for the Jewish community. Yet he wishes by the use of the name “Old Testament” to permit the continuing inclusion of the deuterocanonical books of the Roman Catholic canon. It is not an insignificant point of concern, but the term “Old Testament” is still problematic. Murphy does not accept a supersessionist reading of the name, but his usage requires constant clarification and easily misleads.

James Saunders has suggested the term “First Testament,” and this has been taken up by the Catholic Biblical Association.<sup>7</sup> This is certainly an improvement, but it is also susceptible to a supersessionist interpretation: does a first testament have any significance or validity apart from a second testament? The main problem, in fact, with the names suggested by both Murphy and Saunders is that they render *invisible* the community that produced the texts. When persons or communities are rendered invisible in public discourse, the situation is pernicious and can only lead to oppression of various kinds.

The third solution would be to use the terms “Hebrew Bible” or *Tanakh*. There is great advantage in the two usual names used by the historical community that produced the texts. In many ways this seems the best strategy; it is, in fact, the usage of the Society of Biblical Literature. There is, however, a great disadvantage from a Christian point of view in the consequent limitation of the tradition to the Hebrew (and Aramaic) canon. Since the Christian “Old Testament” is identical in content with the Hebrew canon (even if the order of books is different), this would pose no problem for those Christian communities that grew out of the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century. Yet a very large part of Christianity accepts a wider

canon of Jewish writings: what is, more or less, the content of the Septuagint. For example, the Roman Catholic, Orthodox, and Anglican Churches all include readings from the deuterocanonical books in their lectionaries. Not only that, one has also to consider the variety of canons in other eastern Christian communities.<sup>8</sup> One way out of the dilemma would be to use the terms “Hebrew Bible,” “Apocrypha” or “Deuterocanonical books,” and “New Testament” to describe the contents of the Christian Bible.

I would, however, like to propose a different usage, which is in no way to be construed as a negation of current Jewish practice. Why not use the terms “Jewish Scriptures” or “Scriptures of Judaism”? These have several advantages over previous suggestions. First, these names firmly anchor the texts in the community that produced them. They also allow the frank recognition that the texts are read in two different contexts: on the one hand, the on-going traditions of Judaism, on the other, the on-going traditions of Christianity. These terms also do not imply precise definitions of canonical limits, as does the name “Hebrew Bible” or *Tanakh*. They could thus refer without prejudice to the multiplicity of canons in the Christian Church. Such references in no way deny the on-going legitimacy and validity of Jewish use in the light of Judaism’s post-biblical traditions: the *Talmud(s)*, the *Midrashim* and subsequent commentaries. Nor do they deny the Christian *use* (only the expropriation) of the Scriptures of the community in which Christianity was born. How can we understand Jesus and his renewal movement without them? How much poorer the Christian theological vision would be without their impressive testimonies. Since Marcion, the Church has recognized that without them she could not be true to her vocation.

Most importantly the terms “Jewish Scriptures”/“Scriptures of Judaism” stand as a constant reminder for Christians that we are continuing debtors to “our older brothers and sisters in the faith” (to use Pope John Paul II’s felicitous language). Moreover, if they are *Jewish* Scriptures, then it is totally illegitimate to use them as a weapon against the community that produced them. The words of a prophet like Jeremiah against his own people sound very different on the lips of a Christian after nearly two millennia of supersessionist theology.

### **Methodological Issues**

In organizing a course in Introduction to the Scriptures of Judaism, it is important to announce clearly in the course syllabus the presuppositions of the program for globalizing theological education. These entail a firm commitment to the following matters: (a) mission and evangelism, (b) ecumenism, (c) interreligious dialogue, and (d) liberation and the struggle for justice.

It might be supposed that “globalization” represents an effort to gain some universal or encyclopedic knowledge. That would miss the point. Even if it were feasible to make an exhaustive collection of all the re-readings of the Jewish Scriptures at all times and everywhere, what would one do with it?

In a very useful article, S. Mark Heim has mapped out at least five strategies for contextualizing and exploring the four basic commitments of the program.<sup>9</sup> The goal, in the case of Biblical Studies, is not a mere accumulation of countless data, but the provision of a context where two things may occur: the enablement of students (1) to recontextualize their readings of the texts more adequately, and (2) to be more open and sensitive to other contexts and perspectives which may finally be useful and enriching in their own settings.

Perhaps the most problematic premise is the first. If we are genuinely serious about the last three, it will mean some substantial modifications of our definitions of mission and evangelism as they have often been traditionally expressed. The tendency of some Christians to universalize and absolutize their claims in an *exclusive* way will have to be reconsidered if the other premises are not to be effectively nullified. Rosemary Radford Ruether has argued eloquently for such a change in her study, *Faith and Fratricide*.<sup>10</sup>

If the claims of Christianity are universal and absolute as they have been commonly understood, then the only legitimate discourse with those outside will be either polemical or apologetic. Dialogue, on the other hand, is only possible where there is a genuine possibility of change and transformation in understanding when confronted by other religious traditions. This entails the recognition that our claims and convictions are always provisional. Some will undoubtedly find such a position unnerving: absolute certainties seem so much safer. Yet this recognition of the essential provisionality of our expressions of religious truth is perfectly consonant with the biblical traditions that warn of turning anything, even religion, into an “idol.” As the biblical witness makes so abundantly clear, any human project to which we attribute absolute authority and to which we submit without question is an “idol.” Such idols are ultimately dehumanizing and deadly.

It is certainly possible to affirm that Christianity is unique and has its own unique vocation, but this does not logically entail the total denial of the validity or the integrity of other religious traditions. The burden of proof lies with those who would deny or limit God's freedom to show mercy and love to all creation. Articles by such scholars as Donald Shriver, Marian Bohan, and Marsha Hewitt have begun to address the issue, but their work is just that, a beginning.<sup>11</sup> Much more critical reflection is required of Christians if our understanding of mission and evangelism is not to undermine our other commitments.

In thinking about the task of globalization in the context of Biblical Studies, I have re-worded the four aspects of the program in the following way. Commitment to mission and evangelism means to be in *solidarity with the Gospel*: in Jesus Christ we are called to be a part of the People of God. Commitment to ecumenism means to be in *solidarity with the wider Christian community*: we are called to be collaborators in the creation of a community that shares Jesus' vision of God and his *praxis*.<sup>12</sup> Commitment to interreligious dialogue means to be in *solidarity with all humanity*: we are called to be collaborators in the creation of a fully authentic global community. Commitment to liberation and the struggle for justice means to be in *solidarity with the values of God's reign*: we are called to be collaborators in the healing and restoration of the whole created order, both human and natural.

In the light of the premises of the program for globalization, the introductory course should have the following *goals*. First and foremost, there is a need *to facilitate a competent reading of the texts*. There are, of course, no absolute or dogmatic norms against which to measure such readings. We must admit from the outset the possibility of a plurality of norms. Yet this is not to say that all readings are of equal competence, even though we may at times find it difficult to say exactly why this is the case. John Barton believes the fundamental issue is that of genre recognition—what we read the various texts *as*.<sup>13</sup> But his argument lacks a crucial component. Competence should probably be measured also, at least to some extent, by whether the reading is persuasive for and commensurate with the perceived needs of the community (feminist, African American, Lutheran, Roman Catholic, Jewish) of which the reader is a member.<sup>14</sup> M.H. Abrams summarizes the matter well when he states that

... the linguistic meanings we find in a text are relative to the interpretive strategy we employ, and ... agreement about meanings depends on membership in a community which shares our interpretative strategy.<sup>15</sup>



Yet there is a danger with this perspective: it is not likely that such an approach will promote a reading that is critical and stands out against the received norms of the community. All competent reading ought to have the potential to be subversive. None of our presuppositions should be beyond criticism. This means concretely that our reading strategies may not exclude the making and testing of truth claims. To state the matter in a more positive way, we might evaluate the claims of any reading by appealing to the commitments to globalization mentioned earlier. We may ask this question: Does the reading more fully enable us to be in solidarity with the Gospel, in solidarity with the wider Christian community, in solidarity with all humanity, and in solidarity with the values of God's reign?

Secondly, there is a need to *discover the rich diversity of the religious visions of the biblical traditions*. There is a temptation to elevate one vision to the level of the norm, and thereby to relegate all the rest to the status of second-class. In some ways, this is hardly avoidable, given the presuppositions which we bring to the texts. Yet it has to be resisted, so that we can come to appreciate the diversity of testimony in Israel's traditions. We might at least remain open to the possibility both of gaining new insights and of allowing ourselves to broaden our theological understanding as a consequence. Even if we are unable, finally, to incorporate all of the diverse perspectives that the exercise of globalization reveals into a coherent theological whole, we at least ought to admit they are there.

Thirdly, there is the need to *discern the importance and significance of the canonical shape of the texts*. This has often been neglected by those who use historico-critical methods. But we are obliged finally to read the texts we actually have and to try to understand their importance as they stand. Even this effort, of course, takes place after the dominance of historico-critical methods since the Enlightenment. So when we read the canonical texts, we cannot read in quite the same way Jewish and Christian commentators read before the modern era. Once we have tasted the apple there is no going back to innocence.<sup>16</sup>

Finally, we need to *make possible a critical reading of the texts, of our pretexts (presuppositions), and of our own context(s)*. Even if these matters are more easily and properly handled in advanced exegesis courses, there is no reason why the issues should not at least be raised at the introductory level. The sooner the students begin to articulate their perspectives on all three matters, the better.

To achieve these four goals, there is a need to express the *cognitive objectives* of the course more specifically. Since an introductory course is inevitably somewhat superficial (especially when one considers the amount of material in the Jewish Scriptures), it is necessary to familiarize the students with the following matters:

*The history of the community that produced the texts.* This means dealing with what can be known by historical-critical method of the history of Israel from the formation of the monarchy until at least the first Jewish rebellion against Rome in 66-70 C.E. A good argument could probably be made to extend the time at least to the era of the preparation of the Mishnah, ca. 200 C.E.

*The background—historical, cultural, political, religious, and social—of the various traditions.* This should entail the use of sociological, anthropological, and archaeological, as well as the more conventional historical studies.

*The growth of the various traditions and the formation of the final form of the texts.* The purpose here is not to identify some original part of the text as more authentic than later redactions—as for example, the separation of the “original prophecies” of Amos from later additions. But it is useful for at least three reasons. It enables the students to understand that biblical texts in a fundamental way are not like modern literary works, the product of a single artist and his or her particular vision. It also helps them to understand the ongoing influence of new contexts and their contribution to the redaction of earlier versions of the text. And finally, it enables students to comprehend in a more adequate way that biblical texts did not “fall from the sky” in their canonical form.

*The content and special problems of the various books.* This needs to be stressed for two very sound reasons. It is all too easy to talk so much about critical methods or interpretive techniques that the students end up experts in theory, but virtually ignorant about the concrete contents of a biblical book. Jon Levenson has remarked that “...Christian Old Testament scholars may know biblical theology, but the Jews know the biblical text.”<sup>17</sup> His observation has the ring of truth. While it is not likely that many Christian students will have a mastery of the Hebrew text that one would find in most rabbinical students, that does not rule out a fairly detailed knowledge of the content of Jewish Scriptures. At the same time, students need to be alerted to the genuine problems that may arise in reading the text due to the fusion of diverse layers of traditions.

*The technical skills for doing a competent reading of the texts:* source criticism, form criticism, tradition/history criticism, literary/rhetorical criticism, structuralist criticism, narrative criticism, and reader-response criticism. No single technique

can claim anything resembling universal supremacy. In large part, the techniques that are employed will depend on the kinds of questions we bring with us when we attempt a re-reading of the traditions. Furthermore because all these methods will be encountered in secondary sources, the students need a basic working understanding of them all. Whether they will be equally competent in the use of them all is another matter.

*The resources available for reading the texts from a variety of perspectives:* Caribbean, feminist/womanist/mujerista, African, Asian, Latin American, African American, Native American, Jewish, North American, and European. The purpose here is to help students understand that biblical traditions may speak to a variety of contexts and settings. There is no such thing as a single, disinterested universally valid point of view, nor is there any such thing as a re-reading without presuppositions. Yet acquaintance with a variety of perspectives may contribute to the enrichment of any particular context or setting.

*The range of secondary resources available for doing an adequate study/reading of the texts:* histories, atlases, concordances, dictionaries, commentaries, special studies, and articles. This is probably the most practical aspect of all. A good introductory course ought to enable the students to discover useful and helpful friends and companions for their continuing study.

### **Organization of the Course**

This is not as simple a matter as it may first appear. There are two options, both of which are defensible. The first option is to follow the sequence of the Hebrew Bible—Torah, Prophets, and Writings—from Genesis to Chronicles. This sequence is preferable if the orientation of the course is completely *literary*, that is, without historical reference to the community that produced the texts. If, however, it is supposed that historical context is an important factor in critical exegesis, the order of the Jewish Scriptures requires a constant movement back and forth in historical sequence, which is difficult—if not impossible—for beginners with little background in historical studies.

The second option could be to attempt a (more or less) historical sequence of the traditions. This is far from straightforward. It is impossible, given the redactional character of most books, to be consistently historical, and this is the gravest problem. Do we, for example, deal with the book of Jeremiah in the context of the late seventh to early sixth century B.C.E. or in the context of the postexilic period that produced the final form of the text? Or what about the book of Isaiah? Do we

discuss it in the context of the eighth century or the postexilic era? Or do we divide the book up into three collections, each to be discussed in its appropriate time?

Despite the enormous difficulties, there are several distinct advantages for organizing the course in a more or less historical sequence.<sup>18</sup> First and foremost, the possibility of locating the traditions in their socio-historical contexts helps set some limits on our re-reading of the texts. This is not the place to engage in a critique of current literary theory, but some purely literary readings can seem fairly high-handed and arbitrary. To borrow an image from Hans Jauss, a text is rather like a musical score: there are some limits to what one can do with it, even though interpretations may vary greatly from generation to generation.<sup>19</sup>

In fact, even if one emphasizes in class discussion such matters as form criticism, literary/rhetorical criticism, and narrative criticism, this does not logically exclude historical-critical questions as well. Joseph Blenkinsopp's statement about the matter is valid here:

History works to keep theology honest, and we are always faced with the challenge of critically reconstructing and reappropriating the past if we are to know what direction to take into the future.<sup>20</sup>

Since the students will encounter many studies that are almost purely historical-critical in methodology, it is essential that they become familiar with historical-critical techniques and understand the tasks for which they may be useful.

The literary critic, Murray Krieger, has suggested two useful metaphors for describing our approaches to texts. If we use them as "windows," our attention will be focused on what lies *behind* the text: the writer, his audience, and their social location and history. If we use them as "mirrors," our attention will be focused on what lies *this side* of the text: the meaning generated in the encounter and interplay between text and reader.<sup>21</sup> If we use texts solely as "windows," we will never see ourselves: a common enough and justifiable criticism of much historical-critical reading. On the other hand, if we use them solely as "mirrors," we may very well end up seeing *only ourselves*! The truly fruitful way would be the use of both strategies in a complementary fashion.

There is also a hermeneutical issue involved. If we assume that our historical and social location as readers largely determines our re-reading of the texts, how can we ignore the very same factors when it comes to their production as written traditions?

Finally, reading the prophetic books in the light of the historical context of the prophet allows the possibility of discovering subsequent redactions. The discovery of change and transformation in the traditions might prove helpful as paradigms in present efforts of re-reading.

### **Pedagogical Issues**

Some of the activities described below have already proved to be useful in helping students achieve the objectives of the course. Some have yet to be tried, since they emerged as a result of the preparation of this paper.

It is helpful to include a calendar of the sessions in the syllabus that identifies the biblical texts and secondary resources to be read before each session. In each lecture there are readings of specific texts and at least two examples of some type of critical analysis. At first, simple, brief pericopes are suitable: a hymn, a prophetic speech, a prophetic symbolic act report, or a short legend. Later on attempts can be made at more complex units.

As a supplement to the biblical and secondary readings and lectures, there is also the need to provide an opportunity for the students to begin to do detailed analysis on their own.

One of my course requirements is to do three brief exercises that entail various kinds of analysis. These texts are then discussed in class. One example of such an exercise is the following, dealing with Deuteronomy 26:1-11.

1. Analyze the structure of the pericope according to its formal elements.
2. What is the genre of the text? Its *Sitz-im-Leben*? Its purpose or intention?
3. What is the content of the recited text?
4. What are the major themes or motifs of the recited text?
5. What important theme is missing?
6. What would be a reasonable explanation for the fact that this theme is missing?
7. What does your answer to questions #5 and #6 imply about the *history of the traditions* of the Pentateuch?

The purpose of such exercises is two-fold. It helps the students develop their analytical skills, and it helps them develop their capacity to read texts more carefully and with greater attention to detail.

In the light of the commitment to globalization, there are two other kinds of exercises which should prove useful. The first involves the identification of *similarities* and *differences* between two or three studies of the same pericope. For example, if the text is Genesis 2-3, the students might be asked to identify similarities and differences in the work of Carol Meyers (*Discovering Eve: Ancient Israelite Women in Context*), Severino Croatto (*Crear y amar en libertad: Estudio de Genesis 2:4-3:24*), Modupe Oduyoye (*The Sons of God and the Daughters of Men: An Afro-Asiatic Interpretation of Genesis 1-11*), David Gunn (*What Does Eve Do to Help? And Other Readerly Questions to the Old Testament*), and Nahum Sarna (*Genesis*).<sup>22</sup>

During a discussion of this article with some students, one person made an interesting suggestion that I am going to try in the course. During one of the class sessions, part of the time will be spent in small groups—each trying to articulate a re-reading of a single text from a given perspective: feminist/*mujerista*, Afro-Caribbean, Jewish, Latin American, and so on. The text should be announced and the groups identified in advance so there will be time for some reading in secondary resources and for some previous reflection. The results of each group could then be shared with the entire class. The purpose of the exercise, finally, is to enable the students to understand more adequately how they can engage responsibly in recontextualization in a way that bears upon the communities and/or constituencies to whom they are accountable.

There is also a need to help the students develop means for an *ideological criticism* of the biblical traditions. For example, the analysis of a Royal Psalm could be used to unmask the claims of the royal ideology in Israel. This in turn could be compared with an anti-monarchical polemic as found, for example, in I Samuel 8. One might also compare the laws concerning slavery or the role of women in the Covenant Code, the Deuteronomic Code, and the Holiness Code. It is a source of continuing amazement to the writer that most students—even those who are fairly sophisticated about ideological presuppositions in their own contexts—are so naive when it comes to perceiving the ideological presuppositions in the biblical traditions themselves. But then most talk about “biblical authority” simply precludes any such critical examination.<sup>23</sup>

Finally, the commitment to globalization should mean that in the preparation of term papers, students should be required to include, whenever it is feasible, at least *three or four different perspectives* in their secondary resources. These could vary according to the individual's particular interests. Such a requirement, however, poses some problems. Not all journals printed outside North America and Europe are included in the *Index to Current Periodical Literature*. In our library we receive fourteen journals about Biblical Studies that are not indexed. This means that the professor has to be alert to try to keep a record of useful articles. With the incredible changes in Eastern Europe there will surely be much new material of interest from that quarter. But how can we have access to it? What is to be done to facilitate our sharing what they are discovering?

### **Searching the Scriptures**

Since introductory courses vary greatly in length, it does not seem relevant to give an outline of my own course. In my seminary, the course is taught over two fifteen-week semesters, while in others it may be taught in as few as ten or twelve weeks. Given the variety of possibilities, it may be more helpful to address the problem of how we bring the concerns of globalization to bear on the discussion, exploration, and recontextualization of some typical biblical texts.

Given our particular setting, students are likely to approach the Bible with a number of concerns. There will be questions about such matters as gender relations, cultural encounter and/or conflict, and, because of Puerto Rico's rapid industrialization, environmental contamination and destruction. There will also be great concern for the relations of power in various settings: the political arena, the economy, the Church, and the family. Helpful questions are: Who has power and who does not? How does it operate in settings of inequality? How does power change or how are its relations transformed?

With regard to the specific texts to be discussed, I try to use as wide a variety of types or genres as possible. In the discussion of specific pericopes I also try to use a variety of approaches: literary, historical, sociological, and anthropological. Since there is an embarrassment of riches in the biblical traditions, I vary the texts used from time to time. It also helps to avoid boredom in teaching the course!

It is also wise to announce openly and clearly what one's own presuppositions are. In my own case I make three fundamental affirmations at the beginning of the course: first and foremost, the God who revealed himself in Jesus of Nazareth is the God of

Abraham and Sarah. Second, in the experience of the Church the Scriptures of Israel contain powerful testimonies, capable of transforming us if we listen faithfully. Third, we shall find no models to apply directly to our own context(s). Because the texts are the product of another religious community in another cultural setting more than 2,000 years ago, it would be a miracle if we could.

## **The Concerns of Globalization**

### ***Solidarity with the Gospel***

The basic issue—how we fulfill our vocation as part of the People of God—actually entails two questions: (1) How do we speak of God? and (2) How do we speak of our calling? There are some obvious traditions which are pertinent to our God-talk: Gen. 1-3 (Creator), Ex. 12-15 (Liberator), and Is. 40-55 (Restorer). There are others that call into question our usual discourse and are worth exploring. How do we understand the God who “changes his mind” in Ex. 32 and Amos 7? How do we speak of the God who “tests” human beings in Job and Gen. 22? Finally, how do we justify (if it is possible) the God who mandates genocide in I Sam. 15?

There are numerous texts having to do with Israel’s vocation to be the People of God, but I have found two traditions to be particularly fruitful for discussion. The first is the great sermon of Moses that introduces the Deuteronomic Code, Deut. 4:44-11:32. The second is the collection of the four so-called “Servant Songs” of Isaiah. Christian interpretation has traditionally read these texts as significant for understanding the vocation and ministry of Jesus, but Jews have a long history of interpreting them with reference to Israel’s common vocation in the world. This is a productive strategy for Christian re-reading as well.

### ***Solidarity with the Wider Christian Community***

Israel, especially in the Diaspora, was deeply concerned with the visible signs of its community identity. The same concern may be explored for Christians in a re-reading of Gen. 1, Gen. 17, and Ex. 12-13. A related issue is the matter of the definition of community *boundaries*. How do we speak of who is inside and who is outside the community? In Judaism, the dietary laws and the laws of purity, especially in the Holiness Code, are clear examples. Any Christian re-reading will depend upon how one evaluates the significance of the same matters in the New Testament.



There is a related theme that is highly relevant for many of our students. How do we maintain our identity as we move among other “worlds” and cultures? It is not uncommon for Puerto Ricans to be born in Puerto Rico, to grow up and be educated in the U.S.A., and then to return to Puerto Rico after reaching maturity. They suffer contempt and marginalization in the U.S.A. because of their cultural differences, and they are often looked upon as outsiders when they return, because their Spanish is deficient and they bring cultural values acquired while away. Exodus 2 resonates powerfully with many who have lived this experience: in three episodes Moses is born an Israelite, grows up in an Egyptian palace, and acquires a Midianite wife. Yet he turns out to be an Israelite *par excellence*!

***Solidarity with all Humankind***

There is an enormous range of responses in Israel’s traditions to other peoples and cultures. She may react with contempt (Gen. 19, the incest of Lot with his two daughters), with fear and suspicion (Ezra 10, the command to divorce foreign wives), or with openness and acceptance (Ruth). Often the reaction is ambivalent: there may be hostility *and* recognition that Israel and its neighbors are really brothers under the skin (the Jacob-Esau stories). It is useful to explore the historical and social settings that produce such a wide variety of responses.<sup>24</sup>

***Solidarity with the Values of the Reign of God:  
Liberation and the Struggle for Justice***

There are many possibilities for exploration here—so many, in fact, that one hardly knows where to begin or what limits to set. The following examples do not by any means exhaust the matter.

With regard to the problem of gender relations in a patriarchal culture, it is clear that there is no single vision or understanding. Women are seen as chattels and independent actors—and everything in between. Such texts as Gen. 1-3, the Sarah-Hagar stories (that also include ethnic and class factors), the Judah-Tamar story, the Song of Deborah, and the book of Ruth dramatically illustrate the possibilities.

With regard to the question of political power and exploitation, the story of Moses in Ex. 5, and the prophecies in Amos 3-6 and Micah 2-3 are particularly helpful. It is also enlightening to compare the idealistic picture of some messianic traditions

that speak of the king as the guarantor of justice (Psalms 72 and 89) with a narrative about how monarchies really function to establish and maintain their power (Gen. 47:13-22).

In considering the rights of the defenseless, there are useful pericopes to be found in the legal collections: Ex. 22:21-27; Lev. 19:9-18, 33-37; and Deut. 15:7-11 and 24:10-22 are good examples. There are, of course, numerous prophetic texts that could be used to equal effect. Finally, the book of Ruth is a treasure of profound insights into the matter.

Concerning the land, Israel's traditions once more reflect a wide range of perspectives. It is clearly God's gift (Deut. 8), but its possession and use are conditional upon Israel's obedience and the doing of justice (Deut. 29-30). That God is the actual owner of the land means that it is not available for personal or collective exploitation (Lev. 25). There are also legal texts that reflect a deep concern for caring for and preserving the natural environment (Ex. 23:10-12; Deut. 20:19-20; 22:6-7).

Towards the issue of peace, Israel's perspectives are ambivalent. Some traditions imply that conquest, domination, and genocide are the way (Deut. 20:10-18; Josh. 1-12; I Sam. 15). Yet Israel also understood peace to be the consequence of the establishment of just and equitable relations. Two moving texts to explore with this point of view are Is. 11:1-9 and Is. 65:8-25.

## **Conclusion**

In the task of theological education, the program for globalizing theological studies must now form a fundamental part. The consideration of the relationship of this globalization to the theological work of seminaries will have tremendous consequences. It will, for example, lead us to formulate different answers to some traditional questions and problems in the study of the Scriptures of Judaism in the Church, and it will generate new challenges that have not previously been thought of in our critical reflection about theological studies.

Such a program will not come to full fruition in a few years or decades. It is, in fact, an open-ended project. The resolution of some problems and the resultant creation of a new context for theological studies will inevitably create new questions and

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concerns, that will require further reflection and response. As the Church has recognized from the beginning, no single re-reading of the Scriptures is capable of exhausting the depths of their meaning; yet each re-reading is capable of generating something new and life-giving in its common life.

We have the vocation to criticize, to doubt, to reflect, to articulate, and to recognize always the provisionality of all our projects and answers. And finally, we have the vocation to trust the Spirit to lead us into truth.

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup>This quotation from Shakespeare appears as part of the title of a section in the recent book, *Hebrew Bible or Old Testament?*, edited by Roger Brooks and John Collins (Notre Dame, IN: Notre Dame, 1990). In fact, I had thought of the quotation before reading the book, but I have to acknowledge that various essays in the book were a great help to me in articulating my own point of view with regard to the issue of terminology.

<sup>2</sup>See the comments by Jon Levenson, “The Hebrew Bible, the Old Testament, and Historical Criticism” in *The Future of Biblical Studies: The Hebrew Scriptures*, Richard Friedman and H.G.M. Williamson, eds., (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987), p. 48; and Eliezer Berkovits, *Faith After the Holocaust* (New York: KTAV, 1973), p. 45; and “Judaism in the Post-Christian Era” in *Disputation and Dialogue: Readings in Jewish-Christian Encounter*, F.E. Talmadge, ed., (New York: KTAV, 1975), p. 291. Not all Jewish scholars are quite so blunt. Some are satisfied to use phrases like “the so-called Old Testament.” The message, however, is clear.

<sup>3</sup>Roland Murphy, “Old Testament/*Tanakh* - Canon and Interpretation” in Roger Brooks and John Collins, eds., *op.cit.*, p. 12, n.1.

<sup>4</sup>I first began to think about this issue of terminology several years ago while reading an essay on literary criticism. The author said, in effect, that the gentile Church’s publication of the Jewish Scriptures with the title “Old Testament” as the first part of its Scriptures was the greatest instance of plagiarism in literary history. I have been unable to trace the article. Garry Wills, while speaking on the conquest of the Americas, makes an observation that seems equally applicable to this situation: “Language can itself be an imperial tool. Naming is a way of appropriating, as we see in the many old comparisons of Columbus naming ‘new’ islands to Adam naming the beasts in Eden.” (“Man of the Year,” *New York Review of Books* XXXVIII:19 (Nov. 21, 1991), p. 15.

<sup>5</sup>Rolf Rendtorff describes a similar experience in Germany during his theological studies, so it has not been a limited phenomenon in Christianity. See his comments in “Toward a Common Jewish-Christian Reading” in Roger Brooks and John Collins, eds., *op.cit.*, pp. 106-107.

<sup>6</sup>Roland Murphy, *op. cit.*, pp. 11-29.

<sup>7</sup>James Saunders, “First Testament and Second,” *BTB*, 17 (1987), pp. 47-49.

<sup>8</sup>See James Saunders, “Hebrew Bible and Old Testament: Textual Criticism in Service of Biblical Studies” in Roger Brooks and John Collins, eds., *op.cit.*, p.42.

<sup>9</sup>S. Mark Heim, “Mapping Globalization for Theological Education,” *Theological Education*, 1990, Spring: Supplement I, pp. 7-34.

<sup>10</sup>Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Faith and Fratricide: The Theological Roots of Anti-Semitism* (Minneapolis: Seabury Press, 1974), pp. 226-261. See also her comments in *To Change the World: Christianity and Cultural Criticis* (New York: Crossroad, 1981), pp. 31-43

<sup>11</sup>Donald Shriver, “The Globalization of Theological Education: Setting the Task,” *Theological Education*, 1986: Spring, p. 9; Marian Bohen, “The Future of Mission in a Pluralistic World,” *Theological Education*, 1990: Autumn, pp. 31-43; and Marsha Hewitt et al., “Education for a Global

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Theology,” *Theological Education*, 1990: Spring, Supplement I, pp. 86-112. At a more profoundly theological level, this issue has been discussed in two important recent books: John Hick and Paul Knitter, eds., *The Myth of Christian Uniqueness: Toward a Pluralistic Theology of Religion* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1987) and Gavin D’Acosta, ed., *Christian Uniqueness Reconsidered: The Myth of a Pluralistic Theology of Religion* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1987). I would generally associate myself with the perspectives of the second volume, which affirm the universality of Christianity in terms which are not exclusive.

<sup>12</sup>This definition is based on ideas suggested by Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins*, (New York: Crossroads, 1983), pp. 102-103.

<sup>13</sup>See the excellent discussion of this concept in John Barton, *Reading the Old Testament: Method in biblical Study* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1984), pp. 8-19.

<sup>14</sup>See the suggestive comments on this issue by Stanley Fish, *Is There a Text in this Class? The Authority of Interpretive Communities* (Cambridge: Harvard, 1980), pp. 338-371; Jon Levenson, “Why Jews Are Not Interested in Biblical Theology,” in *Judaic Perspectives on Ancient Israel*, Jacob Neusner, Baruch Halperin, and Ernest Frerichs, eds., (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), p. 300; and Roger Brooks and John Collins, eds., *op. cit.*, pp. 7-8. This also seems to be the point of view implicit in the story of the disciples on the way to Emmaus in Luke 24:13-32. The evangelist affirms that authentic interpretation and hearing of the Scriptures for Christian believers takes place in the company gathered around the Lord’s table. Apart from that context, the scriptures are simply mute texts

<sup>15</sup>M.H. Abrams, *Doing Things with Texts: Essays in Criticism and Critical Theory*. Ed. and with a Foreword by Michael Fischer, (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1989), p. 294.

<sup>16</sup>See the useful comments on this matter by Gerd Theissen, *The Gospels in Context: Social and Political History in the Synoptic Tradition*. Trans. Linda M. Maloney, (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991), p. 6.

<sup>17</sup> Jon Levenson, “Why Jews Are Not Interested in Biblical Theology,” p. 195.

<sup>18</sup>For a fuller discussion of this issue, see James Kugel, “The Bible in the University,” in *The Hebrew Bible and Its Interpreters*, William Propp, Baruch Halperin, and David Noel Freedman, eds., (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1990), pp. 159-164.

<sup>19</sup>Cited in John Riches, “Parables and the Search for a New Community,” in *The Social World of Formative Christianity and Judaism*, Jacob Neusner et al., eds., (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988), p. 238.

<sup>20</sup>Joseph Blenkinsopp, “Theological Honesty Through History,” in Roger Brooks and John Collins, eds., *op. cit.*, p. 151. For other useful discussions of the issue, see Roland Murphy, *op. cit.*, pp. 27-29; and Sharon Welch, *A Feminist Ethic of Risk* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990), pp. 140-145.

<sup>21</sup>Murray Krieger, *A Window to Criticism* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1964), pp. 3-4.

<sup>22</sup>Carol Meyers, *Discovering Eve. Ancient Israelite Women in Context* (New York: Oxford, 1988); Severino Croatto, *Crear y amar en libertad. Estudio de Genesis 2:4-34* (Buenos Aires: Aurora, 1986); Modupe Oduyoye, *The Sons of God and the Daughters of Men: An Afro-Asiatic Interpretation of Genesis 1-11* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1983); David Gunn, *What Does Eve Do to Help? And Other Readerly Questions to the Old Testament*, JSOT, Supplement Series, 94 (1990), pp. 25-48; and Nahum Sarna, *Genesis* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1989). The idea for this type of exercise came originally from an article by Robert Schreier in which he uses a similar technique in a course on Christology: "Teaching Theology from an Intercultural Perspective," *Theological Education*, 1989: Autumn, pp. 13-34.

<sup>23</sup>For a more detailed discussion of this problem, see Vincent Wimbush, "Historical Study As Cultural Critique: A Proposal for the Role of Biblical Scholars in Theological Education," *Theological Education*, 1989: Spring, pp. 30-43.

<sup>24</sup>I would like to acknowledge my gratitude to Peter Nash of Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary for suggesting this strategy during the ATS Consultation on Globalization and the Classical Theological Disciplines (March 13-16, 1992) in Ligonier, PA.



# Teaching Introduction to the New Testament from a Global Perspective

Barbara E. Bowe, RSCJ

## An Autobiographical Introduction

In October 1986, immediately after finishing my doctoral studies in New Testament, I began a three-year teaching commitment at Maryhill School of Theology, a Roman Catholic Graduate School of Theology in Manila, the Philippines. During those years I taught biblical studies to young Filipino seminarians from different religious orders who were studying for priesthood, and to a handful of lay men and women who were pursuing degrees in theology. In addition, during those same years I taught one course each semester at the Sister Formation Institute in Manila, an institution founded after Vatican II in order to provide theological updating for Filipino religious women. For these men and women, the study of scripture was first and foremost the pursuit of the living Word of God for their own time and situation. They knew, instinctively, the power of the Word to shape the lives and consciousness of their people—both for ill and for good. They sensed, instinctively, the potential of the Word as a source of liberation and human dignity for the vast majority of their people living in indescribable poverty. They were impatient with, even intolerant of, biblical or theological inquiry that failed to address directly this reality. Their questioning was relentless: “What has this text to do with *us and our situation*? What does this word of God say to *us*?” The urgency of their lives and their nation’s future set the agenda. It could not have been otherwise. And yet, the danger in such a setting was often characterized by the temptation to appropriate the scripture in a “proof texting” manner to provide biblical warrant for political action, whether on the right or the left of the political spectrum.<sup>1</sup>

It became very clear to me, the longer I continued to teach in those contexts, that the one thing my students most wanted and most needed to learn in order to serve their people as responsible Christian leaders was how to hear, how to read and understand, and how to preach the scriptures more faithfully, but to do so “with the heart



of a Filipino.” This skill, however, was the very thing that I, an American woman with a doctoral degree in scripture, was least equipped to teach them. Thus began for me a three-year sojourn as both teacher and learner in a culture not my own.

The lessons from those three years are still being learned, the questions still being pondered, but chief among them is the firm and renewed conviction that the teaching of Scripture, in the context of professional theological schools, can never be predominantly an “archaeological enterprise” by which we “dig up and examine” the life and thought of Christians in the first century. We must address with equal insistence the question of how the Bible *functions* in our time as the Living Word of God.<sup>2</sup> This perspective may seem self-evident, but too often we fail to achieve such a balance.

A second conviction engendered by the experience of teaching in a cross-cultural context concerns the importance of asking the questions: *Who* interprets the biblical texts? *In what contexts*<sup>3</sup> do we interpret them? *Where* and *with whom* do we stand as we read and seek to understand the New Testament message? The answers to these questions have profound implications for how one chooses to teach an introductory course on New Testament.

Returning to the U.S. in 1989, I joined the faculty of a Catholic school of theology much like the one I left in Manila, with the major differences being that the student body I now teach is decidedly multi-cultural and is made up of an almost equal number of women and men, lay and clerical students.<sup>4</sup> There is, however, the same commitment to educate these students for leadership in Christian ministry to be exercised in a wide variety of settings both within the U.S. and in foreign missions throughout the world. But, compared with the daily urgencies of the Filipino situation that shaped the agenda of all conversation and inquiry, I find that the U.S. classroom can sometimes tend to dull the senses and to promote an “academic” knowledge of texts that risks being devoid of engagement with the Living Word. Believing communities affirm that this Word continues to speak in our time through the biblical texts and through the texts of our daily lives. We “read” this Word from the diverse places and situations in which we stand. Globalization demands that we allow these different readings to have equal voice. In the context of theological

education, therefore, whether immersed in a culture different from one's own or teaching in a context which is itself multicultural, the challenge of globalization is a daunting one.

### **Plan of the Paper**

With these concrete teaching experiences in mind, therefore, this paper will present some initial suggestions for how a classical introductory survey course on "Introduction to the New Testament"<sup>5</sup> might better respond to the challenges of globalization. I use "globalization" in the fourfold sense proposed by Don Browning and modified by Mark Heim.<sup>6</sup>

1. Globalization is the church's universal mission to evangelize the world.
2. Globalization is ecumenical cooperation between the various manifestations of the church throughout the world.
3. Globalization is the dialogue and cooperation between Christianity and other religions.
4. Globalization is the mission of the church to be in solidarity with the poor and oppressed in their struggle for justice.<sup>7</sup>

In addition to these four theological priorities, Heim has proposed five different possible "modes of cultural analysis:" symbolic, philosophical, functional, economic, and psychic, thereby creating a "topography of globalization" that includes at least twenty different possible approaches to the task of globalization in theological education. Obviously, no single course, and no single school for that matter, can address all these various dimensions with equal force. An introductory course on the New Testament, however, readily lends itself to the pursuit of globalization understood under a variety of the Browning/Heim categories. Given my own experience, I will choose to focus especially on the aspects of globalization that embrace both missions and evangelism as well as liberation and the struggle for justice.

The paper will discuss first some key methodological presuppositions essential in teaching New Testament from a global perspective. Second, it will suggest important pedagogical principles and actual classroom practice that can better serve the objectives of globalization. Finally, it will present a description of suggested course content and methods together with an initial bibliography for such a course.

## **Preliminary Questions and Presuppositions**

Several preliminary questions and presuppositions present themselves when approaching the task of teaching New Testament introduction from a global perspective. They include questions of content, hermeneutical presuppositions, the pluralistic nature of the texts themselves, the communal contexts and origin of the various texts, and the importance of a critical approach to the world of the texts.

### ***What Shall We Teach?***

The traditional survey course called “Introduction to the New Testament” is in some form a standard element of every theological school’s Bible curriculum. But in every instance the educator must ask, again and again, “To *what* is the student to be introduced?” The answer to such a question often yields a variety of responses. Since the introductory course is generally the foundational course that becomes the prerequisite for all subsequent study of New Testament texts, the expectation is generally that *breadth* is more important than *depth*, and rightly so. Nevertheless, the instructor must still determine where the greatest emphasis will be given within the multiple foci of such a course. Should it be directed toward developing in the students a greater familiarity with the (1) *contents* of the New Testament in its various forms of tradition and literary diversity of gospels, letters, acts, and apocalyptic writings? Or should the major focus be placed on the study of the (2) *social-historical-cultural world* of the first century in all its complexity with a view to understanding better the values of this world which become enfolded in the texts? Or should New Testament introductions highlight especially the unity and diversity of (3) *theological emphases* evident in the texts which have served as the basis for the development of Christian theology? Or should the major concern be with the myriad of (4) *methodological approaches* to the study of the New Testament documents and the general history of how these methods have been applied in the history of Christianity? Or should beginning students be introduced especially to issues of (5) *modern hermeneutics* which focus mainly on the interpretation and the proclamation of the scriptures for today? Do we abandon completely a traditional survey approach and focus, instead, on specific topics related to global perspectives? Within the explicitly *ecclesial* context that professional theological education is, what is our responsibility to teach students “the tradition” in all its strengths and shortcomings? Each instructor will no doubt answer these questions differently depending on his/her own interests and areas of specialty.

Recounting a faculty discussion at Andover Newton Theological School about this issue of multiple objectives, Max Stackhouse describes the response of one biblical scholar:

We really have only three options... 'to juggle at once several things,' which stretches the competence of every instructor and limits the sense of focus that can be conveyed to students; 'to admit that much of the New Testament world is strange to us and that we must find a hermeneutic to make that strange world relevant'—an option which suggests that the meaning of Scripture depends on our present construction or discovery of a hermeneutic; or to 'give up teaching the New Testament as sacred Scripture,' simply working professionally as any historian of the ancient world might...<sup>8</sup>

The last option, namely, "to give up teaching the New Testament as sacred Scripture," is something, I think all would agree, that theological schools must *not* do. And so we are challenged indeed to acknowledge the strangeness of the world of the texts.<sup>9</sup> But likewise, we are called to continue to probe the meaning of the world, and the Christian texts generated therein, with the aid of an ever expanding repertoire of methods and approaches, all of which must be critiqued and juggled adroitly in the service of the Word of God and human word, an affirmation that lies at the core of all that follows.

### *Texts as Worlds of Meaning*

Contemporary hermeneutics, particularly the work of Ricoeur and Gadamer,<sup>10</sup> has affirmed:

that [a] text must be viewed not primarily as something to be analyzed [though analyze it we must] but as a human expression which functions as a mediation of meaning; that the purpose of studying the text is not to decompose it into its constituent elements in order to account for its genesis" [though its origin is related to its meaning for us] "but to appropriate the meaning of the text in its integrity; that the objective of interpretation is not empirically verifiable propositions about the historical-cultural reference of the text, but the dialectical illumination of the meaning of the text and the self-understanding of the reader.<sup>11</sup>

The implications of this assumption for globalization are several. They place new emphasis on the locus of meaning of a biblical text in the dialectic between text and reader, that is, between the cultural world of the text and the cultural world of the reader or interpreter. They lay an even heavier burden on the interpreter to understand, as far as possible, the socio-cultural dynamics operative within the text itself, and within their own world and “social location.” We readily acknowledge, *in theory*, the perspectival differences we bring to the text, but often this difference is left unexamined and we fail to critique its impact on our reading of specific texts.

In the history of Christianity we have seen that access to biblical interpretation is access to *power*. Theological education today must “demystify that power”<sup>12</sup> and affirm the *plurality* of valid interpretations so that others recognize that they, too, possess the power to interpret the Word for themselves.

Such emphasis on the interpretive interplay of text and reader underscores, furthermore, the essential importance of interpretation itself as fundamentally a cross-cultural enterprise: both between reader and text and among the different interpretive perspectives of various readers.

In addition, Ricoeur asserts the “semantic independence” of the *text* in contrast to oral discourse. By this he insists that “the meaning of a text is not limited to what the author intended even though it was produced in function of such an intention.”<sup>13</sup> This assertion leads to the conclusion that texts generate multiple and equally valid interpretations in different readers.<sup>14</sup> Ricoeur’s position, however, raises numerous questions about the normativity of certain “readings” over others in the history of Christianity, and in the present day.<sup>15</sup> The proposed introductory course, therefore, needs to address also the question of adjudication. How does one weigh, evaluate, and ultimately choose among different and often conflicting readings of the same text? And by whom shall this adjudication be done? The importance of *communities* of interpretation becomes essential here.

These hermeneutical issues, since they pertain so directly to the task of globalization and to the recognition and affirmation of difference in a world church, must be an essential element of the introductory agenda for the study of New Testament.

### ***The Canon and the Embrace of Pluralism***

As Robert Schreiter has affirmed, globalization entails “our embrace of genuine pluralism (where difference is taken seriously).”<sup>16</sup> In view of this, the New Testament canon itself is striking witness to the pluralism which characterized the Christian community from its beginnings. A sensitivity to issues of globalization will be enhanced, therefore, to the extent that introductory courses in the New Testament highlight every aspect of this diversity in the early church. It has become a truism in New Testament study to affirm that from the beginning the kerygma was proclaimed and formulated differently for different communities in response to their particular concerns and religious expectations. For example, whereas the Matthean community wrestled with questions of its relationship and continuity with Israel, especially with reference to the question of Torah interpretation and observance, the predominantly Gentile communities of the Pauline mission received a message about Jesus that announced the “new creation” (2 Cor. 5:17) that God had wrought through Jesus’ death and resurrection. This community of the “new creation” was no longer to be constituted by its faithful observance of Torah but, rather, by its faith in Jesus, the Risen One. Max Stackhouse summarizes well the importance of this pluralism within the New Testament canon:

The Gospels not only reflect divergent linguistic contexts, but economic, political, familial, and ideological ones as well. The scriptures are laden with quite specific, concrete references to status groups, leaders and followers, movements, trends, classes, and cultural environments, which are only now being investigated in detail by specialists. It is presumed throughout that the message of Jesus Christ is pertinent to every group and all parts of the globe it encounters, and that it will bring change to these settings, be expressed somewhat differently in each one, and yet bind them into a new global community of faith.<sup>17</sup>

### ***Texts as Communal Interpretations***

A fourth characteristic of the New Testament documents (related to the discussion of pluralism above) that must be stressed in an introductory course is the recognition that behind the texts themselves lie the *communities* in which, and for whom, they were formulated. In some sense, therefore, we could think of each of the gospels as a kind of “local theology,”<sup>18</sup> the product of a particular community’s struggle

to make sense of its experience of Jesus in light of its religious tradition, its values, and its specific communal concerns.

In the last two decades especially, the importance of these communal contexts for understanding the biblical texts has been affirmed with renewed emphasis by scholars, a fact which is well attested to by the many recent studies of the “social worlds” of various Christian communities.<sup>19</sup> The value of such studies for globalization lies especially in their recognition and affirmation of the *particular contexts* in which Christian faith was born. In addition, they help to account for the diversity of theological expression that emerged in each local community.

### ***Critical Stance Toward the Texts Themselves***

A fifth aspect of the New Testament study that must be especially stressed at the introductory level is the acknowledgment that the texts themselves are inherently conditioned and limited by the cultural contexts which gave them birth. Employing this principle, for example, feminist critique has laid bare the androcentric perspective and the patriarchal structures that dominate the biblical texts, the same texts that have been used throughout Christian history as legitimation for the subjugation of women.<sup>20</sup> Introductory courses in scripture, therefore, ought to encourage in students the development of a respectful but critical stance, a “hermeneutics of suspicion,” as Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza calls it, toward the texts themselves. This stance is warranted, even required, because the texts—and more so the history of the interpretation of these texts—have perpetuated invidious cultural biases with respect to race, class, gender, and ethnicity. If globalization strives for a genuine embrace of pluralism, it must do so in the context of dialogue and mutual critique in pursuit of the truth of God’s Word for us. This critique must begin with the text itself.

These preliminary questions and presuppositions provide the foundational stance I would advocate for a study of the New Testament documents which seeks to be more responsive to the global perspective.

## **Pedagogical Perspectives**

### ***Classroom Environment***

Classroom environments and pedagogical styles can either enhance or stifle learning; they can either support or sabotage the stated goals of a particular course. The design of an introductory course in New Testament that is attentive to issues of globalization should include classroom strategies and course assignments that support globalization in its fourfold meaning adopted at the outset of this paper.

Our understanding of globalization affirms the presence of pluralism and acknowledges that difference must be taken seriously in a climate of mutual and respectful critique. The classroom, therefore, must be a place where the “voices” of all can be heard, weighed, respected, and challenged. As Freire has asserted, the “banking model”<sup>21</sup> must give way to genuine dialogical methods within the classroom. A commitment to dialogical methods is not a concession to a chaotic principle of “anything goes”; nor is it a tacit assent to a claim that “all positions have equal validity.” Rather, dialogical methods invite students to begin with their own experience and perspective and to be open to the experience of others which may challenge and/or modify their own. Group exercises which invite students to discuss among themselves their different readings of various texts will develop in students the sensitivity to pluralism for which globalization strives.

Like the parables themselves, dialogical methods engage the student in the process of reflection on their own perspective and on that of others in light of the faith tradition.<sup>22</sup> Whether we name these “receiver-centered models,”<sup>23</sup> “student centered methods,” “adult learning models,” or call them by any other name, students cannot learn to appreciate difference and pluralism if their own voices are silenced in the classroom.

It is especially important, moreover, for the instructor to encourage response from those who are often silent members of the class, either because of cultural temperament, racial or gender specific socialization, or because of their perceived language deficiency. Employing dialogical methods of learning requires, in addition, that class size be kept within “reasonable limits” but these limits can vary depending on the skill and resources of the instructor. Others may wish to combine various methods alternating large group lectures with multiple small group discussions.



Gary Riebe-Estrella, SVD, defines this dialogical mode of education as “collaborative pedagogy,” in which both students and theological professionals have important and complementary roles. The students’ role is to engage actively in partnership with one another and with the professional theologian/exegete.<sup>24</sup> “In a sense,” he says, “*most* of the work is theirs since, as each is the embodiment (though always partial) of the faith tradition which has developed in his/her cultural group, they hold the source of the theological reflection.”<sup>25</sup> In biblical study, the same principle obtains: the more culturally diverse are those who interpret the text, the more will the multiple layers of meaning and revelation be received by the community.

An example of this principle may help. Employing the insights and terminology of cultural anthropology, recent New Testament studies have underscored the important social dynamic in the first century Mediterranean world known as “honor and shame.”<sup>26</sup> These studies insist that all social interaction in Jesus’ world was conditioned by this dynamic, and that the interpreter cannot make sense of situations and interactions in the New Testament texts apart from reference to honor and shame. But for the person living in the industrialized Western world, these terms have little meaning; moreover, they certainly are not operative principles at the heart of our culture.<sup>27</sup> A Filipino, on the other hand, knows instinctively the power of *hiya* (shame) and *dangal* (honor) in all social interactions because, for the Filipino, *hiya/dangal* have a similar function at the heart of Filipino life and culture.<sup>28</sup> The Filipino experience, therefore, becomes a rich resource for understanding a key dynamic in the New Testament world that is experientially foreign, and for the most part, unintelligible to many modern readers. The articulation of Filipino experience, therefore, provides access for others to a dimension of the New Testament world otherwise inaccessible. Here, the student becomes teacher in a truly mutual learning process.

The role of the professional theologian or exegete is also central to collaborative pedagogy. Important in this regard is, first of all, the critical self-understanding of the professional concerning his/her own stance within a particular context and the recognition of the strengths as well as the limits necessarily inherent in that stance. The educator is called upon to identify and to acknowledge his/her own position of advocacy. For example, in teaching New Testament as a woman, I take every possible opportunity to expose and challenge the androcentric perspective that domi-

nates the biblical tradition, to retrieve wherever possible the voices, the experience, and the interests of women, and to insist that students employ inclusive language and become more conversant with the principles of feminist critical analysis.

But, beyond each one's particular position or stance, there is a common stance shared by all who claim the Christian tradition as their own. Christian educators do not read the texts as disinterested observers but as advocates for the liberating values of the "reign of God." A conscious commitment to globalization, therefore, requires of all a special advocacy on behalf of the poor and oppressed in their struggle for justice. For those in the affluent circles of the First World, moreover, only the voices of those "on the margin" can provide the essential counterpoint to their own limited view.

Creating space for classroom dialogue in a collaborative pedagogy means that questions of method, and the development of skills of critical inquiry, should generally take precedence over the communication of content. Questions that evoke reflection on *how* the meaning of a text is communicated, and *for whom*, are as important, or more important, than surveying the various levels of meaning a text might yield. (As the aphorism goes: "It is more important to teach someone *how* to fish, than to give them a fish.") But, in the end, *nothing* can substitute for a regular, *communal* engagement with the biblical text itself.<sup>29</sup> Students need to read the texts in both individual and group settings; they need to become familiar with their texture, rhetorical style, literary coherence, and power—not merely analyze their structure or theological argument.

Attention to different learning styles present within a multicultural class is another responsibility incumbent upon the instructor. Recent research in learning theory affirms that there are distinct cultural, as well as gender, preferences for either cooperative or competitive styles, either concrete person-centered or object-centered approaches to learning. Some show a cultural preference for a deductive, holistic approach that proceeds from the general to the particular; others prefer a more inductive approach focusing first on specific details then proceeding to general concepts.<sup>30</sup> Given this diversity, it is imperative to employ a variety of teaching styles within the course syllabus.

***New Testament Resources for Globalization***

From the previous section, it should be obvious that I consider the richest, most immediate resource for globalization in an introductory course on the New Testament to be the cultural diversity of the students themselves. But this is true only insofar as students learn to bring these diverse perspectives to their own reading of the texts, and to share these “readings” with others in the class. Where there is little or no cultural diversity represented among the students, the challenge of globalization is made more difficult. In these cases, appreciation for different perspectives and “readings” can be enhanced through assigned texts, invited guest speakers, or other resources.

The difficult challenge of introducing the student to the unfamiliar cultural world of first century Palestine and the Mediterranean world has been minimized by the many recent New Testament studies (both popular and scholarly) which examine not just the historical and political dimensions, but the socio-cultural features of the New Testament world.<sup>31</sup> The work especially of Bruce Malina, mentioned above, continues to be an indispensable tool for helping students to understand the culture in which the gospel message first took shape. In addition, slide and video presentations which familiarize students **visually** with the landscape, the people, the customs—ancient and modern—of the Mediterranean world also help to dispel, in part at least, the veil of strangeness which impedes access to the world of the texts, and thereby to the world of meaning which the texts convey. Admittedly, modern scholarship can never reconstruct completely the world of antiquity nor understand fully its complex symbol systems and cultural dynamics. Therefore, caution is always to be exercised concerning what we claim “to know.”

Central to an understanding of globalization is the appreciation of the biblical tradition as Kerygma, the oral *proclamation* of the “Good News.” Because of this conviction, the texts must be *heard* as well as read. Students might be paired off early in the course, for example, with the assignment to read aloud to one another *in one sitting* an entire text like the gospel of Mark in order to appreciate its inner coherence and the power of its rhetorical style.<sup>32</sup> Or students might be asked to memorize and “perform” in class Paul’s letter to Philemon to be followed by a discussion comparing how and why the church in Colossae and the present class might have heard it differently.

Finally, careful attention should always be given to providing readings and resources that reflect adequately a multicultural mix. Students are encouraged to become familiar not only with the standard American and European journals and biblical reference tools but also with monographs and biblical journals from Latin America, Africa, and Asia.<sup>33</sup>

Thus far, the paper has explored some general assumptions and pedagogical principles for teaching Introduction to the New Testament from a global perspective. The final section of the paper will present a tentative syllabus and suggested readings for such a course. It should be stressed, however, that given the *multiple* objectives usually assumed for this course, each instructor needs to make her or his own decision how best to prioritize these objectives and then to design a course in accordance with these priorities. We cannot assume that a single course syllabus would be equally helpful for all. The very nature of globalization itself argues strongly against this assumption. Each specific context, and each specific group of students, calls for its own course design.

## **Introduction to the New Testament From a Global Perspective**

### ***Course Content and Suggested Methods***

#### ***Course Description:***

This course provides a basic introduction to: 1) the contents of the twenty-seven books of the New Testament, 2) the social, historical, cultural context of the New Testament world, 3) the variety of New Testament literary genres, 4) the modern critical methods of New Testament interpretation, and 5) the principal themes of New Testament theology—their unity and diversity. It strives to integrate theology and spirituality and addresses the challenge of how to become more effective ministers of the Word today in the context of a global church.

Rather than devote a special section of the course to “cross-cultural questions,” I would chose to integrate this approach throughout every phase of the course as indicated above in the general assumptions.

**Required Texts:**

D.L. Barr, *The New Testament Story. An Introduction*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 1987.

B. Malina, *The New Testament World: Insights from Cultural Anthropology*. Atlanta: John Knox, 1981.

C. Osiek, *What Are They Saying About the Social Setting of the New Testament?* 2nd Rev. Ed., Paulist, 1992.

C. Tuckett, *Reading the New Testament. Methods of Interpretation*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986.

In addition, students need to use a study Bible (e.g., RSV; NRSV; NAB) and a Synopsis (e.g., Aland, Throckmorton).

There is not to my knowledge a “perfect” introductory text for this course, nevertheless students need some basic introduction as a resource. In my judgment, Barr’s is especially useful because it moves beyond the limits of the historical-critical approach and draws on Christian sources both within and outside the New Testament canon.<sup>34</sup>

## REQUIREMENTS

1. Class attendance and active participation. (20% of grade)  
(Always bring your Bible to class.)
2. Read the selected New Testament passages and the required texts.
3. **Book Review** (30% of grade) of one of the following texts. Include a brief *summary* of the contents, indicate what new *insights* you gained from this book, and list the *questions and challenges* that the text raised for you.

Choose one of the following titles:

R.McA. Brown, *Reading the Bible with Third World Eyes*. Westminster, 1984.

C.H. Felder, *Stony the Road We Trod: African American Biblical Interpretation*. Fortress, 1991.

J.S. Pobee and B. von Wartenberg-Potter, *New Eyes for Reading, Biblical and Theological Reflections by Women from the Third World*. World Council of Churches, 1986.

C. Rowland and M. Corner, *Liberating Exegesis, The Challenge of Liberation Theology to Biblical Studies*. Westminster/John Knox, 1989.

E. Schüssler Fiorenza, *Bread Not Stone: The Challenge of Feminist Biblical Interpretation*. Beacon, 1984.

J. Stambaugh and D. Balch, *The New Testament in Its Social Environment*. Westminster, 1986.

R.S. Sugirtharajah, *Voices from the Margin: Interpreting the Bible in the Third World*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1991; Part One and Two, pp. 1-226.

#### 4. **Two Interpretive Papers on New Testament Texts** (50% of grade)

The purpose of the book review is to expose students at the beginning of the course to reflection on one particular hermeneutical perspective which may be the same or different from their own. The exercise is meant to encourage students to reflect on their own particular stance and how it affects their reading of biblical texts. When all book reviews have been submitted, students are divided into groups according to which book they reviewed. Each group is then asked to discuss together their response and insights. Finally, each group chooses one person to represent the group on a panel discussion of the different books and their various interpretive stances. This is an exercise that generally “stretches” most students who have not appreciated the plurality of possible interpretive approaches to the text.

The interpretive papers (the first on a synoptic text, the second on either a Pauline or Johannine text) are designed to give students the practice of using various methods of New Testament analysis (form, literary, redaction, narrative criticism, etc.) in a close scrutiny of a text. Guideline questions ask students to relate the themes and issues in the text with the concerns of the community for which it was written. They are also asked to discuss how they might preach this text today in a variety of settings. Finally, students are invited to write a paraphrase of the text in their own words.

The questions on the Pauline tradition focus on pastoral problems and how Paul developed his theological position in response to concrete, pastoral issues. Students are then invited to identify specific problems in their own situation and to discuss

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how these problems are similar to or different from those of Paul's day. Questions for the Johannine texts focus on the Johannine community's developing high Christology (in contrast to that of the Synoptic gospels), and what factors in their communal experience helped to shape this understanding of Jesus. Then students are asked to reflect on their own image or portrait of Christ and how this portrait answers the religious hopes of their own lives. These written reflections then become resources for classroom discussion on these topics in which the differences among students will be shared and discussed.

### ***Methods:***

The course will consist of lectures, dealing with general questions of background and approach to various texts of the New Testament; readings from the required texts and other sources; and three written exercises combining reflection on questions of hermeneutical method, as well as practice in reading and interpreting different New Testament texts.

Classroom procedure will always include dialogical teaching methods designed to stimulate student questions and responses and to facilitate their engagement with the biblical texts. For each section of the New Testament tradition, class time is divided between a general overview of introductory issues and key themes in a given text and discussion of selected passages. This course is designed for the graduate level in a 10-week quarter system. The following presents some suggestions of how such a course might be structured and includes some examples of selected readings.

### ***Course Calendar:***

**Weeks 1 & 2** - Introduction to the New Testament World; Tools for Study; Hermeneutical Principles and Perspectives.

Readings: Barr, pp. 1-32; Tuckett, pp. 1-77; Malina, all; Osiek, all.

**Week 3** - The Christian Experience of Jesus and the Gospel Genre; the Gospel of Mark.

Readings: Barr, pp. 134-172; Tuckett, pp. 78-115.

Handouts: Elizabeth Amoah, "The Woman Who Decided To Break the Rules," A Ghanaian woman's reflection on Mark 5:25-29, *New Eyes for Reading*, pp. 3-4.

P.W. Hollenbach, "Jesus, Demoniacs, and Public Authorities: A Socio-Historical Study," *JAAR* 49:4 (1981) 567-588.

Ahn Byung-Mu, "Jesus and the Minjung in the Gospel of Mark," in Sugirtharajah, *Voices*, 85-103.

J.J. Pilch, "Understanding Biblical Healing: Selecting the Appropriate Model," *BTB* 18 (1988) 60-66.

**Week 4 - Synoptic Problem: Gospel of Matthew; Redaction Criticism**

Readings: Barr, pp. 174-205; Tuckett, pp. 116-135.

J.C. Anderson, "Mary's Difference: Gender and Patriarchy in the Birth Narratives," *Jour Rel* 67:2 (1987) 183-202.

L. J. White, "Grid and Group in Matthew's Community: The Righteousness/Honor Code in the Sermon on the Mount," *Semeia* 35 (1986) 61-90.

L. Schottroff and W. Stegemann, "The Sabbath Was Made for Man: The Interpretation of Mark 2:23-28 (in Matt. 12:1-8)," in *God of the Lowly*, pp. 118-128.

**Week 5 - Luke-Acts; Parables; Structural Criticism Readings**

Barr, pp. 206-235; Tucket, pp. 136-166.

D. J. Bosch, "Mission in Jesus' Way: A Perspective from Luke's Gospel," *Missionalia* [Pretoria] 17:1 (1989) 3-21.

"A South African Example: Jesus Teaching at Nazareth - Luke 4:14-30," in Sugirtharajah, *Voices*, 423-430.

"An Indonesian Example: The Miraculous Catch - Luke 5: 1-11," in *Voices*, 420-422.

Robert J. Karris, "Luke 8:26-39: Jesus, the Pigs, and Human Transformation," *NTR* 4:3 (1991) 39-51.

N. Onwu, "Ministry to the Educated: Reinterpreting Acts 17:16-34 in Africa," *African Christian Studies* 4:4 (1988) 61-71.

**Week 6 - Paul: Pastor and Theologian**

1 Thessalonians, Galatians, 1 Corinthians

Readings: Barr, pp. 34-109.



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“The Letter of Phoebe to the Church at Cenchreae,” in E.S. Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her* (NY: Crossroad, 1983) 61-64.

J.H. Neyrey, *Paul in Other Words. A Cultural Reading of His Letters* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1990) ch. 1-2.

W. Meeks, *The First Urban Christians*, Ch. 5 on ritual in the Pauline communities.

### **Week 7 - Deutero-Pauline and Pastoral Epistles; Authenticity and Pseudepigraphy; Feminist Hermeneutics**

Colossians, Ephesians, 1 Timothy

Readings: Barr, pp. 110-132.

Handouts: C. Osiek, “The Feminist and the Bible: Hermeneutical Alternatives,” in *Feminist Perspectives on Biblical Scholarship*, ed. A.Y. Collins (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1985) 93-105.

Christine Amjad-Ali, “The Equality of Women: Form or Substance (1 Corinthians 11:2-16),” *Voices*, 205-213.

C.J. Martin, *The Haustafeln* (Household Codes in African American Biblical Interpretation: “Free Slaves” and “Subordinate Women” in *Stony the Road We Trod*, pp. 206-231.

D.R. MacDonald, “Virgins, Widows, and Paul in Second Century Asia Minor,” in *SBLSP* 1979, ed. P. J. Achtemeier, vol. 1, pp. 169-184 (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1979).

### **Week 8 - The Catholic Epistles and Hebrews**

1 Peter, James, Hebrews

Readings: Barr, pp. 298-323.

J.H. Elliott, *1 Peter, Estrangement and Community* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1979).

### **Week 9 - The Gospel of John and the Johannine Letters**

Readings: Barr, pp. 236-265; Tuckett, pp. 167-187.

Handouts: H.C. Zorilla, "The Feast of Liberation of the Oppressed: A Rereading of John 7:1-10:21," *Mission Focus* 13 (1985) 21-24.

J. Neyrey, "The Christologies of John's Gospel," in *Christ is Community*; GNS 13 (Wilmington: Glazier, 1985) 142-192.

P. Perkins, "Koinonia in 1 John 1:3-7: The Social Context of Division in the Johannine Letters." *CBO* 45 (1983) 631-41.

**Week 10** - The Book of Revelation; the New Testament as Canon for the Church

Readings: Barr, pp. 266-296; 324-342.

Recommended: A.Y. Collins, "Vilification and Self-Definition in the Book of Revelation," *HTR* 79:1-3 (1986) 308-320.

D.L. Dungan, "The New Testament Canon in Recent Study," *Int* 29 (1975) 339-351.

**ENDNOTES**

<sup>1</sup>For example, a student once told me in class that he considered the Lukan text: "Jesus answered: I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out." (Luke 19:40) to be condoning armed violence.

<sup>2</sup>See the similar discussion of this issue with respect to the function of the biblical tradition in the African American culture in Vincent Wimbush, "Historical Study as Cultural Critique: A Proposal for the Role of Biblical Scholarship in Theological Education," *Theological Education* XXV:2 (Spring 1989) 30-43.

<sup>3</sup>Max Stackhouse ("Contextualization and Theological Education," in *Theological Education* XXIII:1 (Autumn 1986) 67-82 warns against the imprecision with which the term "context" is often used, and calls for an acknowledgement of the provisional nature of any description of "contexts."

<sup>4</sup>23% of the student body (69 students) represent 24 different countries of Asia, Africa, Latin America, and both Eastern and Western Europe.

<sup>5</sup>The standard nomenclature of "Old" and "New" Testament is admittedly flawed and inaccurate. Some in the academic community (notably the editors of the *Biblical Theological Bulletin*) have chosen to substitute "First Testament" and "Second Testament," but these designations have not been universally adopted. "Hebrew Scriptures" and "Christian Scriptures" are used by others, but this, too, is inaccurate since for the Christian, *both* constitute sacred scripture. One way to sensitize students to this linguistic problem is to use interchangeably various designations for the texts we read.

<sup>6</sup>See Don S. Browning, "Globalization and the Task of Theological Education in North America," *Theological Education* XXIII: 1 (Autumn 1986) 43-59, and S. Mark Heim, "Mapping Globalization for Theological Education," *Theological Education* XXVI: Supplement 1 (Spring 1990) 7-34.

<sup>7</sup>Heim, "Mapping," 12.

<sup>8</sup>Max L. Stackhouse, *Apologia, Contextualization, Globalization and Mission in Theological Education* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988) 50-51.

<sup>9</sup>Wimbush ("Historical Study as Cultural Critique," 34-35) formulates well how tentative and partial our understanding of the world of antiquity really is. A healthy caution should always characterize these descriptions and interpretations.

<sup>10</sup>See especially, Paul Ricoeur, *Interpretation Theory: Discourse and the Surplus of Meaning* (Fort Worth: Texas Christian University, 1976) and Hans-George Gadamer, *Truth and Method* (New York: Seabury, 1975).

<sup>11</sup>Sandra M. Schneiders, I.H.M., "The Footwashing (John 13:1-20): An Experiment in Hermeneutics," *CBO* 43 (1981) 76-92, esp. 76-77 which summarizes the essential elements of Ricoeur and Gadamer's hermeneutics as the basis for New Testament interpretation.

<sup>12</sup>This phrase was suggested by Sharon Ringe in oral comments made during the ATS Globalization Conference in March 1992. I wish to thank her for her helpful and perceptive remarks.

<sup>13</sup>Schneiders, 77.

<sup>14</sup>Paul Ricoer, "Creativity in Language: Word, Polysemy, Metaphor," *Philosophy Today* 17 (1973) 97-11.

<sup>15</sup>See the discussion of different "readings" of the biblical text in Gerald O. West, *Biblical Hermeneutics of Liberation. Modes of Reading the Bible in the South African Context*; Monograph Series 1 (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 1991), esp. 55-62.

<sup>16</sup>Robert J. Schreiter, "Teaching Theology from an Intercultural Perspective," *Theological Education* XXVI:1 (Autumn 1989)

<sup>17</sup>Stackhouse, "Contextualization and Theological Education," 68.

<sup>18</sup>This term, from Robert J. Schreiter, *Constructing Local Theologies* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1985), is a helpful one. Important, too, is his discussion of "The community as Theologian," (16-18) which makes a "distinction between the role of the whole community of faith, whose experience is the indispensable source of theology, and whose acceptance of a theology is an important guarantor of its authenticity, and the role of smaller groups within the community who actually give shape to that theology."

<sup>19</sup>A representative sampling would include: John G. Gager, *Kingdom and Community, The Social World of Early Christianity* (Englewood Cliffs; Prentice Hall, 1975); Wayne A. Meeks, *The First Urban Christians. The Social World of the Apostle Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983); Jerome H. Neyrey, ed. *The Social World of Luke-Acts. Models for Interpretation* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991); J. Andrew Overman, *Matthew's Gospel and Formative Judaism. The Social World of the Matthean Community* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990); Gerd Theissen, *Sociology of Early Palestinian Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978); idem., *The Social Setting of Pauline Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982); David C. Verner, *The Household of God, The Social World of the Pastoral Epistles*; SBLDS 71 (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1983).

<sup>20</sup>The work of Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza is foundational: *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins* (New York: Crossroads, 1983); idem., *Bread Not Stone: The Challenge of Feminist Biblical Interpretation* (Boston: Beacon, 1984).

<sup>21</sup>Paolo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, translated by M.B. Ramos (New York: Herder & Herder, 1970) 58-67.

<sup>22</sup>See Mary C. Boys, S.N.J.M., "Parabolic Ways of Teaching," *Biblical Theology Bulletin* XIII:3 (1983) 82-89.

<sup>23</sup>See the discussion of sender versus receiver models of communication in Schreiter, "Teaching Theology," 16-18.

<sup>24</sup>Gary Riebe-Estrella, S.V.D., "Exploring a Praxis-Oriented Methodology in Theological Formation," May 2, 1991 (photocopy), 11.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid. Riebe-Estrella's discussion of dialogical methods is informed by that of Thomas H. Groome (*Christian Religious Education: Sharing Our Story and Vision* [San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1980] esp., pp. 188-191).

<sup>26</sup>See especially the works of Bruce J. Malina, *The New Testament World. Insights from Cultural Anthropology* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1981); *Christian Origins and Cultural Anthropology. Practical Models for Biblical Interpretation* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1986).

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<sup>27</sup>Carolyn Osiek, for example, uses the economic analogy of “honor” as “positive credit rating,” but this analogy fits only partially the all pervasive power of honor and shame in the ancient world.

<sup>28</sup>There is a rich and extensive semantic field in Filipino (Tagalog) related especially to the term *hiya* which indicates its all pervasive influence in Filipino life. For an example of how these Filipino values can inform a reading of the Gospel, see Jose M. de Mesa, “The Resurrection in the Filipino Context,” in idem., *In Solidarity with Culture: Studies in Theological Re-rooting*; Maryhill Studies 4 (Quezon City: Maryhill School of Theology, 1987) 102-146.

<sup>29</sup>It continues to baffle me that students are generally more willing to read *about* the New Testament text than they are to read the New Testament text itself!

<sup>30</sup>For a discussion of these styles with respect to Hispanic, African American, and Native American students see James A. Vasquez, “Teaching to the Distinctive Traits of Minority Students,” *The Clearing House* 63 (1990) 299-304, and the bibliography he includes. For an analysis of gender preferences in learning see, Mary Field Belenky, *et al.*, *Women’s Ways of Knowing: The Development of Self, Voice, and Mind* (New York: Basic Books, 1986).

<sup>31</sup>See additional Bibliography suggested at the end of the paper.

<sup>32</sup>The video presentation of “St. Mark’s Gospel,” performed by the British actor Alec McCowan is available from Palisades Institute, 153 Waverly Place, New York, NY 10014 (212) 243-0600.

<sup>33</sup>For example the *Asian Journal of Theology* (Singapore), *Biblehashyam* (India), *Jeevadhara* (India), *Landas* (Philippines), *Revista Biblica* (Buenos Aires), *Telega* (Zaire), *Vidyajyoti* (India), to name just a few.

<sup>34</sup>The new book by John Pilch, *Introducing the Cultural Context of the New Testament*; Hear the Word, Vol. 2 (Mahwah: Paulist, 1991) is also a useful resource and belongs on an introductory bibliography.

# Globalization in the Teaching of Church History

**Justo L. González**

## **Some preliminary considerations**

As I approach the subject of this paper, I must begin by confessing that there is a part of me that is not very comfortable with the current emphasis on “globalization” in North American theological education. It is difficult for me to admit this, for I have been advocating globalization in one form or another for almost thirty years. Yet, these days I tend to share in what S. Mark Heim’s paper calls “a suspicion that globalization is an ideal formulated by Westerners in such a way that they alone have the means to be the experts at it.” In other words, that there is a form of “globalization” that, even if its proponents do not realize it, is one more way in which the West imposes its standards on the rest of the world, and then faults them for not meeting such standards.

The “asymmetry” to which a number of papers on globalization refer is quite real. The theological enterprise must be carried on in various parts of the world with very different and very unequal resources—just as the very enterprise of daily living must be carried on with unequal resources. Most of us do our research and teaching in institutions where not only we, but also most of our students, have access to computers and various data retrieval and data processing systems. That is a rather exceptional situation when one considers the theological education enterprise on a global scale. We also have access to world news, and to a thousand journals and publications, at our fingertips, in libraries that are generally unavailable to the vast majority of the world’s theological students. Likewise, most of us work in institutions, and with students, with such economic resources that a trip abroad is not considered prohibitive. All of this is a far cry from the conditions under which most theological education in the world today takes place. The “asymmetry” is not only great, but also growing, as research and information systems become more and more sophisticated and ever less accessible to the masses.

A further dimension of this asymmetry has to do with the perspective of those who teach in theological institutions throughout the world, and the books and other materials they must use. A disproportionate number of those who are engaged in theo-

logical education worldwide—especially those who teach in the most influential institutions—have been trained in the North Atlantic, or in countries and institutions imitating and reflecting North Atlantic perspectives. The same is true, to an even greater degree, of the books and other teaching resources available throughout the world.<sup>1</sup>

No amount of curriculum reform in the United States will suffice to change such “asymmetry,” which is not the result of theological curriculum, but of international and national injustice—albeit an injustice that is often abetted by the theological curriculum. Actually, to imagine that such asymmetry can be impacted significantly by curricular reforms implies a gross underestimation of the asymmetry itself and its historical, structural, and economic causes.

Then I have a second suspicion about some forms of “globalization” which I must also confess. Sometimes I wonder to what degree talk and programs of “globalization” serve as an excuse—even as a subconscious excuse—not to deal with issues of real globalization in our own backyards.<sup>2</sup> I know of seminaries that have hardly any African-American students, and yet have ambitious programs of “globalization” which consist mostly in visiting a black nation in the Caribbean or in Africa. I know of seminaries where faculty are avidly studying Spanish so they can improve their global awareness by reading Latin American liberation theology, yet will not cross the street to meet the Spanish-speaking poor who live there. I also know of seminaries with extensive “globalization” projects which include visits to China and Korea, while they ignore the rapidly increasing Asian population in their own neighborhoods. There are also professors who are willing to pontificate about Latin American Pentecostalism, who have never set foot in a Spanish-speaking Pentecostal church a few blocks from their seminaries. It is easier to raise money for programs with a tinge of the exotic, than to raise it for programs that deal with controversial issues in our own communities. It is also easier to love the neighbor who is not too close, who can be visited or left alone at our own discretion. I fear that too often what we call “globalization” is tempted to take that easier route.

Having confessed these two suspicions, I must explain how they affect my own understanding of globalization, which will in turn undergird the rest of this paper. First of all, I believe we must beware of “global globalization”—of “globalization” as a task or a goal which we expect or impose on theological education throughout the globe.

There are at least two reasons for this caveat. The first is the asymmetry that has already been mentioned, which makes it quite likely that any such “global globalization” will turn out to be another disguise for paternalism and neocolonialism. I do not worry too much about this particular danger, for there are many in the rest of the world who would be quick to challenge us if we took that route. In that regard, perhaps even much of our concern about protecting others from the consequences of the “asymmetry” is in itself quite paternalistic and results from an ideological internalization of the asymmetry itself.

The second and most important reason for avoiding a “global globalization” has to do with the tasks of theological education and ministry as I see them. I do not believe that theological education can or should seek to produce generic graduates, capable of serving in all times and circumstances. Most of our graduates, no matter how much of a global perspective they have, will be best suited to serve in a particular denominational, cultural, and social setting. In most cases this setting will be roughly the same as their own background and that of their peers and of the institution where they study. We may not like this, but it is a fact. There are obvious and remarkable exceptions, people who are able to cross cultural, racial, and class boundaries; yet these are still the exception, and even they will only be able to cross a few such boundaries.

Given that situation, it would seem that the purpose of globalization should be to produce graduates who can bring a global perspective to the particular situation in which they are serving. In the case of parish ministers, for instance, this implies helping the local church be aware that it is part of the church catholic—doing this through worship, preaching and teaching, bringing this to bear on ethical and political decisions, making it visible through the sharing of human and material resources, etc. It also implies making the rest of the church present before the local congregation in such a way that its voice can be heard both in comfort and in challenge—helping them break away from the “but-we-have-never-done-it-that-way” syndrome.

In a way, church history has often had this sort of globalization as its purpose, although this has been done in terms of chronological rather than geographical globalization. If geographical globalization seeks to open new horizons by taking students to Central America or to East Africa, chronological globalization seeks a similar end by taking them to the fourth or to the tenth century. If geographical globalization seeks to challenge assumptions about the life of the church and the content of theology by confronting participants with alternatives in other parts of the world, chronological globalization does the same by confronting them with other times and other places. If, for instance, a visit to Uganda will question many



assumptions about conversion, evangelism, and church growth, so will a discussion of the conversion of the Saxons, of Iceland, or of the Inca Empire. Just as catholicity is both geographical and chronological, so must there be a correlation between geographical and chronological globalization.

There are many parallels between these two forms of globalization, so that reflection on the one should be of value for the other. For instance, the difficulties in entering another culture have been repeatedly pointed out in essays on globalization. How much globalization can really take place by means such as a two- or three-week trip to another country? Even in such trips, how does one really get to know people whose language and traditions one does not know and does not understand, and how does one avoid being exposed to what really amounts to a ghetto or a missionary compound within another culture?

I have no answer to these questions. Yet they are very similar to other questions that historians and professors of church history are constantly asking: How much real understanding of the life and challenges of the church of the past can a student be expected to achieve in one or two semesters of classes, readings, and papers? How can students be expected to understand the issues at stake, not only theologically, but also in every other dimension of human existence, with as little background in historical studies as some bring to their theological education? And even then, we are acutely aware that the writing and teaching of history is highly dependent on a process of selection of materials from the past. Part of that selection we do today as we choose a textbook and other readings, and as we design a syllabus; but part of that selection has taken place over the centuries, through the preservation and destruction of various documents, and in a dozen other ways. Therefore, just as the “geographical globalizer,” so must the “chronological globalizer” be concerned about the possibility of being exposed to what amounts to a historical ghetto. In his paper on “Mapping Globalization,” S. Mark Heim raises the question: “Is theology to relate to the ‘high’ culture or to popular culture, to the Sanskritic dominant culture of Aryan tradition or to the varied popular and tribal cultures?” Church historians must face a similar question: Are we to study primarily the ‘high’ theology and church life of Athanasius and Thomas Aquinas, or are we to study the popular religiosity that flourished in Egyptian monasticism and in the myriad pilgrimages, vows, and atavistic religious practices of the thirteenth century?

The parallel, however, breaks down at one crucial point. Although we are relatively free to travel in space, travel in time remains the prerogative of movie producers and poets. If globalization becomes sufficiently important for me, I can travel to another culture and spend as much time there as I see fit. If, on the other hand, I travel to the fourth century and remain there for more than a few hours, engrossed in conversation with Athanasius and with Arius, I shall become the prototype of the absent-minded professor. If they so desire, my students can decide to serve in Zaire, in Bolivia, or in Thailand; they cannot decide to serve in the eleventh century.

There is a positive consequence to this. Because my students cannot decide to live in the eleventh century, but will constantly be forced to return to the present, their “chronological globalization” cannot serve as an escape from present responsibility. They may try it, but they will still have to eat and earn a living in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, much as they may dislike it. Ideally, they should try to understand as much as possible about the eleventh century on its own merit; then they should also be able to return to the twentieth—or the twenty-first—and bring to us a wider, different perspective which has resulted from their incursion into the past. If they simply devote themselves to collecting intellectual “gems” in the past, without ever bringing them to bear on the present, they may be considered excellent scholars, but I will feel that I have failed in my purpose of introducing them to the eleventh century.

I believe that there is a lesson here for geographical globalization—although one that must not be exaggerated. The purpose of such globalization is not primarily to choose the setting where we are to serve. That may be a purpose for some, as in the training of persons called to missionary work. But even in those cases, there comes a time when one serves in a particular locus, and one must take that locus as seriously as any sane person takes the present. Globalization is not a permanent soaring to look at the world from a “global” perspective; it is rather the exposure to alternative settings, alternative ways of being the church and of doing theology, in such a way that each one and all of us may be better theologians in our own settings.

### **Globalization and Selectivity**

Quite obviously, even the most ambitious and unreflective notion of globalization does not really aim to provide participants with a universal, all-encompassing perspective and experience. There is always a process of selection that involves both practical and pedagogical considerations. Likewise, no church history is universal

and all-encompassing. There is a process of selection that has taken place through the centuries, destroying or hiding materials that were considered heretical or irrelevant. To overcome that sort of selection is a difficult task, and one which can only be mentioned in this paper. More immediately relevant to our purpose here is the more recent process of selection that determines, from all the vast historical materials that are available, what will be studied and taught. This process takes place in a number of ways: the existence of a tradition of scholarship, where one generation teaches another what is worth studying, while ignoring the rest; the writing and selection of textbooks; the list of supplemental readings, research projects, etc.; the syllabus itself. It may be that by analyzing this process we may glean some understanding of what the globalization of the teaching of church history may mean for our time and place.

For our purposes here, I suggest we look at the contents of some of the most widely used textbooks in church history, and seek to discover the criteria by which such contents were determined.<sup>3</sup>

Probably the most widely used introduction to church history, at least during my generation, has been Williston Walker's *A History of the Christian Church*. Although this has gone through a number of revisions, its basic outline is the same as that of the original edition. Most of my comments are based on the 1959 edition, revised by Cyril C. Richardson, Wilhelm Pauck, and Robert T. Handy. As one looks at its table of contents, it is obvious that there is in this book an attempt to globalize the readers' view of the church. Presumably addressed at North American Protestants, it provides a background for the self-understanding of such readers.

It appears that the main criterion of the selection process in Walker's history is the importance of various events and developments for North American Protestant self-understanding. Indeed, the table of contents is such that many a North American Protestant will be able to read most of the book and say, "this is my story." The narrative is almost exclusively limited to the Roman Empire in the early centuries, then to Western Europe, and after the Reformation to the North Atlantic. The conversion of Armenia is mentioned almost parenthetically in a sentence dealing with the spread of monophysism. The church in Ethiopia ranks a bit more space—about half a paragraph, again in a section dealing with the monophysite revolt resulting from Justinian's policies. The spread of Islam also merits half a paragraph—a paragraph that also deals with the Lombards, the Avars, the Croats, the Serbs, and several others. Another paragraph takes care of the Spanish "Reconquista." The sig-

nificance of Arabic civilization for the theological renaissance of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and in particular for the development of Thomism, is barely mentioned. As far as I can tell, the crucial role of Sicily and Spain in that encounter between civilizations is not mentioned at all.

Then comes the Reformation of the sixteenth century. The period is covered in 121 pages, of which slightly less than seven are devoted to Roman Catholicism. In that brief section on Catholicism, attention is paid to monastic and mystical movements, to anti-Protestant polemics, and to the Council of Trent. But not a word is said about the very active theological work that was taking place in the Roman Catholic Church, quite apart from any anti-Protestant concern. Those seven pages also include a passing reference to Ricci in China and de Nobili in India. As far as I can tell Francis Suárez, foundational theologian for the Jesuit order, is not even mentioned. The story of Roman Catholicism will then be picked up in another nine pages towards the end of the book, dealing with “Modern Roman Catholicism,” which covers the entire development from Jansenism to the time the book was written.

After the Iconoclastic controversy, the Eastern churches receive two pages for the rest of their medieval development, and then a final chapter of seven pages to bring their story up to date.

All of this may sound quite critical, and in a way it is. Yet, as one looks at the entire work by Walker one must pay tribute to its global perspective even at a time when “globalization” was not an explicit concern. Reading the entire book, I suppose that most North American Protestant readers would come to the conclusion that the history of the Christian church is indeed their history. Probably they would see that entire history as a large tree, perhaps a tall pine, with branches taking off from the main trunk here and there, but also with a clearly defined main trunk. And they would see themselves as the tip—the growing edge—of that trunk. When I first read it, as a young student in a Protestant seminary in Cuba, that was certainly my reading—except that I saw myself and my own church as a small outshoot near the tip of that main trunk. (In other words, the book provided me with a global view of church history, but in that global view my church and I were marginal.)

Having said all this, however, one must also point out that in spite of all its shortcomings, Walker’s book had a globalizing direction that was rare in its time. I suspect that, except for those students taking courses on missions or on ecumenism, this book was the only place where Protestant theological students in North America heard a word about the church in Armenia or in Ethiopia. True, the churches of

these countries were studied as things of the past, having relevance only in terms of the ancient Christological controversies, and not as part of the living church today. Yet they were at least mentioned—which is more than could be said about the rest of the curriculum. I point this out because it bears out one of my main contentions in this paper, namely, that there are elements in the discipline of church history itself which lead in the direction of globalization.

The other general survey of church history which I read while at seminary was Kenneth Scott Latourette's *A History of Christianity*. (When I say I read it, I mean that quite literally. The book was in English, a language most of my classmates could not read. It was also a time before copying machines and computers. So, almost every evening for an entire year I would meet with my classmates, and read the book out loud in Spanish to a bank of students who would type what I dictated, making multiple carbon copies. Behind each one of them, other students would proofread what those on the first row had typed, make corrections, collate, and staple the material. To those who have gone through such experiences, "asymmetry" is no theoretical consideration!)

Latourette's book is similar to Walker's in many ways. It too is written with the North American Protestant reader in mind. Yet, it has a "globalizing" dimension that goes beyond Walker's, and which Latourette makes quite explicit:

If it is not to be distorted, the history of Christianity must include all the varieties of the faith. It must embrace not only those forms which have had a wide following, but also minority groups. It must mention not only the numerous churches and movements which are features of the current scene in whatever part of the world they are found, but in addition those offshoots of Christianity which have disappeared.

From its very beginning, the course of Christianity must be viewed against the background of the entire human race. The necessity of this perspective should be obvious, yet often it has been ignored. Since Christians have claimed that Christ is essential to a comprehension of the meaning of history, since the outlook of Christianity is universal in its scope, and since from the outset the ideal has been set before the followers of Jesus of winning all persons to his discipleship, the historian must ask how far that understanding and that dream have been realized. The historian's canvass, therefore, must be all humankind from the beginning to the present. In every major stage of the narrative, one who would survey the history of Christianity must strive to view it in its global setting.

This means, for example, that in those chapters in which we are telling the story of the first five centuries of Christianity, when that faith was winning the professed allegiance of the peoples of the Roman Empire and was developing institutions, patterns of thought, and forms of worship which have been normative for the majority of Christians from that time to the present, we must make it clear that most of humankind, both civilized and uncivilized, was not as yet so much as touched by the Gospel and was not aware of even the name of Jesus Christ. In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, a period to which many are inclined to look back as the heyday of Christianity, we must be aware of the frequently forgotten fact that Europe, where the faith had its stronghold, and especially Western Europe, where most of the vigour was displayed, was not even as prominent in the total world scene as the Roman Empire had been a thousand years earlier, and that the major centers of wealth, population, and civilization were elsewhere.<sup>4</sup>

This is a much stronger statement of the need for a global perspective than any to be found in Walker's book—or, as far as I know, in any previous history of Christianity. It is also a statement that guides much of Latourette's outline and choice of materials.

This is partly due to Latourette's long-standing interest in world Christianity, as evidenced in his monumental *History of the Expansion of Christianity*. Since much of the research that went into the writing of that history is reflected in his one-volume survey, Latourette's book constantly reminds the reader that Christianity is a global religion. The conversion of King Trdat of Armenia appears where it belongs chronologically, before that of Constantine. The eastern expansion through the Syriac-speaking world, as well as the conversion of Ethiopia, receive much more attention than they do in Walker's work. During the Middle Ages and beyond, Eastern Christianity is not abandoned. The Catholic Reformation receives extensive treatment—although its significant theological work, particularly that which took place quite apart from any anti-Protestant polemical interest, is shortchanged. During the sixteenth century, Latourette does not limit his attention to the Reformation and the controversies surrounding it, but deals also with the unprecedented expansion of Roman Catholic Christianity which took place at that time. And, when it comes to the nineteenth century, Latourette is quite clear that the worldwide expansion of Protestant Christianity was at least as important as the theological debates that were taking place in Europe.

Latourette's book certainly seeks to reflect a global perspective to a much greater degree than does Walker's. Again, this is probably due to his long-standing interest in missions. Those of us who were privileged to know him, know that for "Uncle Ken," Christianity had a global vocation, and that a fundamental aspect of its history was the story of how that vocation was being fulfilled.

It is important to point this out, for there are those who do not grant the "history of missions" or the "history of the expansion of Christianity" or even "world Christianity" the importance these studies truly have. If we are to globalize our understanding of the history of Christianity, then these studies certainly must have a place in it—a subject to which I shall return later on.

In terms of a global perspective, most other introductory books currently being used fall far short of Latourette's. The Lion Handbook on *The History of Christianity*<sup>5</sup> attempts to deal with the multiplicity of perspectives and events in church history by following a format similar to that of a magazine, with multiple authors, inserts, etc. Among its authors it does include at least one Third-World theologian—C. René Padilla, from Argentina, who is given seven pages out of a total of over six-hundred—and there is repeated mention of the missionary enterprise. Yet the interest in churches outside of Western Europe appears minimal and almost perfunctory. Another book that has been widely used as a text in this country is Roland H. Bainton's *Christendom: A Short History of Christianity and Its Impact on Western Civilization*.<sup>6</sup> The very title of the book is an indication that, in terms of globalization, this book does not even approach the achievements of Latourette's. In all fairness, however, it should be said that what is included in these two volumes is the text that Bainton wrote for *The Horizon History of Christianity*<sup>7</sup> whose purpose, according to the editors, was to show that "the history of Christianity is inseparable from the history of western culture and of western society."<sup>8</sup> It was not intended as an introduction to the history of Christianity, but rather as an introduction to Western civilization from the perspective of Christianity's influence on that culture.

A series that is sometimes used as an introductory textbook is *The Pelican History of the Church*.<sup>9</sup> This was a series conceived as a survey of the history of the church for a British readership. It attempts to deal with the worldwide church, not only in the last volume, which deals specifically with "Christian Missions," but throughout the entire series. In this respect, however, the discussion is uneven. The first volume, for instance, has more detail than most comparable books on the origins of the church in Edessa, but then mentions the conversion of Armenia only in passing—as has become customary, in the context of the Christological controversies. Likewise,

the volume of the Reformation is the only one of its kind that discusses the Spanish and Portuguese expansion of the sixteenth century—even though it gives the mistaken impression that Las Casas was a lone voice of protest in a desert of indifference. Still, that very volume discusses Roman Catholic theology in the sixteenth century almost exclusively as a reaction to Protestantism, and thus shortchanges much of its creativity. The fourth volume includes a nineteen-page chapter on “Christianity in the New World.” Fourteen of these pages are devoted to the United States (with a brief paragraph on Canada), two to Latin America, and two to the Far East (!). Volume five includes four chapters (out of twenty-four) on “Eastern Orthodoxy,” “Christianity in America” (which means the United States), “The Missionary Movement,” and “The Ecumenical Movement.” In contrast, eleven chapters in the same volume deal with issues and movements almost exclusively British. Finally, the volume by Stephen Neill does give the entire series a worldwide scope which other series lack—but which is not integrated into the rest of the series.

In the United States, the use of this series may have an unexpected “globalizing” dimension in that, precisely due to its heavy focus on Great Britain and the Continent, it will show that American church history is but a chapter in a larger history. At the same time, except to a certain degree for its last volume, it may tend to reinforce the common attitude, that most things worth studying that do not come from the United States come from Europe. There certainly is little here, even in the volume on missions, that would alert the reader to the theological ferment that is taking place in various parts of the world.

Among Roman Catholics, a widely used textbook on early and medieval church history is *The Christian Centuries* edited by Louis J. Rogier and others. Although its subtitle is “A New History of the Catholic Church,” it does deal with the history of various Christian bodies outside the Roman communion. Thus in the first volume, *The First Six Hundred Years* by Jean Daniélou and Henri Marrou, there is a chapter dealing with the expansion of Christianity in Persia, the Caucasus, and Ethiopia. (The same chapter also deals with Wulfila’s mission among the Germanic peoples.) And throughout that volume the narrative constantly returns to the Byzantine Church and its development. The second volume, *The Middle Ages* by David Knowles and Dimitri Obolensky, not only continues to trace the history of the Byzantine Church, but also adds sections on the further spread of Christianity to the Baltic, Bulgaria, Serbia, and Russia. An added value from the perspective of glo-



balization is that, although most of the book was written by Knowles, Obolensky was brought into the project precisely in order to offer the reader a genuine Eastern perspective on these developments. The authors' explanation of this procedure, and their assessment of its value and difficulties, are illustrative of the situation that all teachers of church history encounter as they seek a more global perspective:

The separation of the churches was due both to political events and to the different ways in which the two parties interpreted points of doctrine and practice. It seemed therefore best, in the ecumenical climate of today, that the story of the gradual estrangement should be told by a writer of each of the two allegiances. This entailed some duplication of the narrative without which the motives of the actors and the consequences of their actions would be inexplicable, and after discussion and a careful reading of each other's work the two authors were in complete agreement that this was the only way to present the reader with an historical dialogue, which in this case seemed more valuable than a single account, however impartial. A candid recognition of differences of outlook, as well as of faults and misunderstandings on both sides, must be an indispensable basis for mutual sympathy and understanding.<sup>10</sup>

The third and fourth volumes in the series have never been published. The fifth, published after long delay,<sup>11</sup> deals with the period since the accession of Pius IX and is an excellent example of the degree to which it is possible to be geographically global without being ecumenical. Indeed, this volume, more than the two preceding ones, takes the subtitle of the entire series quite literally: "A New History of the Catholic Church." On that basis, it pays significant attention to the history of the Roman Catholic Church in Latin America, Africa, and Asia, but none to any other Christian community—except the Eastern churches, to the degree that they serve as the background for various Uniate bodies.

What have been the criteria by which these various authors (or, in the case of the *Lion Handbook*, editors) have selected their materials and organized their outlines? Obviously, first of all, there is a tradition of Christian historiography that goes as far back as Eusebius, and which has been growing through the centuries. We all know that we must deal with the persecutions in the Roman Empire, and that the conversion of Constantine is a crucial turning point. We also know that, when it comes to the sixteenth century, we must deal with Luther and with the various branches of the Protestant Reformation, as well as with the Catholic Reformation. Within this context, various authors choose to emphasize different aspects of the tradition according to their own confessional or personal preferences, but the basic material is generally the same.

Then, there appear to be two criteria that stand in polar tension. On the one hand, there is the criterion of self-understanding. It is important for North American Protestants, for instance, to understand their tradition, and how it relates to the rest of Christian tradition. On the basis of this criterion, the content of church history tends to narrow through the centuries, focusing first on the entire church, then increasingly on the Western church, then (after the Reformation) on Protestantism, and eventually on North American Protestantism. This criterion is dominant, for instance, in Bainton's book.<sup>12</sup> The other criterion, standing in polar tension with self-understanding, is a global perspective. This is often seen as another element of self-understanding. (For instance, my understanding of Methodism becomes clearer as I come to know something of Presbyterianism, Lutheranism, etc.). It is thus that this criterion seems to appear in Walker's book, as well as in the Lion Handbook. At times, however, this criterion leads to the desire to paint a total picture of all of Christianity in its many manifestations and circumstances. This seems to have been Latourette's ideal—an ideal that is embodied in his repeated references, in his *History of the Expansion*, to a hypothetical visitor from outer space, and what that visitor would see throughout the world at a given time. Apparently, Latourette's ideal vision of the history of Christianity in a global context would be that of such a visitor, being able to see the entire world at once, without preconceived notions as to the importance of various movements, or previous commitments, to any one branch of Christianity.

The first of these criteria without the other would lead to a purely utilitarian approach to the history of Christianity. The second would lead to a purely intellectual one, in which the goal is to achieve universal understanding.<sup>13</sup> It would seem to me that, as theological educators and church historians, we cannot but keep these two in tension, without attempting to diminish the tension by weakening either of them. In the long run, I believe, we shall find the two to be complementary, each requiring the other to come to its full significance.

### **The Process of Globalization: A Personal Testimony**

How does one globalize the study and the teaching of church history? I have no great theories on the matter. All I can do is reflect on my own pilgrimage, and how I have attained whatever global perspective I now have.

As I write these lines, it is thirty-seven years since those long evenings spent translating Latourette's history. At that time, church history was not one of my favorite subjects. My professor was a very erudite man, with a traditional style of erudition that could cite names, dates, and places, but with practically no attempt to communicate to us that these data had any significance beyond the need to learn them if we were to be cultured church leaders. His erudition I admired but felt no inclination to emulate. On the other hand, my professor of the history of Christian thought, two years later, was not as learned as my previous teacher. Actually, this was not even his field, but as so often happens in Third World seminaries as the result of the "asymmetry," he found himself teaching it. He did give me a sense that, if I were to understand Christian theology, I should do so historically.

I therefore went to Yale to study "historical theology," not because I had any interest in "church history," but because I saw it as a necessary preparation for the task of systematic theology—which, by the way, I still do. It was at Yale, mostly through contacts with Bainton and Latourette, that I began to realize that church history could be not only interesting, but even relevant. Yet, I still saw myself primarily as a historian of theology, with perhaps a side interest in the general field of church history.

Since that time, I have had occasion to write through the history of the church three times. The first that I began was *A History of Christian Thought*, to which I shall return momentarily. As I was writing that history, a request came from the commission in Buenos Aires that was in charge of producing basic textbooks for seminarians throughout Latin America, that I write a "history of missions." Somewhat unwillingly, I accepted the request, setting aside the history of Christian thought for a while.

I am glad that the book I wrote<sup>14</sup> has never been translated into any other language. Unfortunately, although it has long been out of print, it is still widely used in Spanish. It was a rather uninspired survey of the history of the expansion of Christianity, with little new to offer. Indeed, I did not even consider the possibility of approaching the subject with any other methodology than that which "Uncle Ken" had followed in his massive work, and therefore much of what I did reads like a lesser version of what he had done before, with the major difference that I did devote quite a bit of space to the encounter between Christianity and Islam in Medieval Spain (an encounter which has left its imprint on the Spanish language), to Catholic missions in Latin America at the time of the Conquest, and later to Protestant missions in the same continent.

In spite of the manner in which I approached that task, its accomplishment did make a significant impact on me. From that point on, I could not conceive of telling the history of the church without taking into account the church in Ethiopia, or Armenia, or China. Thus, as had earlier been the case with Latourette, I suppose I could say that it was the history of missions that began to “globalize” my approach to church history—beyond what I have already said about the almost inevitable globalizing thrust of the discipline itself.

My second “go” at the history of Christianity was *A History of Christian Thought*.<sup>15</sup> I had finished its first volume when I interrupted the project almost completely to write *Historia de las misiones*. The publication history of that book is in itself a monument to the “asymmetry” in theological education. It was completed in English in 1975. Since then, it has been reprinted some twenty times, and a revised edition came out in 1987. A Korean translation was published in 1988, and a Chinese translation is about to be published in Nanjing. Yet, as a further example of the global “asymmetry” in theological education, the complete book has never been published in its original Spanish (publication is now planned for 1992). In any case, this was the book that I had always wanted to write: a survey of the development of Christian theology from the present to our day—always seen as preparation for our own present-day theological reflection.

As I now look back at that book, there were three elements that gave it some global perspective. The first was an ecumenical commitment. Even before beginning my theological education, I had been very much involved in the ecumenical movement, mostly through the World Student Christian Federation. When I came to write my history of Christian thought, I was a member of the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches which was sponsoring a dialogue between the Chalcedonian and the non-Chalcedonian churches. Therefore, it was impossible for me to ignore theological developments, not only in the Eastern Orthodox churches, but also in those that have been traditionally dubbed “Nestorian” or “Monophysite.”

A second “globalizing” influence was the work I had done and the perspectives I had gained in writing *Historia de las misiones*. The controversy over Chinese rites, for instance, is something that I would never have found in any other history of Christian thought—perhaps in a Roman Catholic church history, for the controversy eventually reached Rome. But it was something that I now felt compelled to include, for I saw no reason to consider it any less part of the history of Christian thought than the Arian and the Jansenist controversies.

Finally, a third “globalizing” influence was my own Latin American background and setting. Why is it, I asked myself, that the theology of Francisco de Vitoria, for instance, is usually ignored in histories of Christian thought? And even more, combining this with the ecumenical factor, why is it that most books on the history of theology or on church history—including most Roman Catholic books—give the impression that the only significant events of the sixteenth century were the Protestant and Catholic Reformations, some even totally ignoring the conquest of the Western Hemisphere, the debates surrounding it, and the very active theological activity that took place in Spain quite apart from any attempts to refute Protestantism?

(My third “go” at the history of Christianity was a series of ten small paperbacks, originally published in Spanish, then translated into Portuguese, and finally published in a two-volume English translation-adaptation as *The Story of Christianity*.<sup>16</sup> There, I tried to implement most of what I suggest here, while at the same time trying to provide a book that could serve as a basic text for courses in church history. The degree to which I have succeeded is for others to decide.)

### **Socio-Political Globalization**

Perhaps the first inkling I had that I would still have to have another “go” at the entire history of the church was a letter I received from a dear friend, since deceased. Waldo Galland, an Uruguayan Waldensian who was General Secretary of the World Student Christian Federation, wrote congratulating me on the publication of this book—actually, of its first volume—and saying that he wished I had paid more attention to “the political dimensions” of theology.

I thought I had done that. Indeed, I had spoken of the impact of Constantine, and I had even quoted all the standard gossip on matters such as the political machinations behind the Christological controversies. But then, as the years passed, I came to see something of what Waldo meant. He did not mean that I should have paid more attention to the political motivations behind an emperor’s decision. What he meant was that I should have “globalized” my approach and my analysis so as to include the concerns and understandings of a wider spectrum of human society. Politics is the means whereby a society allocates its resources among its members. Therefore, even in the most undemocratic regimes, politics involves not only the powerful decision-makers, but also those who are most affected by their decisions—

namely, the poor. What Waldo's comments meant was that I had written a history which did not sufficiently take into account the lives and concerns of the vast majority of Christians and how they relate to the development of Christian theology.

In recent times, I have given much thought to this matter, and I have come to the conclusion that I am not alone in this shortcoming. Indeed, I stand in a tradition that goes as far back as Eusebius of Caesarea. In a lecture at Columbia Theological Seminary, Jaroslav Pelikan declared that Eusebius was a church historian who did not believe in history. What Pelikan meant was that Eusebius's Neoplatonic presuppositions made it difficult for him to grant any permanent significance to historical events. I would now add, with a tinge of hyperbole in order to make my point, that Eusebius was a church historian who did not tell the story of the church. What Eusebius told was mostly the history of leadership in the church, particularly as that leadership exhibited values that were compatible with Roman values. He did not tell the story of the church as the *people* of God, many of whom were attracted to Christianity precisely because it promised an alternative social order to that in which they had to live. And he told the story in such a way as to make it appear that the conflict between the church and the Empire was mostly due to a misunderstanding, ignoring the intrinsically subversive elements in the Christian message and in Christian hope as it was lived by the masses in the church. It is also for these reasons, and not only because of his Origenism, that Eusebius scoffs at the supposedly too materialistic eschatological expectations of Revelation, Papias, and Irenaeus.

It was this approach to church history, and particularly to the history of Christian thought, that Waldo Galland criticized in his letter to me. In my account of the history of the church, which was very similar to the account that I had received from my own teachers, I forgot that "the Christian movement was revolutionary, not because it had the men and resources to mount a war against the laws of the Roman Empire, but because it created a social group that promoted its own laws and its own patterns of behavior."<sup>17</sup> Therefore, what I later said about most modern Western historians of the church also applied to my own work:

While most modern historians have found it necessary to correct Eusebius' account of early Christianity and the period of persecutions on one point or another, few have cast doubt on his basic interpretation of the persecutions as an unfortunate misunderstanding. This is not surprising, since most historians, while censuring Eusebius for his uncritical attitude vis-à-vis Constantine's government, have avoided interpreting the Christian faith in such a way that it would appear too critical of their own society.<sup>18</sup>

In short, globalization must also include socio-economic globalization. And this must take at least two directions: First of all, it must do everything possible to recover and tell the story of the Christian masses, and how their faith related to such struggles and hopes. This means that those whose opinions and experiences have been suppressed—notably women and the poor—must be given a chance to speak. Secondly, it must recover the often forgotten teaching of the church—of its rank and file as well as of its leaders—regarding such struggles and hopes.<sup>19</sup>

### **Profile of a Syllabus**

From all the foregoing, it would seem to follow that a globalizing syllabus for an introductory course on church history would have some of the following characteristics:

First of all, it would define “church history” in its wider sense. This is not the place to enter into a detailed discussion on the relationship between disciplines such as “church history,” “historical theology,” “history of missions,” etc. The boundary lines between these various disciplines are blurred, and I believe that they should remain so. I know that there is a difference, for instance, between a course on “church history” and one on the “history of Christian thought”; yet I would not care to try to define that difference, and I would suspect that anyone who can define it has a rather truncated vision of both church history and the history of Christian thought. In any case, it would appear that, for the sake of globalization, in an introductory course these distinctions should be kept to a minimum. Such a course should introduce the student to the life and thought of the church throughout the centuries, and should show how these are indissolubly interconnected.

For similar reasons, such a course should also include much of what has traditionally been called the “history of missions,” although making it clear that the students themselves and their church are the result of such history—in other words, that the “history of missions” includes not only the history of Chinese and Ethiopian Christianity, but also the history of European and American Christianity.

Since the goal of such a course would be to show students that their own experience of Christianity stands within a global context, both geographically and chronologically, it should include American church history as part of the course itself. This is not to say that there should not be a separate course—or courses—on American church history. It is to say that students should be shown that American church

history is but a chapter of the entire history of the church, and that they should also be given an opportunity to reflect on how that chapter—which for them is the most important—relates to the entire story. They should be able to see, for instance, the relationship between Protestant attitudes towards Roman Catholics in the United States in the nineteenth century and what was taking place in Europe at the same time.

Part of the reason why I single out *American* (meaning U.S.) church history is that I do not presume to know enough about the situation in Canada to make any assumptions in that regard. But a much more important reason is the very asymmetry to which so much reference has already been made. When teaching church history in Puerto Rico, Costa Rica, or Bolivia, I have experienced the asymmetry working in an opposite direction. There was no need to show that the national history of the church—particularly the Protestant church—was but a part of the whole. A Bolivian Methodist could not very well think that her or his church was the total, or even the greater, part of the picture. The need was rather to show that there was a national history worth exploring and preserving. Here, on the other hand, the need is quite the opposite. Students from the dominant side of the asymmetry are seduced by the illusion that their church stands and has always stood on its own; that it has influenced and continues to influence others, but not vice versa; that it is the epitome of Christian history. Placing their first encounter with American church history within the context of the global history of the church, and as a minor part of that history, would do much to undo that illusion.

Pedagogically, the course should be built as a means of self-understanding—although not the self-understanding of the individual student, but rather the self-understanding of the entire church catholic, and *then* of the student's place within that church.

Concretely, this might mean beginning the course, not with Jesus and the apostles (or with the Jewish and Greco-Roman background), but with the present state of Christianity. Where is Christianity present now? How does it differ from place to place? How many different kinds of Christians do we know? How does our church differ from others? From such questions, one then moves to the basic question of the course: How did this come about? (A procedure which would then be repeated at the beginning of each major portion of the course.)

If the goal is to understand this global church, it follows that a number of elements that are often mentioned only in passing are of primary importance. To name one example, when it comes to the late fifteenth and the sixteenth centuries, it should be



made clear that there are at least three events or series of events that would prove crucial for understanding today's global church: the fall of Constantinople and the consequent gravitation of the center of Eastern Orthodoxy towards Moscow; the Roman Catholic expansion into the Western hemisphere, as well as into Africa and Asia; and the Protestant Reformation. In most general introductions to church history in the United States (not only Protestant, but even Catholic) it is taken for granted that only the last of these three events merits detailed consideration and discussion. Yet one could reasonably argue that the jury is still out as to which of the three will prove of greatest significance for the future course of Christianity. Likewise, when it comes to the nineteenth century, most church history courses dwell at length on the theological debates that took place in Germany, and only in passing do they mention the great missionary (and colonial) expansion of Protestantism. Yet one could reasonably argue that the history of the missionary and colonial movement is more important than the history of German theology in order to understand the global church today.

The "asymmetry" of which we have spoken so often is not only a matter for scholars to consider as they discuss the shape that globalization is to take. It is also a living reality in the church and in the world today, and one cannot understand them without understanding it. Therefore, the asymmetry itself, its origin and functioning, must be part of any globalizing syllabus on church history. How did it come about that the vast majority of Christians in today's world are poor? How did it come about that most of us are not among them? On each side of the asymmetry, how does that affect our understanding of Christianity, our life as a church, our relation with society, our relations with each other?

For this aspect of the course, most of our classes provide excellent laboratories. Indeed, in most schools of theology in the United States and Canada there are a number of students from poorer countries and churches. Their presence is usually understood primarily in terms of a contribution that our schools and churches make to those other areas of the world. At best, we see them as resources to help in the globalization of our own perspectives. Yet their very presence among us provides the opportunity for in-depth reflection on the nature of the asymmetry itself and its basis in church and world history. What economic, cultural, theological, and other forces have created the sort of relationship in which we are all engaged? Why are there churches in our part of the world that can engage in the sort of theological education that our seminaries provide, and others that cannot? In this seemingly

advantageous situation, what do we gain? What do we lose? Until our courses are so structured that the asymmetry provides genuine opportunities for learning in both directions, the task of globalization in theological education will still remain to be done.

ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup>This implies that globalization in Church History must include not only teaching, which is the subject of this paper, but also research. Although the limited scope of this paper does not allow me to enter fully into the subject of research, I should at least raise the caveat that all that is said here about the impact of the “asymmetry” on the teaching of church history is equally true about research. It does not suffice to make the entire history of the church throughout the world the hunting preserve of those who, because of the asymmetry, have the resources to do so.

<sup>2</sup>In this regard, see H.J. Recinos, *Jesus Weeps: Global Encounters on Our Doorstep* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1992).

<sup>3</sup>Obviously, alternative approaches to our question would provide additional light on the subject. It would be quite interesting and rewarding, for instance, to collect and compare course outlines, bibliographies, etc. It would also be helpful to discover the exact place of church history within the curricula of various schools. If I choose to approach the task by comparing textbooks, this is due to two reasons: first, this is the subject that I know best; second, it deals with materials that will be most readily recognized by other colleagues in the field.

<sup>4</sup>*Kenneth Scott Latourette, A History of Christianity* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1953), xvi-xvii.

<sup>5</sup>J.H.Y. Briggs, R.D. Lindner and D.F. Wright, eds. (Berkhamsted, England: Lion Publishing, 1977) *The Lion Handbook*.

<sup>6</sup>Roland H. Bainton, *Christendom: A Short History of Christianity and Its Impact on Western Civilization*, 2 vols. (New York: Harper & Row, 1964).

<sup>7</sup>*Idem, The Horizon History of Christianity* (New York: American Heritage Publishing Co., 1964).

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>9</sup>H. Chadwick, *The Early Church*; R.W. Southern, *Western Society and the Church in the Middle Ages*; O. Chadwick, *The Reformation*; G.R. Cragg, *The Church in the Age of Reason*; A.R. Vidler, *The Church in an Age of Revolution*; S. Neill, *Christian Missions* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1960-1970).

<sup>10</sup>D. Knowles and D. Obolensky, *The Middle Ages* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1969), v.

<sup>11</sup>Roger Aubert *et al.*, *The Church in a Secularized Society* (New York: Paulist, 1978).

<sup>12</sup>An extreme case of this sort of approach, although one dealing exclusively with the history of Christian theology, is J.L. Neve's *A History of Christian Thought* (2 vols., Philadelphia: Muhlenberg, 1946). This book devotes less than one page to Thomas Aquinas, and twenty times that much to the controversies among Lutherans leading to the Formula of Concord.

<sup>13</sup>Quite clearly, although Latourette wrote his *History* as if seeking such global, unbiased understanding, he saw himself as a committed Christian and a Baptist, and was very aware that this was a stance that he could not and would not abandon.

<sup>14</sup>Justo L. Gonzalez, *Historia de las misiones* (Buenos Aires: Methopress, 1970).

<sup>15</sup>Justo L. Gonzalez, *A History of Christian Thought*, 3 vols. (Nashville: Abingdon, 1970-75). Revised edition, 1987.

<sup>16</sup>Justo L. Gonzalez, *The Story of Christianity*, 2 vols. (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1984).

<sup>17</sup>R.L. Wilken, *The Christians as the Romans Saw Them* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984), p. 119.

<sup>18</sup>*Christian Thought Revisited: Three Types of Theology* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1989), p. 98.

<sup>19</sup>It was in the hope of making a contribution in this direction, specifically with regard to the poor and the causes of their poverty, that I wrote *Faith and Wealth: A History of Early Christian Ideas on the Origin, Significance, and Use of Money* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1990).



# **Exploring New Approaches in the Native Ministries Degree Programme at Vancouver School of Theology**

**Brian J. Fraser**

A fascinating and demanding exercise in globalization began for the Vancouver School of Theology (hereafter VST) when we accepted an invitation to participate in a native ministries consortium. The main purpose of the group, made up of the Anglican and United native ministries bodies in British Columbia; Charles Cook Theological School in Arizona; and VST, was to provide education to those working primarily in native communities. Part of that effort is the development of an M.Div. by extension, using VST's current competence curriculum as a base for design, but adapting it in ways appropriate to the cross-cultural context in which the education is being conducted.

As Associate Professor of Church History at VST, with a focus on Canada and the United States, it fell to me to coordinate the development of the North American component of the students' study of church history. This apparently simple task led to some interesting design possibilities for courses and projects and raised some fundamental questions about how church history was being taught in the residential programme at VST and other seminaries. My colleagues in the Native Ministries Consortium and at VST have been perceptive and stimulating critics of this work. Two research assistants, Tasha Carruthers and Keven Fletcher, deserve special thanks for their searchings and comments throughout the development stage.

This paper is an exploration of the process by which we designed the North American Church History component of our competence curriculum for use in the extension M.Div. offered by VST and the Native Ministries Consortium. The paper will deal first with a brief history of the Native Ministries Degree Programme (hereafter NMDP) and its place within the various globalization efforts in theological education in North America. Second, the basic design of the course of study, together with its place in VST's competence curriculum, will be described. Third, I will indicate the various streams of contemporary thought in history and theological education that

have informed the design. Fourth, I will articulate some of the questions we will monitor as the programme develops. Finally, I will comment on some of the questions that were raised and discussed at the Consultation on Globalization and the Classical Theological Disciplines in Ligonier in March 1992.

### **History and Nature of VST's Native Ministries Degree Programme**

Several factors and developments over the past twenty years contributed to the creation of the NMDP in 1987 through which VST agreed to design and offer a M.Div. degree by extension for people called by and working in primarily native communities. In the Spring 1991 issue of *Theological Education*, James N. Pankratz analyzed the development of the programme.<sup>1</sup> It is sufficient, then, to highlight the elements of the degree programme that play an important part in the design of the Canadian Church History component:

- VST's commitment from its founding in 1971 to take its cultural context and locale seriously;
- VST's development of a competence-based curriculum in the mid-1970s, focused on what churches want their clergy to know and to be able to do and organized in three divisions, Biblical, Historical/Theological, and Ministry;
- the establishment, in 1985, of the Native Ministries Consortium, composed of the Anglican Diocese of Caledonia, the Coastal Region Group of the B.C. Conference of the United Church of Canada, Charles Cook Theological School, and VST, to "develop, under native leadership, community-based training programmes for native ministry, both lay and ordained;"
- the request of native leaders from the Diocese of Caledonia that an M.Div. degree by extension be developed by the Consortium and VST;
- three unique features characterize the programme in Pankratz's view: it is an extension programme, equivalent to the regular VST M.Div. in substance and quality, but using methodologies adapted to meet native criteria of competence and excellence as well; in recognition of oral culture, evaluation will be done orally at a level commensurate with the standards expected of residential students at VST; and admissions requirements are consistent with ATS and VST standards for those without a completed undergraduate degree.

- the programme calls for a four-part covenantal relationship involving the native community, the sponsoring denomination, VST, and the student; with the community and sponsoring denomination providing opportunities for ministry, financial support for the students, supervisors of their ministry, and tutors who are approved by the Faculty Council at VST;
- a Joint Curriculum Committee, made up of representatives of the Consortium and VST, is responsible for ongoing curriculum design and implementation, with the focus thus far on the foundational competencies in Bible, History/Theology, and Ministry;
- adaptations to the academic programme have been made on the basis of two assumptions: in an extension programme, how people learn is more important than how teachers teach, and competence for ministry is the goal of the programme;
- three modes of instruction are used: home study seminars and tutorials in the students' regions, intensives at various centres, and summer courses on the VST campus;
- the first three students who enrolled in the NMDP in the fall of 1989 were from the Anglican Diocese of Caledonia; currently, students from the United Church Prince Rupert Presbytery, from the Episcopal Diocese of South Dakota, from the Anglican dioceses of Calgary and Brandon, and from the Presbyterian Presbytery of Superior have been admitted to the programme;
- discussions concerning cooperation and participation in the programme are taking place with native communities in Alaska, Hawaii, New Zealand, and Australia.

As Pankratz pointed out, the VST Faculty was considering a proposal to participate in the Pilot Immersion Project for the Globalization of Theological Education in North America at the same time that we were considering the initiation of the NMDP. We recognized that the same goals—increased awareness of the multicultural character of our society, increased awareness of the marginalized, and reflection on the implications of these realities for theological education and ministry—would be accomplished through the NMDP for native societies in Canada and beyond. We decided to concentrate our attention on Native Ministries.

Mark Heim's mapping of globalization in theological education provides a helpful framework within which to understand the approach being taken by VST and the



Native Ministries Consortium.<sup>2</sup> Heim develops a matrix for understanding the various approaches to globalization that consists of four theological priorities and five modes of analysis. The theological priorities are: *evangelism*, in which attention is focused primarily on the church's universal mission to evangelize the world; *ecumenism*, focused on cooperation among the various manifestations of the church throughout the world; *interfaith*, focused on dialogue and cooperation among Christianity and other religions; and *justice*, focused on solidarity with the poor and the oppressed and the struggle for justice.<sup>3</sup> The modes of analysis Heim describes are: *symbolic*, dealing primarily with a culture's symbols and images; *philosophical*, focused on a culture's intellectual systems and convictions; *functional*, focused on the functional structures for maintaining identity and meaning or legitimating authority; *economic*, focused on the economic priorities in the culture's organization; and *psychic*, focused on the culture's organization of power.<sup>4</sup> Within this matrix, ecumenism best describes the theological priorities of the work of the Native Ministries Consortium, with elements of interfaith and justice included, as the consortium deals with the impact of native spirituality on the Christianity of native communities and as the Church becomes involved in advocacy and action for the justice claims of First Nations in the various regions that are served. The primary focus of the degree programme, however, will be the intricate, interwoven pattern of contact, conflict, and cooperation among the sending cultures, the missionaries who carried a particular form of the Gospel, and the receiving cultures involved in the establishment and development of native congregations and judicatories in Christ's Church. To complete the characterization of our approach in terms of Heim's matrix, we will approach the issue of Canadian and American Church History within the NMDP from a functional perspective, with some attention to the ways in which the other modes of analysis help us understand the formation of identity.

### **Basic Course Design for Canadian Church History**

The best way to indicate the place of Canadian Church History within the VST residential competence curriculum is to describe the competence clusters that constitute the requirements of the Historical/Theological Division. There are four clusters: a foundational knowledge and skills cluster entitled "Tradition and the Traditions"; an advanced theology cluster; an advanced history cluster; and a "Faith and Culture" cluster. In the first cluster, exercises and exams, written or oral, provide evidence of competence in doing textual analysis, in understanding the text in context, in historiography, in interpreting a theological discourse, in formulating a theological position, and in having a knowledge of the basic developments in history, theology,

and liturgy over the 2000 years of the Church's life and work. The advanced theology cluster involves Christology, another theological area, and two significant theologians. The advanced history cluster includes the student's own tradition, another tradition, and three of four periods in the Church's history—early, medieval, reformation, or modern. These advanced clusters are evaluated through papers and/or projects designed in consultation with the faculty. The "Faith and Culture" cluster consists of proving competence in the philosophy of religion, by examination of one's ability to summarize and critique an article dealing with some dimension of the subject, and in national context, usually dealt with in conjunction with one of the other advanced clusters in the Historical/Theological Division or in the ethics project in the Ministry Division. An advanced competence in liturgy completes the Historical/Theological requirements in the residential M.Div. programme. Advanced competency in liturgy is demonstrated by essays focusing on a specific topic in liturgical history or theology, sometimes in conjunction with another competency.

The competencies outlined remain the same for the NMDP, though the means of evaluation will be adapted to the cultural background of the students. For those lacking advanced writing skills, oral evaluations will be designed.

At this stage in the development of the NMDP, a different course is being used in the extension degree programme than in the residential degree programme. The extension programme is using an older double course that surveyed the development of the history, theology, and liturgy of the Church from the third century to the present, with lectures from the various members of the Historical/Theological Division (five of us in all) on those areas we knew best. We have revised that approach in the residential programme, breaking the former double course down into three single courses: one dealing with various issues arising within the Tradition and the Traditions in Western Christendom, one with Denominational Traditions in their North American Context, and one with the history of Liturgy. The work we are doing on Canadian Church History in conjunction with the NMDP may well lead to a revision of how we approach the broader Tradition and the Traditions in that extension programme. The reasons for that will become apparent as we describe the design we are developing.

At present, the Canadian and American component of the NMDP we are working on will enable the students to prove competence in four advanced areas of the Historical/Theological programme: National Context, Own Tradition, Modern Period, and Liturgy. All of these are related to North American Church History for

the students currently in the NMDP, i.e., an understanding of and ability to analyze the way in which the life and worship of the student's ecclesial community has taken shape in time and space in specific geographical settings in Canada and the United States.

In our design, we have decided to do nothing less than turn the traditional approach to teaching church history on its head. Most seminary courses in church history begin with a survey of 2000 years of thought and life in Western Christendom, including the expansion and diversification in other parts of the globe over the past 200 years. Following this survey, students are invited or instructed to choose a variety of electives that examine some dimension of this history in greater detail. We intend to begin with the history of the local congregation in which the student is serving and move out from there in tracing the influences that shaped its life and witness.

The key question in the design is, "How was your Christian identity formed?" Who were the key individuals in the native community and the Euro-American community in this process? What were the key institutions, again in both the native and Euro-American communities? What were the key rituals and events that conveyed Christian meaning in the community? What kind of continuity and change characterized the story of the ecclesiastical community that nurtured you in the Christian faith? It follows, then, that the exact shape of the course for any given student or group of students will not emerge until the oral history has been gathered and examined. VST faculty and regional tutors will be involved in an ongoing process of researching local histories and designing courses that are specific to the factors shaping the Christian identities discovered in those particular contexts.

Questions that seek to elicit this kind of information will be devised in language appropriate to the particular culture in which the student is working. The questions might well be asked in the normal routine of pastoral visiting and conversation, or more formal story-telling sessions might be arranged.

Working closely with the tutors from that region, students will then begin to put the information they have gathered into its broader context. They will consider the native culture in which the congregation finds itself. They will gather information concerning the missionaries who carried particular interpretations of Christianity to the region. They will explore the sending cultures of those missionaries. And, finally, they will consider the broader ecclesial tradition and traditions that shaped those carrying missionaries and their sending cultures. The basic approach might best be diagrammed as a series of concentric circles, with the student working out

from his/her immediate context to broader and broader understandings of the influences that have shaped the identity of the Christian community in that particular place and of the systems of meaning that have been embodied in that congregation.

The design has required, and will probably continue to require, that either the tutors, or research assistants working with the supervising professor, survey some of the missionary literature of the sending culture throughout the period of the congregation's life. What we are seeking to derive from this literature are the perceptions of the sending cultures for whom it is being written and the carrying missionaries who are writing it. What are their perceptions of the whole enterprise, of the key individuals and their roles, of the key institutions and rituals, and of the reception of the faith among the receiving cultures? The highlights of this research that bear on the questions being asked of the members of the native congregation, i.e., how was Christian identity formed through key individuals, institutions, rituals, and events, will be extracted for the students. They will then be asked to analyze the differences in perspective on the process of the formation of Christian identity and meaning within the native and the Euro-American community.

At some future time in the development of the design for the whole degree, we want to explore the possibility of using this process as the starting place in the residential History/Theology programme, building on the connections between the sending cultures and the rest of the Christian Tradition. This would complete the process of turning the traditional approach to church history in the seminary curriculum on its head, since the logic of this approach would suggest that a survey course is the final, rather than the first, part of the programme. Beginning with the particular, we would move towards the general, rather than vice versa.

For example, among the Anglican students currently in the NMDP from the Diocese of Caledonia, the work of the Church of England and the Church Missionary Society in the 1800s was central to the establishment of their parishes. Following the roots of this missionary enterprise back into English Anglicanism through revivalism, revolution, and the Reformation, gives professor, tutor, and student an opportunity to learn of the intricate, interwoven process that shaped the life, witness, and worship of these local congregations on the west coast of British Columbia. Research assistants have already surveyed the missionary press in which frequent reports

from the missionaries and their wives were published. Extracts from these will be printed from the computer discs onto which the notes were typed and these transcripts will be given to the students.

There is a growing body of secondary literature that the professors and tutors can use to supplement these primary sources for the missionary encounters. Two collections of essays on Canadian Native History have been published recently, Robin Fisher and Kenneth Coates's *Out of the Background: Readings in Canadian Native History*, and J.R. Miller's *Sweet Promises: A Reader on Indian-White Relations in Canada*.<sup>5</sup> As well, a comprehensive survey of missionary endeavours among Canada's native peoples is available in John Webster Grant, *Moon of Wintertime: Missionaries and the Indians of Canada in Encounter since 1534*.<sup>6</sup> The rich secondary literature used in normal seminary courses will help to tie these developments to the broader ecclesial traditions.

It is important to recognize that the design just described has not yet been proven in action. Tutors will begin to work with students on the process in summer and fall 1992. There will be, no doubt, many adjustments necessary for the purpose to be accomplished effectively.

### **Streams of Contemporary Thought Informing the Design**

In this section of the paper, I will attempt to isolate several of the writers and writings that have shaped the design outlined above. It is an eclectic mix, but the common thread that runs through the whole tapestry of literature mentioned here is a concern with the formation of identity and meaning. At this initial stage in the programme's development, I can do little more than list the sources with some brief indication of the insights gained from them and the role they might play in the educational process.

#### *Contextual Theology*

The most influential work for me in this vein has been Robert J. Schreiter's *Constructing Local Theologies*.<sup>7</sup> Two dimensions of Schreiter's work seem particularly important at this stage. First, his concern with the dynamic interaction of gospel, church, and culture in the making of local theologies, seen in both the living spirit of a community and the network of traditions that surround it, is an important feature to keep in mind. His suggestions related to the concept of "mapping" as used in field and systems theory as a means of analyzing the formation and operation of local theologies promise to be most helpful in our work.<sup>8</sup> Second,

his stress on the importance of dialogue as a means of interaction among the various cultures of Christianity and the cultures the students enter is crucial to the NMDP.<sup>9</sup> There must be genuine mutual respect and listening in the process of education. David Lochhead's work in *The Dialogical Imperative* is also an important resource in understanding a dialogical approach to theological education.<sup>10</sup> David is a colleague at VST and one of the key participants in the development of the NMDP.

### ***Congregational Studies***

This is a growing and rich literature. James F. Hopewell, Joseph C. Hough, Barbara Wheeler, C. Ellis Nelson, Carl Dudley, Jackson W. Carroll, and James P. Wind are among the most stimulating thinkers in this field.<sup>11</sup> These scholars use a wide variety of tools in analyzing the identity of a congregation and the process of its formation. They are participants in the ongoing process of following through on an agenda set in the early 1960s by James Gustafson in his pioneer volume, *Treasure in Earthen Vessels: The Church as a Human Community*. There he described the Church as a community of language, interpretation, memory and understanding, and belief and action.<sup>12</sup> The current generation has added cultural anthropology and literary criticism to the list of partner disciplines to theology. The work done by the scholars mentioned above and others in the 1980s has taken these themes and applied them to the congregational communities that make up the complex and varied community of the Church. A particularly clear and concise statement of this approach to congregational studies is found in Martin Marty's article entitled, "The Congregation as Culture." Marty's definition of culture, taken from anthropologist and historian James L. Axtel, offers a concise working definition for what we are attempting in this component of the NMDP:

Culture is an idealized pattern of meanings, values, and norms differentially shared by the members of a society, which can be inferred from the non-instinctive behaviour of the group and from the symbolic products of their actions, including material artifacts, language, and social institutions.<sup>13</sup>

At Vancouver School of Theology, we are fortunate to have the Centre for Study of Church and Ministry, directed by Dr. William (Bud) Phillips. The Centre works with some twenty to thirty congregations a year in an eighteen-month vitalization programme that utilizes many of the insights drawn from these writers and provides fresh insights into the dynamics of congregational cultures and leadership.

### ***The New Cultural History***

I have in mind here the breadth of approaches and perspectives found in the collection of essays edited by Lynn Hunt, *The New Cultural History*.<sup>14</sup> Cultural anthropologists, such as Clifford Geertz, Mary Douglas, Marshall Sahlins, and James Clifford, and European social and cultural historians, such as E.P. Thompson, Keith Thomas, Fernand Braudel, Hayden White, and Dominick LaCapra, are key figures in the development of this approach to popular history. The approach takes seriously both the way in which people other than the social and political elites express meaning in their lives and explores the interactions of the popular and elite mentalities in a given cultural context.<sup>15</sup>

### ***Oral History***

In Canada, drawing on developments over the past thirty years in England and the United States, oral history is gaining in stature as an important means of retaining the memory of our cultures. This is particularly important for oral cultures such as those of the native peoples. Most of the systematic work in oral history in Canada has been done in labour, rural, or military history.<sup>16</sup> Classic manuals for doing oral history remain Paul Thompson's, *The Voice of the Past: Oral History*, and Jan Vansina's, *Oral Tradition as History*.<sup>17</sup> Another important resource for understanding the dynamics of orality and literacy in cultural encounters is the work of Walter J. Ong.<sup>18</sup>

### ***Missions History***

Several of the younger generation of scholars in Canadian Church History have been drawn to various aspects of missions history, as seen in the essays in the Festschrift for John Webster Grant, *Canadian Protestant and Catholic Mission, 1820s-1960s*.<sup>19</sup> They draw on the work of missions historians such as Gerald H. Anderson, William R. Hutchinson, and R. Pierce Beaver, to explore the interactions among the sending cultures, the carrying missionaries, and the receiving cultures.<sup>20</sup> The recent work of Carl F. Starkloff, dealing with both missions history and dialogue with native religious traditions, contains important insights and sets important agendas for our work.<sup>21</sup>

### ***Women's History***

In all three dimensions of missions history, women played an essential, though often unacknowledged, role. They were key promoters and supporters of the missionary enterprise within the sending cultures, they were missionaries in their own right, either as medical or teaching personnel or as spouses, and they were

influential figures in the receiving cultures.<sup>22</sup> Another important dimension, not yet adequately explored in Canadian missions history, is the interaction between the Euro-American women and native women, especially in matrilineal cultures.

### ***History of Professional Ministry***

The growing body of work on the history of the clergy by historians such as John T. McNeill, Brian Heeney, Donald M. Scott, Alan Haig, Brookes Holifield, and Ronald Osbourn suggests a rich area of research in leadership patterns in the church.<sup>23</sup> In the case of the church history course being designed for the NMDP, attention will have to be paid to the models and expectations of leadership provided by the sending culture, the practice of the carrying missionaries, and the appropriation of the receiving culture. Again, the presence at VST of the Centre for Study of Church and Ministry is advantageous, since one of its primary concerns is leadership within the church. Cross-cultural studies in this area will be of mutual benefit.

### ***Ethnographic History***

There is a growing body of literature, using a wide variety of methodologies, that chronicles and analyzes the history of native peoples in North America. In Canada, the work of Robin Fisher, J.R. Miller, and Bruce Trigger stands out.<sup>24</sup> Robin Fisher and Bruce Trigger both have written historiographical articles surveying the treatment of Canada's First Nations by historians.<sup>25</sup> This work provides an important overview of the area with which we are dealing in the course, but it also offers interpretations of the encounters between natives and Euro-Americans that must be brought into dialogue with native perceptions.

### ***Questions to Monitor***

As mentioned previously, this design remains untested in the field. Several questions remain unanswered concerning the practicality and effectiveness of this approach to Canadian and American Church History and to the broader context of Western Christendom throughout rise and decline.

- What formulation of questions will best elicit the kind of information we seek from the members of the local congregation in which the student is working?
- How may we best train the students and tutors in the skills of oral history in a way that honours both the native oral culture in which the student is working and the historical consciousness of the white culture whose degree the student is seeking? Is there a particular understanding of and approach to oral history that is most appropriate to this enterprise?



- Are there ways of collecting, collating, and reporting the stories gathered that will be helpful in keeping the memories of the local community alive, while at the same time, informing the broader community of the process of Christian formation that has gone on there?
- Can we find effective methods of setting up the conversation between the local story and the broader stories of the ecclesial communities that have helped, over the ages, shape the identity of the particular congregation? Can we, in other words, really move from the particular to the general in establishing a broad understanding of the interconnections among the historical and geographical Communion of Saints?
- Does such an approach lend itself too easily to providing a rationalization for the status quo, or can we combine a hermeneutic of suspicion with a hermeneutic of appreciation in assessing our own histories and their interaction?
- Is this approach affordable, or is it too time-intensive for the students, tutors, and professors involved?
- What questions have we overlooked completely?

### **Questions from the Globalization Consultation**

Of the many comments and questions that arose in our conversations at the consultation, I wish to recall and respond to two in particular: the basic perspective from which we design courses and formulate research projects, and the relation of the way we teach church history to our participation in the creation of the future. I have endeavoured to integrate other concerns raised in our discussions in the redrafting of the paper as a whole.

In the discussions stimulated by the three papers dealing with the discipline of church history, the question arose of the appropriate framework within which to organize the courses we offer in church history and the appropriate questions to pose in setting research papers and projects. Do we use some version of a global perspective based in the assumptions of Western Christendom, as outlined in Justo Gonzalez's

review of the standard textbooks, or do we use some version of a national perspective based either in countries of origin or in current countries of residence, or do we use some version of ecclesial culture represented by denominations imported to or developed in North America?

My current resolution of this quandary in favour of the last option, that of ecclesial culture, is determined primarily by the nature of the students enrolled in the school at which I teach. It is a multi-denominational seminary, sponsored by the United Church of Canada, the Anglican Church of Canada, and The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Its degrees are recognized by the United Methodist Church, the Presbyterian Church USA, and the United Church of Christ in the United States. It is located on the campus of and associated with the University of British Columbia, but the university has no control over its programmes. The vast majority of our students are preparing for some kind of professional or volunteer service in the various denominations that sponsor or recognize the degrees and programmes offered by VST. Further, denominations remain the dominant agency by which the Church in North America organizes its life and mission. It is in congregations that attach themselves to one or more of these denominations, or in organizations that owe their mandate and funding to these denominations, that most of our students will exercise their ministry. It would seem appropriate, then, that the primary vocational context from which our students come and to which they will go would play a significant role in the design of courses and research projects. Such a perspective does not imply an unquestioning acceptance of the current state of denominationalism in North America nor an abandonment of the ecumenical enterprise. To recognize the vocational context and the formative power of denominational ecclesial cultures is a starting point, not the final word. It is, however, one of the implications of taking the identity of the student seriously in the educational process.

Another question that came up in a variety of forms was the impact of the way we teach church history on the activity of shaping the future of the Church and its mission by those in leadership positions. In the context of the NMDP, we are seeking to contribute to the formation of local pastor-theologians in the Church in mission. They will be leaders in the articulation of a local theology by the communities they serve. Those communities, however, are part of a broader network of people and institutions that form regional, national, international, and ecumenical networks that constitute the Body of Christ in its present earthly form. With respect to the interconnectedness of the Church's agencies, David Daniels's reference to the way in which the work of Roger Bastide, Arnold Toynbee, and James Clifford points to an intercultural approach that examines the interpenetration of civilizations is

suggestive, especially for church historians trying to make sense of ecclesial life in North America where such interpenetration is the norm. The degree to which our students' formation as ministers is informed by the riches of the Christian community, in all of its complexity, has an important effect on the faithfulness of the local theologies developed by their communities. In our teaching of church history, we need to model a form of dialogical conversation with the Church's varied past and present that will help students shape a future more faithful to the fullness of God's ecumenical compassion.

### **Concluding Comments**

This paper has been a progress report on a programme in the early stages of design and implementation. Those who spoke encouragement and critique at the Consultation on Globalization and the Classical Theological Disciplines were very helpful in pressing my thinking further. They raised questions that have yet to be answered and offered suggestions that have yet to be assimilated into the process. The particular exercise in globalization that VST and the other members of the Native Ministries Consortium have undertaken will bear its fruits gradually and, we pray, well. The impact it has had and will continue to have on the faculty and students at VST, on the content and design of the curriculum, and on the perception of who the partners are who participate in theological education, is seen, albeit in part, in the ideas presented in this paper.

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> James N. Pankratz, "Globalization Begins at Home," *Theological Education*, XXVIII:2 (Spring 1991) 68-86.

<sup>2</sup>S. Mark Heim, "Mapping Globalization for Theological Education," *Theological Education*, XXVI (1990) Supplement 1:7-34.

<sup>3</sup>Heim, "Mapping," 12.

<sup>4</sup>Heim, "Mapping," 14.

<sup>5</sup>Robin Fisher and Kenneth Coates (eds.), *Out of the Background: Readings in Canadian Native History* (Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman, 1988), and J.R. Miller (ed.), *Sweet Promises: A Reader on Indian-White Relations in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991).

<sup>6</sup>John Webster Grant, *Moon of Wintertime: Missionaries and the Indians of Canada in Encounter since 1534* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984).

<sup>7</sup>Robert J. Schreiter, *Constructing Local Theologies* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1985).

<sup>8</sup>Schreiter, *Local*, 22-38. If we follow the general directions suggested by Schreiter in this chapter, the question that was raised in discussion at the consultation concerning how the students would be introduced to "alien Christians" will be answered. The key is to keep the importance of this issue in mind as the maps and interconnections being drawn by those involved in the educational process.

<sup>9</sup>In this connection, two of Schreiter's more recent articles contain more pointed discussions of the dialogical dimensions of theology and theological education in a cross-cultural context. See Robert J. Schreiter, "Faith and Cultures: Challenges to a World Church," *Theological Studies* 50 (1989):744-760, and "Teaching Theology from an Intercultural Perspective," *Theological Education* XXVI (Autumn 1989) 1:13-34. In the former article, Schreiter draws attention to Stephen Bevans' comprehensive classification of approaches to contextual theology. See Stephen Bevans, "Models of Contextual Theology," *Missiology* 13 (1985) 2:185-202.

<sup>10</sup>David Lochhead, *The Dialogical Imperative: A Christian Reflection on Interfaith Encounter* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1988).

<sup>11</sup>See James F. Hopewell, *Congregation: Stories and Structures* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), Joseph C. Hough and Barbara G. Wheeler (eds.), *Beyond Clericalism: The Congregation as a Focus for Theological Education* (Atlanta: Scholars, 1988), C. Ellis Nelson (ed.), *Congregations: Their Power to Form and Transform* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1988), Carl Dudley et al. (eds.), *Carriers of Faith: Lessons from Congregational Studies* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1991), Jackson Carroll et al. (eds.), *Handbook for Congregational Studies* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1986), and James P. Wind, *Places of Worship: Exploring Their History* (Nashville: American Association for State and Local History, 1990).

<sup>12</sup>James Gustafson, *Treasure in Earthen Vessels: The Church as a Human Community* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961).

<sup>13</sup>Martin E. Marty, "The Congregation as a Culture," *The Christian Ministry* 22 (1991) 1:15.

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<sup>14</sup>Lynn Hunt (ed.), *The New Cultural History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989).

<sup>15</sup>See, for example, Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), and *Local Knowledge: Further Essays in Interpretive Anthropology* (New York: Basic Books, 1983); Mary Douglas, *How Institutions Think* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1986); Marshall Sahlins, *Islands of History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985); James Clifford and George E. Marcus (eds.), *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986); E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (New York: Random House, 1966); Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (New York: Macmillan, 1975); Fernand Braudel, *On History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980); Hayden White, *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987); and Dominick LaCapra, *Rethinking Intellectual History: Texts, Contexts, Language* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983), and *Soundings in Critical Theory* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989).

<sup>16</sup>R.G. Hann, "Oral History," in T. Crowley (ed.), *Clio's Craft: A Primer of Historical Methods* (Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman, 1988).

<sup>17</sup>Paul Thompson, *The Voice of the Past: Oral History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), and Jan Vansina, *Oral Tradition as History* (Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1985).

<sup>18</sup>See, for example, Walter J. Ong, *The Presence of the Word: Some Prolegomena for Cultural and Religious History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967), *Interfaces of the Word: Studies in the Evolution of Consciousness and Culture* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977), *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (London: Methuen, 1982), and "Orality-Literacy Studies and the Unity of the Human Race," *Oral Tradition* 2 (1987) 1:371-382.

<sup>19</sup>John S. Moir and C. Thomas McIntire (eds.), *Canadian Protestant and Catholic Missions, 1820s-1960s* (Toronto: Peter Lang, 1988).

<sup>20</sup>See Gerald H. Anderson, "American Protestants in Pursuit of Mission: 1886-1986," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 12 (July 1988) 3:98-118, William R. Hutchinson, *Errand to the World: American Protestant Thought and Foreign Missions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), Torben Christenson and William R. Hutchinson (eds.), *Missionary Ideologies in the Imperialist Era, 1880-1920* (Aarhus, Denmark: Farlaget Aros, 1982), and R. Pierce Beaver (ed.), *American Missions in Bicentennial Perspective* (Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1977).

<sup>21</sup>See Carl F. Starkloff, "Religious Renewal in Native North America: The Contemporary Call to Mission," *Missiology* 13 (January 1985) 1:81-101, "New Tribal Religious Movements in North America: A Contemporary Theological Horizon," *Toronto Journal of Theology* 2 (1986) 2:157-171, and "Indigenous peoples and the experience of Christianity," *Pacifica* 2 (1989):323-332.

<sup>22</sup>A good example of the work beginning to appear on Canadian women in missions history is Ruth Compton Brouwer, *New Women for God: Canadian Presbyterian Women and India Missions, 1876-1914* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990).

<sup>23</sup>See John T. McNeill, *A History of the Cure of Souls* (New York: Harper and Row, 1951), Brian Heeney, *A Different Kind of Gentleman: Parish Clergy as Professional Men in Early and Mid-Victorian England* (Hamden: Archon Books, 1976), Donald M. Scott, *From Office to Profession: The New England Ministry* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1978), Alan Haig, *The Victorian Clergy* (London: Croom Helm, 1984), and Brookes Holifield, *A History of Pastoral Care in America:*

*From Salvation to Self-Realization* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1983). Ron Osbourn's work, in many ways the most stimulating and suggestive, is only available to a broad public in summary form in Joseph C. Hough, Jr. and John B. Cobb, Jr., *Christian Identity and Theological Education* (Chico: Scholars, 1985), 5-16.

<sup>24</sup>See Robin Fisher, *Contact and conflict: Indian-European relations in British Columbia* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1979), J.R. Miller, *Skyscrapers hide the heavens: a history of Indian-white relations in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989), and Bruce Trigger, *Natives and newcomers: Canada's "heroic age" reconsidered* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1986). With American students entering the Native Ministries Degree Programme, we will have to explore similar works done in the United States. A standard survey is Henry Warner Bowden, *American Indians and Christian Missions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981).

<sup>25</sup>Robin Fisher, "Historical Writing on Native People in Canada," in Carl Berger (ed.), *Contemporary Approachers to Canadian History* (Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman, 1987), 115-123, Bruce Trigger, "Ethnohistory: Problems and Prospects," in Crowley, *Clio's Craft*, 132-153, and "The Historians' Indian: Native Americans in Canadian Historical Writing from Charlevoix to the Present," *Canadian Historical Review* 67 (1986) 3:315-342.



# **Teaching the History of U.S. Christianity in a Global Perspective**

**David D. Daniels**

The globalization of theological education suggests a future for theological education in North America in which its European heritage is placed within a multi-racial context. The new context presents an opportunity to refocus the teaching of U.S. Christianity to be inclusive of the multi-racial expressions that comprise U.S. Christianity. In order to make such a paradigmatic shift in perspective from the standard narrative, a globalized narrative of U.S. Christianity needs to be developed.

A global perspective in the teaching of U.S. Christianity could entail at least three themes. The theme of “multi-culturalism and multi-racialism”, is an option that reconstructs the making of U.S. Christianity as various intersections of European, Native American, African, and Asian cultures or civilizations. A “religion in the world” thesis could present the differences in U.S. religious participation in the construction and engagement of the United States, the West, and the modern world. This theme could be organized around various topics such as capitalism, consumerism, racism, sexism, classism, militarism, electoral politics, denominationalism. The focus would be on the common world that U.S. Christianity shapes and is shaped by, taking context as paramount. “Interreligious interaction and dialogue” comprise a third theme that highlights religious pluralism. This theme notes the meeting of world religions in the United States, accenting their impact on U.S. Christianity, their participation in the redefining of issues for Christianity, and U.S. Christianity’s response to religious pluralism. Each of these themes is underdeveloped in the historiography that undergirds the teaching of U.S. Christianity. While there are some bibliographic sources that contribute to some of the themes, the standard narrative that dominates the writing of U.S. Christianity conceptually hinders the critical employment of the themes. This paper explores the dilemma facing the globalization of the discipline of U.S. Church History. In this paper, I offer two histories and a critique of the standard narrative, discuss the approaches of two revisionists as historiographic avenues to a global perspective, present a theoretical framework which I contend incorporates a global perspective better than the standard narrative, and conclude with a bibliographic essay.



### **Making a Globalized Narrative: Preliminary Comments**

Scholars working within Native American and African American religious studies who incorporate anthropological research and methods into their disciplines provide bibliographic sources. They often take seriously the worldviews and cultures of the peoples who received and interpreted the various interpretations of Christianity that were transplanted to the Americas from Europe. Some scholars of Euro-American religion, who also use anthropology, often highlight the transformation of the various European expressions of Christianity by European colonizers in North America after contact with a new social context and the emerging forms of non-European Christianity. The best way to teach the history of U.S. Christianity from a global perspective, with the studies available in current historiography, is to follow the lead of the historians who use anthropology. Comparative studies of the cultural history of Native American, Hispanic American, Euro-American, and African American engagements of transplanted European Christianity and its transformations from the colonial era to the present accent the multicultural and multiracial dimension that constitute my use of globalization for this paper.<sup>1</sup>

### **Making a Globalized Narrative: Histories of the Standard Narrative**

Constructing a globalized narrative to teach the history of U.S. Christianity demands more than a revision of the standard narrative represented by the major texts of Sidney Ahlstrom, Wintrop Hudson, Martin Marty, and Robert Handy. It requires radical conceptual changes. Before discussing the changes needed, the paper explores the history of the standard narrative through two historical sketches by Jerald Brauer and R. Laurence Moore. These sketches will be employed to delineate the different phases in the development of the standard narrative, providing a context for discussing the revising of, or possible supplanting of, the standard narrative.<sup>2</sup>

Jerald Brauer argues that a basic narrative interpreting the history of American Christianity has been sustained through revision since the 1840s. He notes four perspectives in the historiography from the 1840s to the 1960s. The first phase extends 80 years, 1840s-1920s, stressing the Puritan-Pietist tradition as the core of the narrative. Robert Baird, Brauer's designee as the first formal historian of American Christianity, uses the Puritan-Pietist tradition as the basis to differentiate between representative and non-representative Christian groups in the developing nation. For Baird, the Evangelical groups serve as the custodians of the culture, society, and faith, while the non-evangelical groups, including the Roman Catholics, would fol-

low the lead of the Episcopalians by having a significant impact later. In Baird's endeavor to develop indigenous categories to interpret the uniqueness of American Christianity, as opposed to European categories which mystify the American religious experiment, he teases out the theme of voluntarism, selecting voluntarism over doctrine, ethics, polity, or ministry. For Baird, voluntarism is a product of the separation of church and state along with being an impetus for Christian activism and revivalism that distinguished American Christianity from its European counterpart. Baird's narrative serves as an apologia for the Evangelical hegemony over American Christianity.<sup>3</sup>

The second phase, 1920s to 1930s, is dominated by William Warren Sweet. Sweet deepens the perspective of the first phase's accent upon the uniqueness of voluntarism and religious liberty by employing the frontier thesis to explain why a form of Protestantism, the "methodistic" type, which barely existed in Europe, came to dominate the American religious scene. For Sweet the "methodistic" type best suited the various projects designed to tame the frontier. The frontier was tamed, as R. Laurence Moore notes, by the "great" Protestant church's capacity to "discover cooperative ways to stamp out the sects and to find ways to prevent Catholic expansion." In the second phase, the Sweet narrative provides an apologia for the triumph of the methodistic type in the United States and for American religion after the collapse of the Evangelical consensus at the beginning of the twentieth century.<sup>4</sup>

The third phase, the 1950s, shifts from Baird's evangelicalism and Sweet's Methodist themes to Sidney Mead's incorporation of the organizational form, voluntarism, into the broader term, denomination. For Mead, the term denomination captures the American conception of church. Religious liberty and frontier now are seen as the context in which "denominations came into being." According to Mead, the cluster of ideas that fashioned the Church in the U.S. are primitivism, missionary outreach, revivalism, anti-intellectualism, voluntarism, and religious competition. Mead discusses the denomination as an institution interacting with social forces, living in, out of, and even creating "a matrix of ideas." Mead highlights the European antecedents of American Christianity, placing the religion within the context of Western Christianity, without minimizing the discontinuity. While Mead deepens the American self-understanding by stressing the role of ideas, he conceals religious diversity by excluding it from discussion. In the third phase the Mead narrative functions as an apologia for U.S. Christianity as a member of western Christianity, radically qualifying the uniqueness of U.S. Christianity.<sup>5</sup>

During the fourth phase, the narrative is revamped. Religious diversity and experimentation are applauded. The history of American Christianity is interpreted as “the making of pluralism.” Christianity now extends beyond Protestantism to embrace Catholicism and Orthodoxy. Anti-intellectualism in American Christianity is re-evaluated through the expansion of the term theology beyond systematic theology to incorporating the theology-shaping polity, liturgies, hymns, and sermons. The inclusion of the religious development of non-Protestants such as Catholics, non-Calvinists such as Lutherans, and non-Europeans such as African-American Christians, is a problem that challenged the narrative. The narrative includes them in the story of Christianity as an addendum, qualifying for a footnote, paragraph, or an occasional chapter. The links between European and American Christianity are made prominent, often defining American Christianity as an extension of the Reformation, the product of transplanted churches, and a partner in north trans-Atlantic movements. Sidney Ahlstrom, Winthrop Hudson, and Martin Marty are representative of this phase. In the fourth phase the Ahlstrom narrative serves as an apologia for religious pluralism.<sup>6</sup>

R. Laurence Moore offers an alternative to Brauer’s historiographic analysis. Moore’s interpretation of the narrative highlights the role that social context played in constructing the standard narrative. For Moore, the historic break of U.S. Christianity with the financial arrangement of state-sponsored religion and the political arrangement of state-enforced religion left U.S. Christianity, specifically Protestantism, in a tenuous and untested position, making the future of U.S. Christianity captive to the private realm. The proliferation of religious groups, Christian and non-Christian, signaled the decline of historic Protestantism as the preferred religion and initiated the disintegration of U.S. society because of the loss of a state church as the cohesive center. The narrative, then, served as a fiction to fulfill the pivotal function vacated by a state church in legitimating select forms of Christianity. The narrative was used to deem certain Christian movements normative and significant, delimit the boundaries of respectable expressions to arrest experimentation on the part of denominations and religious groups, and prod many slightly deviant groups to eradicate their deviant elements to conform to approved forms. More than merely guarding by legitimation U.S. Christianity from degeneration or the demise of Protestantism in America, nineteenth-century historians employed the narrative to protect the young nation’s moral ecology. As Moore notes: “Many churches existed in America, but only a few were significant.” And the narrative functioned as a par-

ticipant in the selection of the significant churches by chronicling their influence and using them as models to devalue Christian movements designated as peripheral.<sup>7</sup>

Moore identifies as contradictory the elastic use of the term Protestant within the standard narrative, a term that sustains the narrative. Protestant means different things in different contexts: doctrine, ritual, codes, attitudes, customs, habits, historical heritage. When Protestant culture is discussed, the multi-layered definition of Protestantism is flattened; Protestant serves as a referent to the “activities of a few denominational groups labeled ‘mainline.’” “To bolster numerical strength, mainline Protestantism becomes a political term, grouping the communions that identify with the dominant society. The narrative as guardian of mainline Protestantism periodically recruits new communions to swell its ranks. Puritan lineage or modern religion becomes the pedigree of a variety of denominations as they receive credit for forming the national character.”<sup>8</sup>

### **Making of a Globalized Narrative: A Social Critique of the Standard Narrative**

The scaffold that supported the social function of the narrative was made up of institutions that cooperated with emerging bourgeois culture in the nineteenth century and the Protestant establishment. This alliance provided the cultural and social base for the Protestant establishment. Institutions that ordered this base included the public school and Protestant college movements, the legal and penal systems, and the legislatures. The educational system with its hidden Protestant curriculum socialized the children of the poor, working-class racial minorities, and immigrants. The legal and penal system enforced moralities and social arrangements defined by Protestant discourse. The state and federal legislature enacted laws that defended Protestant practices and privileges.<sup>9</sup>

The narrative was also dependent upon the modern project. The modern project assumed a universal truth with core and periphery relations, giving privilege to the rationality and sensibility that undergirded its cosmology as normative. The narrative often identified its select traditions as core, defining other expressions of Christianity as sects or cults, as relics of the past or refuse of the present. The select traditions and their cosmology became the core into which the other Christian ex-

pressions were to be assimilated. Within the standard narrative the core was successively Puritan, Evangelical, Methodististic, denomination, and served as a public religion.<sup>10</sup>

The narrative's positing of the periphery as the "other" maintains boundaries for the core, aiding in re-enforcing the core's identity and reproducing the core in the society. As Craig Owens notes from Foucault: "The positing of the 'other' is a necessary movement in the consolidation" of a group's identity. The core classifies its history as a flight from superstition, coercion, intolerance, fanaticism, irrationality, dogmatism, ritualism, and incredulous beliefs and an embrace of rationality, tolerance, intellectual honesty, integrity, and persuasion. The narrative's explicit judgment of its past and implicit judgment of cosmologies similar to its past is based on the rationality and sensibility that sustains its present cosmology.<sup>11</sup>

While the modern project is expressed through different institutions in various ways, the narrative's dependence on it becomes problematic as the context changes and the alliances propelling the modern project shift. The narrative mystifies these changes in U.S. Christianity itself by manipulation of the key terms. A simple switch to accenting discontinuity over continuity would chronicle the demise of hegemonic movements such as Puritans in the eighteenth century, Evangelists in the early twentieth century, and Christians in the mid-twentieth century, and signal the end of the narrative's *raison d'être*.<sup>12</sup>

The narrative's internal collapse is exposed when its thesis is shifted from substantive categories, such as Puritan or Evangelical theology and culture, to procedural categories, such as methodistic type, denomination, or religious pluralism. Religion in general or mere religious organization substitutes for Christian faith. Procedural categories, such as denomination, are employed to incorporate Judaism, Buddhism, and Islam into the narrative to maintain the narrative's legitimizing role. The narrative, void of Christian content and the import the members of denominations give their group, ceases to be the history of specific Christianity or Protestantism or Puritanism. Rather, it is the U.S. religious experience in general which was the project of Brauer's fourth phase as represented by Alhstrom. Ultimately, the final blow is external, coming from the collapse of the modern project itself and its cosmology. This collapse undercuts the narrative since the narrative projects the modern project and its cosmology.<sup>13</sup>

Events that challenged and undermined the modern project and its cosmology were the anti-colonization campaigns of the third world that fought colonial powers militarily and morally rejecting Western superiority, the European right to dominate, and Western moral hegemony. The cultural campaigns of the Harlem Renaissance and the negritude movement denied Western cultural and intellectual superiority, claiming the right to participate in the definition of reality and developing alternative systems of value. The social and legal campaigns of the U.S. Civil Rights movement denounced the exclusion of African Americans from full participation in U.S. society. The combined impact of the moral campaigns of African Americans, native Americans, Hispanics, feminists, and peace activists exposed the contradictions between U.S. ideals and social practices in civil rights, human rights, race relations, gender relations, and foreign policy along with the contradictions within U.S. Christianity and its complicity in injustice. A consequence was the judging of the Americanization process as bankrupt.<sup>14</sup>

### **Making of a Globalized Narrative: The Transition**

Because the standard narrative was dependent upon the modern project, a revised narrative will need to relate critically to the modern project. A revised narrative will also need to employ presuppositions which allow for alternative reconstruction of the history of U.S. Christianity. As noted above, the last revision of the standard narrative adopted a thesis which supported the modern project, the making of religious pluralism. To revise this thesis and move toward a globalized interpretation, the making of religious pluralism needs to shift from procedural discourse which distinguishes pluralities, majorities, and minorities, to ecological discourse of post-modern musings. For example, the making of religious pluralism might be re-defined in terms of heterogeneity instead of homogeneity. Homogeneity reflects the quest for uniformity, standardization, rationalization, while heterogeneity reflects simultaneously the acceptance of diversity, multiplicity, and multivalence, and the recognition of commonality. Consequently, the making of religious pluralism is more than mere diversity or tolerance. Such pluralism fails to acknowledge commonality. An operative pluralism demands simply the adherence to certain attitudes: tolerance over intolerance, persuasion over coercion, commitments to agreed rules of order over the non-acceptance of any rules. The making of religious pluralism which is defined by heterogeneity presumes pluralism but also recognizes commonality. Thus the discussion is conceptually deepened.

R. Lawrence Moore's concept of religious outsiders suggests a means to revise the narrative, offering a framework to discuss heterogeneity and to link plurality and commonality. Moore argues that religious outsiders invent their Americanness by forming separate identities in contradistinction to the "vaguely defined concept of mainstream or dominant culture." The raw material they use to invent their identities, their Americanism, is material both peculiar to their history, experience, and culture and is connected to the general American religious experience. What Moore's concept observes, though, is how religious outsiders supply new material for other Americans to incorporate, both from their specific experience and their inventions. Consequently the religious outsiders shape the dominant culture. Historically, religious outsiders gained hegemony in U.S. society in various periods: Evangelicals in the nineteenth century, Liberals in the mid-twentieth century, Conservatives in the late twentieth century. The history of U.S. Christianity becomes the making of religious outsiders. Craig Owens's quote from Paul Ricoeur registers the new consciousness:

When we acknowledge the end of a sort of cultural monopoly, whether it's illusory or real, we are threatened with the destruction of our own discovery: Suddenly it becomes possible that there are just others, that we ourselves are an "other" among others.

The history of the standard narrative can be seen as the refusal to acknowledge Ricoeur's insight or as a struggle to suppress it. The alternative narrative presumes the recognition, reconstructing the history of the other among others within the project of outlining the commonalities in historical perspective. What is at stake is not simply the story, but the identity of U.S. Christians.<sup>15</sup>

A major difference between a revision of the standard narrative with Moore's framework and the historians of Brauer's fourth phase like Ahlstrom is that Ahlstrom and others describe the religious others basically in terms of individuals with some attention to theological distinctives, while revisions modeled after Moore's highlight the interaction between insiders and outsiders as groups. A globalized narrative requires the anthropological recognition of different civilizations that inform the religious outsiders as the standard narrative recognizes European civilization. Such recognition is only the initial step in the revision. Thus, calls for a globalized narrative are made during the collapse of the social and ideological structures that supported the Ahlstrom phase of the standard narrative and the emergence of new social and ideological structures which demand a new narrative.

### **Making a Globalized Narrative: Critiquing Two Revisionists**

Peter Williams and Catherine Albanese are two historians who propose serious alternatives to the standard narrative of U.S. Christianity. Both historians make substantive shifts away from the modern project and incorporate new material which the standard narrative only mentioned but never integrated into the story. While the proposals the authors offer do provide direction, a serious critique of the modern project, its constriction of the alternative narratives, is necessary before a new direction in historiography narrative is actually possible.<sup>16</sup>

Williams's use of the modernization thesis provides a framework which challenges the standard narrative and incorporates new material, specifically popular religion. His appropriation of the thesis, though, limits his project. The presuppositions of the modern project that define the modernization thesis need to be exposed in order to go beyond the anti-folk bias of the modern project; the modernization thesis precludes a serious encounter.<sup>17</sup>

The stages of religious development from primitive to premodern to modern that structure the modernization thesis assume an evolutionary scheme attached to the myth of progress, reason, and the universal. The stages theory inhibits Williams from developing any criteria to critique the comparable value of religion in the different periods. The stages theory makes it difficult not to deem religion as other than anachronistic because the other religions are premodern. To recognize popular religion with any integrity requires challenging this myth of progress. The prejudices of the modern project that produce the basis for defining progress need to be examined, and progress must be defined in a general, human, or historical form which theoretically allows the judgment that the modern or contemporary expression of religion might be inferior to earlier embodiments. Such a move is necessary in order for popular religion to be granted parity with modern religion. Williams also must critique the myth of reason that structures the stages. Advancement in religion must be defined by more than its degree of rationalization, especially a rationalization shaped by modernity. Other rationalities must be accepted in order to broaden the criteria to judge advancement. The rationalities of myth, narrative, and ritual must be granted parity with abstract reason for popular religions to be discussed with integrity. And finally the universal that is implicit in the stages must be challenged. The movement of all religion to a universal, for which modern religion is the closest historic proximation, unduly prejudices the discussion against popular religion and towards, in this instance, one form of rationalized religion.



Some other presuppositions or myths are needed to provide a framework where modern religion is given historical specificity and popular religion is given historical integrity.<sup>18</sup>

Williams' distinction between popular religion, folk religion, magic, the Little Tradition, and the Great Tradition might be maintained; the import is redefined when existential realities replace or at least parallel social realities as the structure of religion. It is precisely at the juncture between the two realities where Williams locates popular religion. However, his use of Robert Redfield's categories, Little Tradition and Great Tradition, minimizes the existential dimensions. However, it is to existential realities that popular religion must profoundly speak: death, disease, despair, dread, depression. Without the existential dimension, the chaos to which modern religion responds rings hollow. The existential and social realities also intersect at the point of religious reproduction. These reconsiderations will aid in granting parity between different expressions of Christianity. Yet the categories of Little Tradition and Great Tradition substantively advance the discussion of popular religion by offering a means to portray the development of popular religion within the modern project. His categories grant popular religion a historical life in the modern period by conceiving of it in more than anachronistic terms. One can study, then, the Little Tradition in relation to its own history as well as comparing it with the history of the Great Tradition and the various historical contexts. Consequently, these traditions, in reference to Christianity, can not only be used to reconstruct the Christian Tradition, but they can be set in dialogue within the tradition responding to common context, histories, and each other, illuminating developments in Christianity in new ways. Williams advances the discussion by presenting the history of U.S. Christianity and religion from the perspective of religious groups formerly deemed peripheral.<sup>19</sup>

Albanese employs the categories of "manyness" and "oneness" to narrate the history of U.S. Christianity. Her "manyness" category bestows parity on the various religions that specifically populate American society. Her use of the "Americanization thesis" provides structure to the discussion of "manyness" or American religious pluralism. "Manyness" is not simply religious proliferation or the coexistence of unrelated religious phenomena; both historically common and different religions meet in America and contend with a context that favors certain cultural and religious forms. And most, if not all, religions and religious expressions might contend with them. The religious forms that illustrate Albanese's Americanization thesis include rituals, holy days, vestments, and hermeneutics.

Americanization, though, as a product of culture, embraces the economic, political, and social as well as the religious. The economic culture of capitalism in which Americanization operates also impacts the manyness. It influences style, form, and content through the commodification of religion in general and individual religions in particular. How the specific religions contend with this context is critical for the discussion. The political and social culture in which Americanization operates also shapes the manyness; it influences the relations, arrangements, and content through which race, gender, and class interface with Americanization in general and individual religions in particular. How the specific religions contend with the symbols, ideologies, and practices fueled by issues of race, gender, and class are not isolated interactions, but are part of a general process. Americanization, though, cannot be defined as a unilateral process as in the modern project; it is a dialectical process. Americanization shapes and is shaped by the cultures and religious communities in which it operates. The historical reconstruction of this dialectical process would illuminate both the manyness and “oneness”.<sup>20</sup>

The “oneness” theme also needs further illumination. Albanese’s concept of public Protestantism provides a basis for commonality within American religious pluralism which the earlier discussion of heterogeneity advocated. This is crucial if the discussion is going to shift from discourse grounded in homogeneity and the limitations of the modern project. A substantive discussion of what the American religious experiment created, beyond the procedural category of plurality, leads us to characterize commonality. Albanese’s public Protestantism, does supply content. She offers the projection of the standard narrative as the content and renames it public Protestantism, content that is tied to the modern project and void of impact from the peripheral communities.

Instead of the old core of U.S. Christianity being the substance, Albanese makes the old core a hegemonic form. Public Protestantism and Americanization almost become synonymous. To advance a narrative open to an interactive interpretation of U.S. Christianity and religion, public Protestantism as a phenomenon must become historically specific and discussed in a multi-dimensional manner. Public Protestantism is not simply an extension of European religion. Public Protestantism is a product of religious plurality as well as a producer of it. Different prisms must be employed to view how public Protestantism shapes and is shaped by these historical realities.<sup>21</sup>

For the invention of a globalized narrative to be grounded in heterogeneity and to make the paradigmatic shift, it must build conceptually on the scholarship of Williams, Albanese, and Moore by deepening their critiques and radicalizing their pro-

posals. In reference to U.S. Christianity, a globalized narrative will articulate voices and accept as subjects civilizations and people previously dismissed, who participated, directly and indirectly, in the creation of U.S. Christianity.

### **Making a Globalized Narrative: A Theoretical Discussion**

Theoretically, Roger Bastide's sociological concept of the interpenetration of civilizations provides a way to utilize Moore's framework and revamp the standard narrative. Bastide contends that religion in the Americas is the product of three civilizations: Native American, European, and African. According to Bastide, these civilizations encountered each other in the Americas and the interaction produced a continuum of religious expression. Like Moore, the accent is on religious interaction. With this approach, U.S. Christianity is no longer a mere extension of the European Reformations. U.S. Christianity is better reconstructed within an intercivilizational approach which highlights the impact of non-Western cosmologies on the development of American Christianity and, the debt U.S. Christianity owes to non-Western religions.<sup>22</sup>

Arnold Toynbee's approach in his *The Study of History* could also be helpful. His rejection of an evolutionary model to describe the history of Western civilization, for a model resembling Bastide's approach, reoriented the history of the West from being the assimilation of previous civilizations to being a member of the community of civilizations. His comparative framework highlighted the impact of other civilizations on the making of the West and the contemporary and historical existence of other civilizations in competition with Western civilization. It is crucial to study the religious dimension of the competing civilizations in the reconstruction of U.S. Christianity.

Central to the project of producing an alternative narrative and the above discussions is the concept of culture. In congruence with the approaches of Moore, Bastide, and Toynbee is the work of James Clifford. Clifford argues that identities in the twentieth century no longer presuppose continuous cultures or traditions. This recognition shifts the discussion away from the isolation of "Africanisms," "Europeanisms," and "Amerindianisms." Accepting the point that the history of cultures in the United States includes confrontation with the forces of "progress," modernization, and nation-making--which have been both destructive and creative--Clifford accepts the challenge of developing a conception of culture which takes seriously the apparent disintegration of various cultures by the acids of modernity along with the integrity of the culture exhibited in its inventiveness. "Many tradi-

tions, practices, cosmologies, and values,” according to Clifford, have been lost, and “some literally murdered; but much has simultaneously been invented and revived in complex, oppositional contexts.” Clifford notes: “something more ambiguous and historically complex has occurred, requiring that we perceive both the end of certain orders of diversity and the creation or translation of others.”<sup>23</sup>

At its extreme, Clifford’s project strives to interpret a post-colonial and post-modern culture, broadly defined, which appears to have no essential or distinctive features of “language, religion, land, economics, nor any other key institution or custom.” By definition, culture is always acculturating. For Clifford, though, the key question is: “How much historical mix-and-match would be permissible before a certain organic unity were lost? Is the criterion a quantitative one? Or is there a reliable qualitative method for judging a culture’s identity?”<sup>24</sup>

Clifford relies partly on a curator, William Sturtevant, who distinguishes acculturation from assimilation by arguing that acculturation “involves the adoption of cultural traits, the borrowing of customs,” while assimilation “refers to the incorporation of one society into another.” Though this distinction recognizes the integrity of and establishes the existence of cultures often deemed subcultures, that is those that can be mainstreamed through cultural and economic development, it conflates the complexity of culture with its either-or proposal. W.E.B. DuBois’s concept of double-consciousness suggests a third option in which multiple paths of a culture may be used in strategies of cultural change, appropriation, resistance, subversion, masking, compromise, translation, invention, and revival.<sup>25</sup>

The theories of Moore, Bastide, Toynbee, and Clifford critique the presuppositions of Brauer’s fourth phase and provide a framework that undergirds the shift to a globalized narrative that is more than a revision of the standard narrative.

### **Making a Globalized Narrative: A Bibliographical Essay**

The early and middle colonial era, from the 1500s to the 1720s, could be viewed from the perspective of Neal Salisbury’s *Manitou and Providence: Indians, Europeans and the Making of New England, 1500-1643*<sup>26</sup> and James T. Moore’s *Indian and Jesuit: A Seventeenth-Century Encounter*.<sup>27</sup> Salisbury and Moore provide insight into how the Native American worldview and culture interpreted the Christianity they received and accented particular themes such as health and the role of

healers, specifically physical healing. The absence of a notion of original sin as well as the European Christian obsession with guilt are noted. The authors also offer descriptions of the Euro-American's appropriation of Christianity during the era. These books also show the impact of different forms of orality and rationality which influence the reception and interaction with a particular Christian expression and how peculiar developments in historic Christian thought like original sin, transubstantiation, and the Trinity are not easily communicated to other civilizations or cultures.

Moises Sandoval provides two studies that highlight the Hispanic American Catholicism during the colonial era. In *Fronteras: A History of the Latin American Church in the USA Since 1513*, Sandoval includes three substantial essays.<sup>28</sup> Two are by Ricardos Santos: "Missionary Beginnings in Spanish Florida, the Southwest and California" and "The Organization of the Church on the Frontier"; the other essay is Luciano Hendren's "Daily Life on the Frontier." Hendren deals with the Hispanic American interpretation of Christianity more than Santos who gives a social history of topic, focusing on institutional developments and Hispanic American relations to Native Americans. Hendren offers glimpses of the piety and cultural forms that embodied Hispanic American Christianity during the era ranging from morality plays, folk wisdom or theology, folk medicine, religious art, and the religious celebrations. Michael V. Gannon's *The Cross in the Sand: The Early Catholic Church in Florida, 1513-1870*,<sup>29</sup> and John Tracy Ellis's *Catholics in Colonial America*<sup>30</sup> discuss Hispanic American, English American, and French American Catholicism and Catholic missions to Native Americans.

The late colonial period, beginning with the Great Awakening of the 1730s, is a pivotal moment for the emergence of Euro-American folk Protestantism and African American Christianity. Rys Isaac's *The Transformation of Virginia, 1740-1790*,<sup>31</sup> describes the irruption of the culture and worldview of the Euro-American folk culture into Protestantism in Virginia through revivalism. Isaac demonstrates the impact of this irruption on religion, culture, and politics. The egalitarian commitments of these eighteenth evangelicals and their folk perspective cleared space for African American culture and worldview to irrupt into Christianity. Alfloyd Butler's *The Africanization of American Christianity*<sup>32</sup> discusses this development in South Carolina during the 1700s. While the social, more than the cultural, dimension is noted in Butler, Albert Raboteau and Mechal Sobel complete the picture limned by Butler. In *Slave Religion: The "Invisible Institution" in the Antebellum South*,<sup>33</sup> Raboteau introduces the reader to a trajectory of African American religion that begins with a discussion of African traditional religion and its shaping of the Afri-

can American reception and engagement of Christianity. He highlights the role of spirit possession, the African musical style, and liturgical dance. To accent the degree of reception played in the formation of African American Christianity, Raboteau discusses the theology Euro-Americans presented to African Americans as a contrast. Sobel's *Travelin' On: The Slave Journey To An Afro-Baptist Faith*<sup>34</sup> compares African American and Euro-American Baptist Christianity. By comparing the two forms, she demonstrates how common elements in both resemble each other and how they occasionally differ in function, focus, and prominence. Sobel's *The World They Made Together: Blacks and Whites in 18th Century Virginia*<sup>35</sup> reverses the trajectory by suggesting how forms of Euro-American Christianity during the 1700s incorporated African perspectives from African American Christianity. For instance, she traces the development of "happy death" among evangelicals during the late 1700s as a product of the interpenetration of civilizations that occurred within Euro-American Christianity because of the emergence of Christian domestic slaves.

In the early and middle 1800s, race defined the traditional topics of religious history: religious liberty, denominationalism, missions, the Christian America project, revivalism, voluntarism. Carol George's *Segregated Sabbath*,<sup>36</sup> Will Gravely's essay, "The Rise of African Churches in America, 1786-1820: Reexamining the Contexts," and James Melvin Washington's *Frustrated Fellowship: The Black Baptist Quest for Social Powers*,<sup>37</sup> along with Raboteau's *Slave Religion*, document the struggle of African Americans, slave and free, to exercise a modicum of religious liberty regarding the right to establish a congregation, to be ordained, to worship freely, and to practice Christianity. These works also present the role of the church in the struggle for racial justice within U.S. Christianity and society. This expression of denominationalism can be yoked to Euro-American developments in denominationalism discussed in Russell E. Richey's edited volume, *Denominationalism*.<sup>38</sup> The essays in Richey's volume for the most part describe denominationalism in terms of theology, polity, and personalities rather than as a struggle to overcome racism and injustice.

Robert T. Handy's *A Christian America: Protestant Hopes and Historical Realities*<sup>39</sup> can be juxtaposed to David Howard-Pitney's *Afro-American Jeremiad: Appeals for Justice in America*<sup>40</sup> and James Melvin Washington's essay "The Origins of Black Evangelicalism and the Ethical Function of Evangelical Cosmology." Here two visions of Christian America emerge during the same era and extend to the twentieth century. In the Euro-American vision, morality and mores are central to

realizing the vision, while in the African American vision racial justice is integral to realizing the vision, although morality and mores are a concern. When George Marsden's research on the evangelical Euro-American worldview during this period, *The Evangelical Mind and the New School Presbyterian Experience*,<sup>41</sup> is added to Donald Mathews's study of the Southern antebellum Protestant worldview of Euro-Americans and African Americans in *Religion in the Old South*,<sup>42</sup> a cultural context is provided for the different and often clashing visions of Christian America projected by these racially distinct Christian communities.

Louise L. Stevenson's *Scholarly Means To Evangelical Ends: The New Haven Scholars and the Transformation of Higher Learning in America, 1830-1890*<sup>43</sup> can be compared with Lawrence Levine's *Black Culture and Black Consciousness: Afro-American Folk Thought From Slavery To Freedom*<sup>44</sup> and Sterling Stuckey's *Slave Culture: Nationalist Theory and the Foundations of Black America*.<sup>45</sup> These works demonstrate the changes that occurred in the religious worldview among Euro-American and African American Protestants throughout the nineteenth century. Marsden charts the trajectory of Protestant thought in the United States with its theoretical origins in the Scottish Enlightenment to clash with perspectives informed by developments from the German Enlightenment and social changes in U.S. society. Robert F. Berkhofer, Jr.'s *Salvation and the Savage: An Analysis of Protestant Missions and American Indian Response, 1787-1862*<sup>46</sup> deals with the cultural contact between Euro-American missionaries and Native Americans.

The period from the Civil War to the emergence of the pentecostal movement and fundamentalism in the early twentieth century can be viewed from the perspective of development in southern Euro-American Evangelicalism, such as the withdrawal from public ministry, and in African American Protestantism, its challenging of the slave cosmology and entry into public ministry in the South. Charles Reagan Wilson's *Baptized in Blood: The Religion of the Lost Cause, 1865-1920*<sup>47</sup> presents Euro-American transformation of public ministry while Clarence Walker's *Rock in a Weary Land: The African Methodist Episcopal Church during the Civil War and Reconstruction*,<sup>48</sup> James Melvin Washington's *Frustrated Fellowship*, and Edward L. Wheeler's *Uplifting the Race: The Black Minister in the New South, 1865-1902*,<sup>49</sup> present the African American struggle to apply insights from African American abolitionist Evangelicalism to public ministry in the postbellum era. Robert D. Cross's *The Emergence of Liberal Catholicism in America*<sup>50</sup> and Thomas T. McAvoy's *The Americanist Heresy in Roman Catholicism*<sup>51</sup> discuss forms of Catholic accommodation to the Protestant-based culture of the United States.

The emergence of pentecostalism, fundamentalism, and liberalism during the early twentieth century illustrates the clash of cosmologies between different Christian movements and the interpenetration of civilizations that shaped these movements. Iain MacRobert's *The Black Roots and White Racism of Early Pentecostalism in the USA*<sup>52</sup> discusses how slave religion and post-slavery African American Protestantism intersected with the transplanted British Holiness movement and produced pentecostalism. D.R. McConnell's *A Different Gospel: A Historical and Biblical Analysis of the Modern Faith Movement*<sup>53</sup> presents the worldview that affirms in the modern era a belief in supernaturalism, such as divine healing and miracles. And Donald Dayton's *Theological Roots of Pentecostalism*<sup>54</sup> charts the trajectory of holiness theologies that clustered together in the late nineteenth century forming the theological framework of pentecostalism.

George Marsden's *Fundamentalism and American Culture: The Shaping of Twentieth Century Evangelicalism, 1870-1925*,<sup>55</sup> and Grant Wacker's *Augustus H. Strong and the Dilemma of Historical Consciousness*<sup>56</sup> argue that a shift of the transplanted Scottish-informed cosmology undergirding Evangelical and American thought is partly responsible for the cognitive crisis of faith that produced liberalism and fundamentalism. T.J. Jackson Lears's *Place of Grace: Antimodernism and the Transformation of American Culture, 1880-1920*<sup>57</sup> analyzes the social and economic sources of the shift in cosmology. William R. Hutchison's *The Modernist Impulse in American Protestantism*<sup>58</sup> describes the modernist and liberal response to the crisis in worldview precipitated by the intellectual development in the nineteenth century.

The 1920s to 1970s can be interpreted through Paul A. Carter's *The Decline and Revival of the Social Gospel: Social and Political Liberalism in American Protestant Churches, 1920-1940*,<sup>59</sup> Benjamin E. Mays and Joseph W. Nicholson's *The Negro's Church*, Marta Weigle's *Brothers of Light, Brothers of Blood: The Penitentes of the Southwest*,<sup>60</sup> George M. Marsden's *Reforming Fundamentalism: Fuller Seminary and the New Evangelicalism*,<sup>61</sup> Garry Wills's *Bare Ruined Choirs: Doubt, Prophecy, and Radical Religion*,<sup>62</sup> Robert Wuthnow's *The Struggle for America's Soul: Evangelicals, Liberals & Secularism*,<sup>63</sup> and C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence Maimiya's *The Black Church in the African American Experience*.<sup>64</sup> Each book illustrates discontinuities, continuities, and transformations within the cosmologies and culture that shape and are shaped by the different expressions of U.S. Christianity discussed by the authors. Carter charts the engagement of Christian institutions that embraced modernity as a positive phenomena. Mays and Nicholson's analysis of African American Christianity around the late 1920s and early 1930s recalls the



cosmology, culture, and politics that formed slave religion and African American abolitionist evangelicalism. Weigle describes the folk Catholicism of Mexican-Americans in New Mexico. Marsden tracks the transformation of fundamentalism to evangelicalism that Fuller Seminary participated in during the mid twentieth century, the discarding of dispensationalism and biblical inerrancy and the reappropriation of the Genevan reformation of the sixteenth century. Garry Wills interprets the transformation of Catholicism into a mainline U.S. religion with Vatican II as the pivotal event. Wuthnow describes the new cosmological context of secularism that Euro-American liberals and evangelicals try to comprehend and negotiated in the post-World War II era. And Lincoln and Maimiya present a study of African American Christian life during the late twentieth century, noting continuities and recent developments.

### **Making a Globalized Narrative: Concluding Comments**

A globalized narrative reconstructs the history of U.S. Christianity from the perspective of the people who lived it and the civilizations through which they expressed the Christian faith. Such a paradigmatic shift lodges the teaching of the history of U.S. Christianity within new cultural politics. A revised or new narrative will address the issues facing U.S. Christianity, reinterpret its past and present, and recognize the formerly marginalized groups and their transformation due to globalization of religion from the colonial era to the late twentieth century.

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup>See Neal Salisbury, Manitou and Providence: Indians, Europeans and the Making of New England, 1500-1643 (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1982); Albert Raboteau, Slave Religion: the "Invisible Institution" and the Antebellum South (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982).

<sup>2</sup>Jerald Brauer, "changing Perspectives on Religion in America" in Reinterpretation in American Church History, eds. R. Pierce Beaver, et al. (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1968), 1-28; R. Laurence Moore, Religious Outsiders and the Making of Americans (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986).

<sup>3</sup>Brauer, 2-4.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., 4-11.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., 11-16.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., 15-28.

<sup>7</sup>Moore, 5.

<sup>8</sup>Moore, viii, 15; see also Catherine L. Albanese, America: Religions and Religion (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1992).

<sup>9</sup>Richard Bushman, The Refinement of America: Persons, Houses and Cities (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1992); Cornel West, Prophesy West! An Afro-American Revolutionary Christianity (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1982).

<sup>10</sup>Robert Wuthnow, Meaning and Moral Order: Explorations in Cultural Analysis (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 186-214; Moore, 3-21.

<sup>11</sup>Craig Owens, "the Discourse of Others: Feminists and Postmodernism" in The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture, ed. Hal Foster (Port Townsend, WA: Bay Press, 1983), 58.

<sup>12</sup>Moore, viii.

<sup>13</sup>Wuthnow, 209.

<sup>14</sup>Jeffrey K. Hadden, The Gathering Storm in the Churches: The Widening Gap Between Clergy and Laymen (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1969); Cornel West, Prophesy Deliverance! (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1982).

<sup>15</sup>Wuthnow, 225-226.

<sup>16</sup>Peter W. Williams, Popular Religion in America: Symbolic Change and the Modernization Process in Historical Perspective (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1980, 1989); Catherine Albanese.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., 23-26, 59-68; Wuthnow, 187-189.

<sup>18</sup>Williams, 12-13; Bernard Yack, "Liberalism and its communitarian Critics: Does Liberal Practice 'Live Down' to Liberal Theory?" in Community in America: The Challenge of "Habits of the Heart", eds. Charles H. Reynolds and Ralph V. Norman (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 152.

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<sup>19</sup>Williams, 10-11, 63-68, 131-142.

<sup>20</sup>Albanese, 92-99.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., 429-430.

<sup>22</sup>Roger Bastide, *The African Religions of Brazil: Toward a Sociology of the Interpenetration of Civilizations* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978).

<sup>23</sup>James Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature and Art* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988), 16, 17.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., 323.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., 325.

<sup>26</sup>Neal Salisbury, *Manitou and Providence: Indians, Europeans and the Making of New England, 1500-1643* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982).

<sup>27</sup>James T. Moore, *Indian and Jesuit: A Seventeenth-Century Encounter* (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1982).

<sup>28</sup>Moises Sandoval, ed., *Fronteras: A History of the Latin American Church in the USA Since 1513* (San Antonio, TX: Mexican American Cultural Center, 1983).

<sup>29</sup>Michael V. Gannon, *The Cross in the Sand: The Early Catholic Church in Florida, 1513-1870* (Tallahassee: University Press of Florida, 1982).

<sup>30</sup>John Tracy Ellis, *Catholics in Colonial America* (n.p., 1957); reprinted from the *American Ecclesiastical Review*, vol. 126, January-May, 1957).

<sup>31</sup>Rys Isaac, *The Transformation of Virginia, 1740-1790* (Greenville: University of North Carolina Press, 1982).

<sup>32</sup>Alfloyd Butler, *The Africanization of American Christianity* (New York: Carlton, 1980).

<sup>33</sup>Albert Raboteau, *Slave Religion: The "Invisible Institution" in the Antebellum South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978).

<sup>34</sup>(Mechal Sobel, *Travelin' on: The Slave Journey To An Afro-Baptist Faith* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1979).

<sup>35</sup>(Idem, *The World They Made Together: Blacks and Whites in 18th Century Virginia* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989).

<sup>36</sup>(Carol George, *Segregated Sabbath* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973).

<sup>37</sup>James Melvin Washington, *Frustrated Fellowship: The Black Baptist Quest for Social Powers* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1986).

<sup>38</sup>Russell E. Richey, ed., *Denominationalism* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1977).

<sup>39</sup>Robert T. Handy, *A Christian America: Protestant Hopes and Historical Realities* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991).

<sup>40</sup>David Howard-Pitney, *Afro-American jeremiad: Appeals for Justice in America* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1991).

<sup>41</sup>George Marsden, *The Evangelical Mind and the New School Presbyterian Experience* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970).

<sup>42</sup>Donald Mathews, *Religion in the Old South* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977).

<sup>43</sup>Louise L. Stevenson, *Scholarly Means to Evangelical Ends: The New Haven Scholars and the Transformation of Higher Learning in America, 1830-1890* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986).

<sup>44</sup>Lawrence Levine, *Black Culture and Black Consciousness: Afro-American Folk Thought From Slavery to Freedom* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977).

<sup>45</sup>Sterling Stuckey, *Slave Culture: Nationalist Theory and the Foundations of Black America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988).

<sup>46</sup>Robert F. Berkhofer, Jr., *Salvation and the Savage: An Analysis of Protestant Missions and the American Indian Response, 1787-1862* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1977).

<sup>47</sup>Charles Reagan Wilson, *Baptized in Blood: The Religion of the Lost Cause, 1865-1920* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1980).

<sup>48</sup>Clarence Walker, *Rock in a Weary Land: The African Methodist Episcopal Church during the Civil War and Reconstruction* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1982).

<sup>49</sup>James Melvin Washington, *Frustrated Fellowship* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1986).

<sup>50</sup>Robert D. Cross, *The Emergence of Liberal Catholicism in America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1959).

<sup>51</sup>Thomas T. McAvoy, *The Americanist Heresy in Roman Catholicism* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1963).

<sup>52</sup>Iain MacRobert, *The Black Roots and White Racism of Early Pentecostalism in the USA* (Basingstoke, NH: Macmillan, 1988).

<sup>53</sup>D. R. McConnell, *A Different Gospel: A Historical and Biblical Analysis of the Modern Faith Movement* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1988).

<sup>54</sup>Donald Dayton, *Theological Roots of Pentecostalism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Francis Asbury, 1987).

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<sup>57</sup>T. J. Jackson Lears, *Place of Grace: Antimodernism and the Transformation of American Culture 1880-1920* (New York: Pantheon, 1982).

<sup>58</sup>William R. Hutchison, *The Modernist Impulse in American Protestantism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1982).

<sup>59</sup>Paul A. Carter, *The Decline and Revival of the Social Gospel: Social and Political Liberalism in American Protestant Churches, 1920-1940* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1954).

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<sup>61</sup>George M. Marsden, *Reforming Fundamentalism: Fuller Seminary and the New Evangelicalism*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1987).

<sup>62</sup>Garry Wills, *Bare Ruined Choirs: Doubt, Prophecy, and Radical Religion*, (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1972).

<sup>63</sup>Robert Wuthnow, *The Struggle for America's Soul: Evangelicals, Liberals & Secularism*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1989).

<sup>64</sup>C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence Mamiya, *The Black Church in the African American Experience*, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1990).

# **Christian Theology between the Global and the Local**

**Robert J. Schreiter**

## **Introduction**

Teaching theology from a global perspective is a theme that I had an opportunity to address a number of years ago for the ATS.<sup>1</sup> In that presentation, I tried to sketch out a number of the methodological, pedagogical, and hermeneutical issues at stake in dealing with a tradition that considered itself normative, but which at the same time needed to express itself in a manifold of cultural settings. Those considerations then formed the framework for a discussion of how Christology might be taught from a global (or more specifically, an intercultural) perspective.

What follows here presumes that presentation as background. The points made at that time will not be repeated here. In the interests of continuing to build a body of literature that addresses the globalization of theological education, I will try to take up some new points, and reflect on issues that have become clearer in the four years since that essay was written. Specifically, I want to dwell on five sets of issues: (1) the contexts of the globalization of theology; (2) themes to be highlighted in a global approach to theology; (3) the forms theology in its global contexts will take; (4) the sources of theology viewed from a globalized perspective; and (5) curricular suggestions.

## **The Contexts of Globalization**

When we speak of globalization, our attention often focuses on the interconnectedness of the world through communications and information technology, a shared and fragile physical environment under threat of destruction, and a solidarity of peoples experiencing oppression. What is sometimes less apparent is how changing events can reshape our understanding of globalization. In other words, the contexts in which we live and out of which we experience the world help give contour to how we will understand globalization. Such a reshaping is an ongoing process and deserves periodic reflection on our part in order to understand just what

we mean by globalization. The often-cited multivalency or even confusion surrounding the term “globalization” grows, in no small measure, from the different contexts in which the term is used.<sup>2</sup>nn For example, within ATS’s own history of dealing with this phenomenon, “globalization” was first called “internationalization,” reflecting the awareness that national boundaries were being crossed. “Globalization” carries with it more the sense of the new intimacy peoples around the planet share through technologies and interlocking economies. Don Browning’s fourfold classification of kinds of globalization and S. Mark Heim’s elaboration on them both point to a variety of understandings of globalization—a variety that ATS has been hesitant to reduce to a single meaning.<sup>3</sup>

There has been wisdom in that reluctance to come to a univocal definition of globalization: it consists in the fact that, given the perspective from which one operates, the globalizing picture takes on quite different forms. The Browning classification (globalization as missions and evangelism, ecumenical connectedness worldwide, interfaith encounter, and the universal struggle for justice) addresses globalization from the vantage of internal, theological goals. Heim’s elaboration of Browning’s proposal suggests additional dimensions. What I would like to suggest here is that attention to the contexts out of which we view globalization will be important as we fix our sights on programs of globalization in the teaching of theology.

What things are most likely to influence our understanding of globalization today? I would like to suggest one overarching concern which, in turn, helps to shape a number of important issues in discussions of globalization. This concern has to do with the important social forces that are operating on our world both centripetally and centrifugally at the same time.

On the one hand, communication and information technologies, capital flow, and consumer product distribution are creating a single world. National borders and even the concept of the nation-state are becoming less and less relevant. Products are assembled in one place from parts made in a variety of different places around the world. There is a major stock market open somewhere in the world at every hour of the day, resulting in a non-stop business day and endless flux and flow of capital. Communication technologies have shrunk our concepts of time and space. Coca-cola, denim jeans, and athletic shoes are now universal products and have become icons of globalization. And there is growing awareness of our ecological interdependence. We are rapidly growing into what Bernard R. Barber has called “McWorld,”<sup>4</sup> a homogenized, globally-shared reality that seems poised to become a single world culture.

On the other hand, there is what Barber calls a “Lebanonization” of the world, in which small cultural communities assert their autonomy from—and sometimes in spite of—larger social units. The ethnic struggles among peoples in eastern Europe and central Asia, the concern for multiculturalism in North America and Australia, and the efforts to hear previously silenced voices of women and minority groups who have been marginalized for a variety of different reasons can create a picture of a world, Shiva-like, dancing itself apart. In places where these cultural communities assert political independence, violence sometimes ensues. Difference and otherness are praised, but the question is also raised about the threshold of differences and forms of otherness people can tolerate while living in close quarters with one another.

This simultaneous homogenization and implosion of societies, this synchronous emphasis on the global and the local, characterize the forum in which globalization is being discussed today, just as classifications of First, Second, Third, and Fourth Worlds did in the 1970s and 1980s. Likewise, the integration of world economies into a single, multicentered form of capitalism raises questions yet to be answered about the discourse of liberation in the many poor countries of the world. While we may not be at the “end of history,” as Francis Fukuyama has averred,<sup>5</sup> we are certainly at a point of transition. A number of things need to be said about this new context for speaking about globalization.

First of all, global and local dimensions of culture are not symmetrical. The homogenizing global culture is sometimes understood as one local (largely North American-based) culture writ large. While the Coca-Cola, the videos, the T-shirts, and the athletic shoes seem to suggest a common culture, local cultures persist, side-by-side with this local “culture.” Indeed, a number of theorists, such as Roland Robertson and Arjun Appadurai, argue that the global culture is not a culture in a true sense. Rather, elements from one culture are universalized and are then received and integrated into local cultures in a variety of different ways. The culture that global culture seems to be is really, in Appadurai’s words, a series of “-scapes” ideational constructs that embody common cultural elements. He identifies five such “-scapes”: ethnoscapas, technoscapas, finanscapas, mediascapas and ideoscapas.<sup>6</sup> These give the illusion of being complete cultures, but in fact rely on connections with local cultures to maintain their illusion.

If this analysis is correct, what theologians mean by “thinking globally and acting locally” may bear some re-examination, particularly as such formulations relate to “local” theologies: global thinking and local acting may not fit together as neatly as



is sometimes suggested. This certainly suggests a new connection between the global and local, involving an examination of how the global is received in a local culture.

Secondly, the comprehensive and homogeneous impression given by global culture can lead us to think that it is centrally and coherently organized. This belief is fostered especially by communications technology and the interlocking nature of capitalist economies. In point of fact, however, the reality is probably closer to what Lash and Urry have called “disorganized capitalism.”<sup>7</sup> Rather than a hierarchical, centrally organized system reminiscent of the assembly-line capitalism of the 1950s, this capitalism is multicentered, organized around projects on an ad-hoc basis, and then disassembled and reorganized around the next project. The seemingly solid facade of such global corporations as IBM or Bechtel actually mask a host of much smaller arrangements. Capitalist economies practice the discourse of postmodernism—of fragmentation and fuzzy boundaries—far more than many realize.<sup>8</sup> If all of this is so, then it is incorrect to conceive of globalization as necessarily having a high level of coherence.

This raises questions about so-called world or global theologies, such as those of Smart and Konstantine, Krieger, Smith, Drummond, and Balasuriya.<sup>9</sup> Are our critiques of global culture incisive enough to deal with the profound ambiguities that hide behind global rhetoric—ambiguities sometimes voiced by those on the less privileged end of globalization? Does global culture provide a base that is uniform enough for such a uniform kind of theology?

Third, the persistence of the local is best understood by what the local provides and what the global does not. In his studies of minority cultures and ethnic enclaves, educational theorist James A. Banks has hypothesized that ethnic communities provide three things that are often lacking in majority or dominant cultures. They are: a sense of belonging or identity, a source of moral authority for guidance in life, and a framework of meaning to explain life’s events.<sup>10</sup> The larger society (or putative global culture) may hold out options for these three but generally cannot deliver a configuration of them that will be satisfying. To the extent that larger cultural units cannot do this, local cultures persist.

It is widely recognized that coming together as a global community is essential for the survival of life on the planet. Banks’s hypothesis suggests that we need to think more closely about the conditions that will make living in such a global community possible. Economies that exclude significant portions of the population from participation, deep ambivalence about any exercise of authority, and lack of adequate

frameworks of meaning will make people reluctant to forego a local theology for any offer of a global theology. In striking the balance between the global and the local, theologies will have to be able to take into consideration both dimensions of this polemic.

For some time, the discourse of liberation provided that link. Liberation theologies helped forge new visions and new forms of community. They linked local communities to a broader program of social and economic transformation. Given the apparent triumph of global capitalism over other forms of economic organization, it is questionable if the language of liberation will continue to be able to forge these links.

A theology that is a truly globalized theology will have to stand at this intersection of the global and the local. It will need to understand the context within which it is global—both the exciting aspects of a new unity among human communities made possible by channels of communication and information, and the need for a non-alienating, participative mode of being together at the local level. To fail at either the global or the local makes the achievement of globalization impossible. In order to have a truly global theology, then, the conversation regarding the contexts of globalization needs to continue, side by side, with the construction of the theological discourse.

There has been a rhetoric of universal theologies, the ecumene of the church, and of a church truly catholic for a long time. The material cultural base is now being put into place not only to have Christians everywhere, but also to have them in communion with one another. As I have tried to explore elsewhere, the prospect of this intensive communication is already beginning to create a new kind of theology.<sup>11</sup>

An important first step in the teaching of theology and in the construction of the curriculum, then, is to think about how the contexts in which we live and work will shape our understanding of globalization. Let me turn to a second set of issues that speaks more concretely of what those understandings will have to be.

### **Themes in a Global Theology**

If the constructing of a global theology has to stand at the intersection of the global and the local today, if the global is seen as interacting with the local in a variety of complex ways, how will this affect themes to be treated in theology today? I would like to organize some of those themes around Browning's four understandings of globalization.

***Missions and Evangelism***

There has been a good deal of speculation about the future directions of the missionary movement within Christianity as the third millennium draws near.<sup>12</sup> From one point of view, it appears that many of the new Christians will represent a conservative Protestant or a pentecostal perspective, if we extrapolate from the percentages of missionaries who hold these views and are now active in mission fields. Other accounts focus upon the re-evangelization of once-Christian societies, a movement drawing its momentum from a variety of Protestant and Roman Catholic sources.<sup>13</sup>

Concern about mission and evangelism is not simply a matter of convert-making in the nineteenth century sense of the term, though proselytism remains an important preoccupation. Effective evangelism embraces a variety of other themes that interact with concerns of globalization directly. One is a frequently voiced concern that the end of East-West hostilities and the preoccupation with the reconstruction of the economies and societies of the former Soviet bloc will lead the North to ignore the South. Missionaries in the South will need to keep the economic plight of their region before the eyes of the rest of the world. The dramatic end of situations of violence in many parts of the world make for a situation where the message of the Gospel is most clearly articulated in the biblical notion of reconciliation.<sup>14</sup> Indeed, bridge-building may become a predominant image for the missionary in a globalized world, much as the martyr or hero was for the nineteenth century.

Certain mainline churches may downplay the mission and evangelism dimension of globalization in order to break with a colonialist past. But even as they are abandoning missionaries, anthropologists and sociologists are rediscovering them and looking at their work as a key to understanding how we will all be able to live together in multiple, overlapping communities in the global village.<sup>15</sup> Social scientists are thus studying missionaries to discover how we might survive in a globalized world in the future.

From a more theological perspective, this dimension of globalization invited theologians to think once again about the message of the Gospel for a now globalized world. The collapse of many officially atheist regimes, and the ambivalence among some postmodernists to the fruits of modernity and secularization give theologians an opportunity to reconceive their understanding of God's work in the world at the end of the twentieth century. Some of that thinking should be reflected in the introductory course in theology.

***Ecumenism***

Much has been written about the nascent world-church and the potential consequences of the new theologies coming from some of the churches of Africa, Asia, and Latin America. A globalized perspective calls out for more and more of this experience to be incorporated into the mainstream of theological reflection and research in North America. The American Theological Library Association has announced the publication of its first cumulated print index in its International Christian Literature Documentation Project for April 1993. *Theologie im Kontext*, a similar documentation and abstract service of the Missionswissenschaftliches Institut in Aachen, is now in its thirteenth year. Likewise works by individual authors and anthologies of theology from Asia, Latin America, and Africa are now available in many languages.

The problems that dog theology in this new ecumene are not primarily ones of access. Information technologies are rapidly overcoming these challenges. The problems are of a different nature. They are especially about criteria used to judge the relative quality of theology—whether it all adheres to the critical standards of the European Enlightenment. It is unfortunately still not uncommon to hear European and North American theologians voicing the opinion that it is still an open question whether theology can really be done in Africa. As will be suggested below, the issue is not abandoning critical standards; it is realizing that theology takes on a variety of different forms.

In the teaching of an introductory course in theology, we often spend a great deal of our energies initiating students into critical reflection. That needs to continue. But we theologians need to introduce students to the variety of forms of theological reflection as well.

Embracing the ecumene involves more than acknowledging new contributions from other parts of the world. In striking the balance between the global and the local, attention will need to be given to distinctively North American forms of theology. An important work in this regard is Canadian Douglas John Hall's *Thinking the Faith: Christian Theology in a North American Context* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1991).

***Interfaith Dialogue***

It is the relation of Christianity to other religious traditions that seems to get the shortest shrift in theological schools in the United States and Canada today, if the ATS surveys of deans are to be believed. This is a matter both of instruction in other traditions and instruction in interfaith relations. Books that might do Christian the-

ology from such a perspective are still in rather short supply.<sup>16</sup> Comparative theologies are still in their infancy. Yet, an ability to see Christian theology as located within a map of other theologies is an essential part of globalization. Such a perspective is not only for the dialogue specialist; it has become part and parcel of the lives of many ordinary Christians whose work brings them into contact with countries with non-Christian majorities, and whose neighborhoods may bring them into direct contact with Muslims and Buddhists. Simple religious literacy will have to become a greater part of theological education in a globalized world—and this apart from a more refined Christian theology of religions. The great historian of religions Max Muller once said that those who know only their own religion know none. In a globalized world, this dictum has become even more true. Attitudes about other religious traditions need to begin to be explored already at the level of introductory courses in theology.

### ***The Struggle for Justice***

The 1980s were a time of considerable progress in introducing the understanding of justice into North American theological awareness. Likewise, the growth of feminist and now womanist theologies have helped open the purview of theology immensely. A healthy use of hermeneutics of suspicion, plus commitments to try to hear the voices of those once silenced, have done much to change the complexion and the voice of theology in a globalized context. Methodologies connected with liberation and feminist theologies have broadened the discussion from a too narrow focus on more deductive Enlightenment methods. And the concerns for beginning with social analysis offer additional new methodological inroads for theology.

Fortunately, there is now an abundance of literature available in this area. Noteworthy as an anthology ideally suited for teaching the introductory course is Susan Brooks Thistlethwaite and Mary Potter Engel *Lift Every Voice: Constructing Christian Theologies from the Underside* (New York: Harper and Row, 1990).

Despite the plethora of literature now available, one cannot presume that there is an understanding or commitment to justice on the part of those participating in an introductory course in theology. For many Christians in North America, the fact that the majority of Christians live in situations of oppression and injustice is not fathomed or is simply ignored.

Issues of justice and oppression can serve as the first entry point of many theological students into issues of globalization. The stark contrast to their own situation opens up issues of difference, culture, and power in an often dramatic fashion. Upon this foundation, other understandings of globalization can be built.

At the same time, it is important to keep pace with the directions that the struggles for justice are taking. This is to overcome any sense that these are static issues. As was already mentioned, the discourse of liberation is beginning to be examined in some places as the concrete circumstances change for many communities. Concerns with the underlying spiritualities that inform the struggles for liberation are also worth noting. And the ties of liberation theologies to forms of popular theology and belief must also be noted.

### **Forms of Theology**

It has already been noted that, in a globalized setting, the forms of critical theology that have dominated Western theology since Schleiermacher continue to be important for all Christian theology. At the same time, the fact that there have been and are other genres of theology needs to be recognized in a globalized world. The academic character of our theological institutions, denominational histories of battles with pietism and fundamentalism, and other factors have contributed to a denigration of these other forms in many places.

One resource to introduce students to the variety of forms that theology has taken historically can be found in Chapter 4 of *Constructing Local Theologies*. This chapter outlines four such approaches that have been part of the Christian tradition: (1) theology as commentary or variations on a sacred text; (2) theology as wisdom (*sapientia*); (3) theology as critical knowledge (*scientia*); and (4) theology as *praxis*. This can be useful in helping students identify the different kinds of theology they will encounter in their communities and map the relative appropriateness of different kinds of theology for different settings. This can be particularly useful in helping students learn how to do theological reflection.

This discussion of forms of theology should be paired with a series of readings to illustrate these forms. Patristic and medieval commentaries on books of the Bible, as well as the early medieval *florilegia*, provide material for number one above. Patristic writings, writings of the mystics, and some sermon material offer insight into number two. Contemporary works of spirituality may also be used. The opening section of Thomas Aquinas's *Summa Theologiae*, paired with the beginning of

Pannenberg's *Systematic Theology*, offer good material for number three. The aforementioned Thistlethwaite-Engel anthology is filled with excellent material for number four.

### **Dealing with Sources**

A good deal of time in introductory courses in theology is usually devoted to initiating students into the sources that come together to make theology. The particular configuration of that convergence ordinarily bears the stamp of the denominational tradition.

In what follows here, I would like to make a few comments about how the various elements are dealt with from a globalized perspective. In many instances, there are intuitions about what will need to be done, but still little literature to go on to help support these directions.

### ***Experience***

The experience of faith is a prime resource for the doing of theology. Although experience is valued differently in Christian traditions, the *fides quaerens intellectum*, faith seeking understanding, presumes experience.

For students coming out of North American cultures, particularly from a dominant culture, experience as an authoritative resource is largely taken for granted. What becomes important in opening these students to a wider perspective is learning how to value the experience of persons and cultures other than their own. This is especially important in learning how to value the experience of those living in the same territory as they do, yet experiencing the world in a fundamentally different way.

The section on experience in Edward Schillebeeckx's volume *Christ* (New York: Crossroad, 1980, pp. 27-64) can be especially useful here.<sup>17</sup>

### ***Revelation***

Revelation is, of course, a fundamental category for Christian theology. The language of revelation does not fit well into a secularized worldview, but makes eminent sense within the framework of the other great religious traditions. Here is an opportunity to utilize some interfaith possibilities, since revelation functions in Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, and the religions of India. Here brief encyclopedia articles, such as the ones in the *Encyclopedia of Religion*, can be used.

### ***Tradition***

The different forms of Christianity locate authoritative witness in different places. All agree on the authoritative significance of the Bible, although the exact nature of that authority will vary. What can be useful in this regard is to look at the various ways the Bible is being interpreted worldwide today. Anthologies are starting to appear that help to understand this.<sup>18</sup>

More problematic in some instances are the other forms of authority: the authority of the community (e.g., the Councils and the Reformation confessions), and the authority of persons (e.g., the Roman Catholic emphasis on the pope and the magisterium). Apart from standard texts on these subjects, it might be helpful to review the nature of authority and traditions in communities. Dominant culture North Americans tend to equate authority with Weberian rational authority, when traditional and charismatic may often play a greater role. Students need help in understanding how authority works, especially in small-scale communities. This was noted above in the discussion of ethnic enclaves in global culture.

Works that might be helpful in studying tradition and authority are *Constructing Local Theologies* (chapter 5), Richard Sennett's *Authority* (New York: Random House, 1981), and Edward Shils's *Tradition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983).

### **Curricular Suggestions**

Rather than provide a full syllabus here (for reasons that will be apparent shortly), I would like to make some curricular suggestions. These build upon the pedagogical points made in the essay on teaching theology from an intercultural perspective (see note 1).

In making the match between being global and being local, it is important to give students a grounding in their particular form of Christian confession. For that reason, the choice of texts should be specific to that confession's understanding of Scripture, tradition, and human experience. Beyond that, however, some common things apply.

I would begin with giving students a sense of what the world church is today and how that intersects with global culture. Theology is then presented as the reflection faithful Christians undertake at the intersection of the Gospel, church, and culture. I would spend a little time on each of these points: the Gospel, as it has been understood in various times and places; the church, as the bearer of the memory of Jesus;



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and culture, as the social location in which students now find themselves. The last point would involve an introduction to social analysis.

This would be followed by a survey of some of the forms that theology would take, a topic treated above. This would include readings in each of these forms and a discussion of how some forms are more appropriate to some settings than others.

Then I would turn to the sources of theology, examining them from the point of view of my own tradition (in this case, Roman Catholic), but also noting the alternative approaches, as well as new understandings emerging in the world today. Some of the discussion of sources would follow along the lines suggested above.

Throughout I would intersperse exercises to help students explore different theological forms and different modes of theological reflection.

The overriding purpose would be to help students understand the varieties of theologies in the world today, and the variety of ways in which issues are approached.

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Robert J. Schreiter, "Teaching Theology from an Intercultural Perspective," *Theological Education* XXVI (1989) 13-34.

<sup>2</sup>Cf., e.g., Max L. Stackhouse, "Many Pearls, Few Threads," *The Christian Century* 109 (February 5-12, 1992) 151.

<sup>3</sup>Don S. Browning, "Globalization and the Task of Theological Education in North America," *Theological Education* XXIII (Autumn, 1986) 43-59; S. Mark Heim, "Mapping Globalization for Theological Education," *Theological Education Supplement I* (1990) 7-34.

<sup>4</sup>Bernard R. Barber, "Jihad vs. McWorld," *The Atlantic Monthly* (March, 1992) 53-65.

<sup>5</sup>Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York: Free Press, 1992).

<sup>6</sup>Roland Robertson, "Mapping the Global Conditions: Globalization as the Central Concept," in Mike Featherstone (ed.), *Global Culture: Nationalism, Globalization and Modernity* (London: Sage Publications, 1990), 15-30; Arjun Appadurai, "Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy," in *idem*, 295-310. Cf. also Robertson, *Globalization* (London: Sage, forthcoming).

<sup>7</sup>Scott Lash and John Urry, *The End of Organized Capitalism* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1987).

<sup>8</sup>This point is developed especially by David Harvey in his book *The Condition of Postmodernity* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989). If Harvey is correct in his analysis, theologians embracing postmodernity uncritically will need to examine how much their concepts may be being driven by an economic form with potentially dangerous implications.

<sup>9</sup>Ninian Smart and Stephen Konstantine, *Christian Systematic Theology in Its Global Context* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1991); David Kreiger, *The New Universalism: foundations for a Global Theology* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991); Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *Towards a World Theology* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1990); Richard Drummond, *Toward a New Age in Christian Theology* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1985); Tissa Balasuriya, *Planetary Theology* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1984).

<sup>10</sup>James A. Banks, "Multicultural Education: Development, Paradigms and Goals," in James A. Banks and James Lynch (eds.), *Multicultural Education in Western Societies* (New York: Praeger Books, 1985), 2-28.

<sup>11</sup>Robert J. Schreiter, *Constructing Local Theologies* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1985).

<sup>12</sup>See, for instance, Gerald H. Anderson, James M. Phillips, and Robert T. Coote (eds.), *Mission in the 1990s* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991); William Jenkinson and Helene O'Sullivan (eds.), *Trends in Mission: Towards the Third Millennium* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991).

<sup>13</sup>The work of Bishop Lesslie Newbiggin has been addressing this especially. See, for example, his *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1989). Pope John Paul II has made "the new evangelization" a major theme of his pontificate.

<sup>14</sup>Robert J. Schreiter, *Reconciliation: Mission and Ministry in a Changing Social Order* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1992).

<sup>15</sup>See, for example, Jean and John Comaroff, *Of Reason and Revolution: Christianity, Colonialism, and Consciousness in South Africa* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991).

<sup>16</sup>One book that attempts this is Smart and Konstantine (see note 9 above). However, this volume presumes a good deal of background already in the great literate traditions. Its use of Sanskrit terminology will probably frighten off beginners.

<sup>17</sup>A more extensive account may be found in his article "Erfahrung und Glaube," in *Christlicher Glaube in Moderner Gesellschaft* (Freiburg: Herder, 1980), vol. 25, 73-116.

<sup>18</sup>See for example Cain Hope Felder (ed.), *Stony the Road We Trod: African American Biblical Interpretation* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1991).