

SUPPLEMENT I

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**Globalization:
Tracing the Journey,
Charting the Course**

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DAVID S. SCHULLER, Contributing Editor

GAIL BUCHWALTER KING, Editor

NANCY MERRILL, Assistant Editor

LISA MORSE, Editorial Assistant

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Contributors to This Issue

Don S. Browning, Professor of Religion and Psychological Studies,
University of Chicago Divinity School, Chicago, Illinois

Kosuke Koyama, Professor of Ecumenics and World Christianity,
Union Theological Seminary, New York, New York

Mercy Amba Oduyoye, Deputy General Secretary,
World Council of Churches, New York, New York

David A. Roozen, Co-Director, Center for Social and Religious Research,
Hartford Seminary, Hartford, Connecticut

Robert J. Schreiter, Professor of Doctrinal Theology, Catholic Theological
Union, Chicago, Illinois

David S. Schuller, former Associate Director,
The Association of Theological Schools, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Donald W. Shriver, Professor of Applied Christianity,
Union Theological Seminary, New York, New York

Introduction

Given the urgent problems pressing our world and the desire of theological education to respond, can another volume on globalization be justified? Those who view globalization as a passing enthusiasm of “political correctness” or a programmatic emphasis of the ’80s will answer “No!” They will be joined by those who feel the case has been made for the globalizing of theological education, and now individual seminaries must implement local programs. Well into our second decade of seeking to overcome Western proclivities of provincialism in outlook, yet domination of both the methods and content of our theological disciplines, why this volume?

First, the issue is far more complex than we initially thought. At the beginning, we naively thought that the addition of a few courses on world religions; the enlargement of bibliographies to include more theologians from South America, Africa, and Asia; greater sensitivity to women; and a few more sabbaticals in Third World countries would solve the problem.

Second, the context continues to change radically. Many of those who formulated the concepts that enabled us to begin to think about the problem are themselves being forced to rethink the issues. Our institutions and our intellectual positions reflect political, social, economic, and technological realities more than most of us care to admit.

Third, while colleagues outside North America remind us that globalization is a particularly Western concern, it becomes increasingly clear that theological institutions across the world have structured curricula with Western assumptions and are still dominated by Western theologies and methods.

Thus this volume presents more than a few fresh illustrations of how North American schools are seeking to “globalize” their courses or ethos. The first four articles provide an orientation, seeking to review the path North American schools of theology traveled during the first decades of seeking to incorporate a global perspective.

Those who have joined theological faculties in recent years may profit from the brief historical overview that follows on how the Association sought to conceptualize issues related to globalization and engage schools in a dialogue. From the outset, the leadership was aware of an inherent tension between those espousing primarily the *evangelism* of the world and those seeking *dialogue* among cultures and faiths of the world.

We have included Don Browning's article from 1986 because its fourfold delineation of "globalization" as used among theological educators has become the beginning point for all subsequent attempts to depict the differing understandings of globalization.

Browning's theoretical framework takes on specificity in David Roozen's 1990 report. Roozen, a respected sociologist, was asked to survey the ATS member schools as to their current thinking and practice in regard to globalization. His conclusions are particularly helpful because he is able to compare his findings with an initial survey conducted in 1983.

Having provided significant leadership during the early efforts at globalization, Donald Shriver reflects on some of the theological assumptions and issues that underlay our efforts to move into the next phase of the quest. He describes what a globalized theological education would look like and discusses some of the major issues to be faced in pursuing that endeavor.

Also included in this volume are the texts of three addresses delivered at the 1992 Biennial Meeting of the Association. Robert Schreiter explores the challenges of contextualization from a world perspective. He discusses three major issues facing contextualization—the uprooting of peoples, how the gospel message is received, and ways of belonging—and concludes with their implications for theological education today.

As an Asian theologian in a Western seminary, Kosuke Koyama is in a distinctive position to investigate the unities and diversities of theological education. The commonalities he discusses include a methodology of mutuality, the knowledge needed by humanity, and liberation from the global prestige system. His investigation of several theological paradigms reveals the intense pressures Western theological education has placed on the theologies being done by those in Asian and other cultures.

The mix of religions and cultures in sub-Saharan Africa provide the perspective from which Mercy Amba Oduyoye analyzes contextualization as a dynamic in theological education. She focuses on the dynamism of cultures, the multireligious nature of African communities, and the impact of pro-justice movements.

Strong voices in the ATS called for the 1990s to be the Decade of Globalization. While there is not consensus on such a goal, these articles, all by colleagues in theological education, provide both fresh thinking and far-sighted vision.

Globalizing Theological Education: Beginning the Journey

David S. Schuller

When The Association of Theological Schools formed a committee to explore the “internationalization” of theological education in 1980, it had no way of knowing whether it was addressing a task that could be completed within a biennium or whether it was proposing a new direction for theological education. The uncritical use of the term “internationalization” serves as a powerful reminder of the climate in which the Committee began its work: Ferment in society...upheaval in political, economic, and social structures across the globe...strife in theological education...debate regarding biblical mandates. All this provided the context in which the group began its work under the leadership of Donald Shriver, then President of Union Theological Seminary, New York.

A new consciousness of the worldwide church and the interdependence of humanity had begun to raise questions about some of the assumptions on which theological education in the Western world was built. Cross-cultural awareness made those in the West conscious that their culture and religious view of the world were no longer normative. Theological schools in North America were faced with the challenge of educating students who would have a new global awareness of the church and of the world. The challenge of carrying out Christ’s mandate within a global Christian community, confronting the realities of religious and cultural pluralism, demanded answers.

The Committee’s initial task was one of conceptualization. It sought both to find the words to describe more accurately its mandate and to understand the scope of the task before it. Quickly sensing the liabilities of the term “internationalization,” it determined to use a core New Testament concept to describe its task, namely *oikoumene*. The term seemed ideal in its simultaneous New Testament usage for the “whole inhabited world” and the “new reality of the body of Christ, the Church.” But because the English adjective is “ecumenical,” the term was never adopted by the schools. “Globalization” finally became the generic term to describe this endeavor.

The Committee sought to lay a theological foundation for its work. Avoiding an initial programmatic thrust, the Committee sought to describe

globalization as a presupposition of theological education. Of several biblical concepts which guided their initial thinking, perhaps the most significant was:

Now in Christ Jesus you who are far off have been brought near in the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who has made us both one, and has broken down the dividing wall of hostility (Eph. 2:13-14).

The Committee interpreted the Christian faith as standing or falling in “its import for the entirety of humankind.” The good news was meant, from the beginning, to be preached in “Jerusalem and all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth” (Acts 1:8). Theological education was seen as calling teachers and students to resist the temptations of cultural, political, and geographic provincialism. Thus the “breaking down of the dividing wall of hostility” in all of its human manifestations was conceived as one of the guiding centers of the global task.

Of the six areas of engagement that the Committee defined, we examine two as illustrative:

1. Theological education must seek to build the visible unity of the church in a broken world. The disunity of the churches was viewed as a scandalous denial of God’s love for the world. The Committee debated whether the unity of the *church* or the unity of *humanity* should be the primary focus of theological education’s understanding of the new *oikoumene*.
2. From the beginning the group was sensitive to the potential contradiction between evangelism and dialogue. As they phrased the question:

Is there an inherent tension, even contradiction, between the evangelistic mission of the church and the loving respect owed by Christians to all the cultures, communities, and religions of the human world? What is to prevent education in world evangelism from becoming education in world domination? Is “proclamation” compatible with “dialogue”? “Evangelization” with “humanization”?

In reviewing globalization both in the Association and in member schools during the initial years, at least three overlapping dimensions informed the meaning of the globalizing of theological education:

1. *Globalization as Evangelization*. For some theological schools the primary concern is with the proclamation of the gospel throughout the world. Globalization in this context stresses that effective witness to the gospel demands a knowledge and sensitivity to the cultural context in which the

gospel is to be proclaimed and a ministry undertaken. Thus theological education in North America needs to overcome the identification of the Christian faith with Western culture. Engagement in cross-cultural studies and dialogue would promote and enlarge the understanding of people and their needs throughout the world. An awareness of other cultures would make theological education in North America less ethnocentric and uncritically Western.

2. *Globalization as Human Promotion and Development.* For those for whom this is the primary definition of globalization, the central themes are justice and solidarity. Implicit in this interpretation is an awareness of the critical role of the United States in a world sharply divided by war, poverty, and oppression. Proponents are sharply critical of any theological confusion of Christianity with North American political, social, and economic structures. The call is to become aware of and involved in the fight to destroy that which perpetuates oppression and to participate in forms of human development and justice.

3. *Globalization as Interfaith Dialogue and Ecumenical Cooperation.* Its vision of other world religions is that of equal partners involved in cross-cultural and interreligious dialogue. If theological provincialism is the failure to acknowledge the value of other faiths, the curricular task is to involve students in the sympathetic study of non-Christian traditions. "The overall objective of such studies is to situate the Western Christian experience in the broader human religious experience."

Within the last several years the fourfold definition initially suggested by Don Browning has been widely adopted. In an address to the 1986 Biennial Meeting of ATS, Browning said:

...for some, globalization means the church's universal mission to evangelize the world, i.e., to take the message of the gospel to all people, all nations, all cultures, and all religious faiths. Second, there is the ideal of globalization as ecumenical cooperation between the various manifestations of the Christian Church throughout the world. This includes a growing mutuality and equality between churches in First and Third World countries. It involves a new openness to and respect for the great variety of local theologies that are springing up within the church and its various concrete situations. Third, globalization sometimes refers to the dialogue between Christianity and other religions. Finally, globalization refers to the mission of the church to the world, not only to convert and to evangelize, but to improve and develop the lives of the millions of poor, starving, and politically disadvantaged people.

The Beginnings of Institutionalization

When the theological schools gathered for the Biennial Meeting of ATS in 1986, the Committee had a sense that it had initiated and nurtured globalization among the schools as well as within the Association itself. It saw its task as finished and the next stage of effort as necessary on the level of the schools. Prior to the meeting, it had commissioned an exploratory survey to determine to what degree globalization had established itself within the goals and concerns of the individual schools.

In its recommendations to the Association, it addressed each segment of the theological community separately. Suggesting to administrators that globalization involves “the educating power of particular human relationships across cultural lines *and* the ethos or atmosphere of a school’s life,” it called on them to make a principal aim of their administration the cultivation of these relationships and this new ethos. The Committee stated its conviction—now based on six years of evidence—that globalization is not a fad, but that it stands at the intersection of the “gospel ecumenism” of the New Testament and the “secular ecumenism” of the modern world.

Recognizing the danger that globalization might become an “add-on” to the heart of the educational enterprise, it appealed to faculties to evaluate themselves regularly as to whether “the global context is peripheral or central to the *foundational* elements of the curriculum.” Faculties were also charged with a special responsibility for students from non-Western countries, to safeguard and enhance such students’ orientation to their home cultures.

Students, in turn, were asked to lay aside their professional zeal to become “credentialized” by engaging in education that involves learning from other cultures. Though such new education would involve financial and psychological costs, the Committee assured them of the value of such learning for ministry in North America.

Since the development of a global curriculum and ethos will require “budget and budget priorities,” trustees were warned that in a day of stringent budgets, other budget lines might have to shrink in order to sustain a global priority.

Finally, the ATS was asked to assist in sharing information about globalization, to gather pertinent data and, four to six years later, to authorize a new inquiry regarding developments in the intervening period.

When the proposed resolution to dismiss the Committee was presented to the Biennial Meeting, concern for globalization was so great that the resolution was voted down and a new Task Force on Globalization was appointed to work toward making the 1990s the decade of globalization for theological education. William Leshner, who championed the cause during the Biennial Meeting, became the chair of the new Task Force.

As the Task Force assessed what needed to be done to assist schools to move more fully into globalizing their curricula and community life, it determined that a “vocabulary and a set of paradigms” was most needed to undergird and sustain the conversation about globalization on a broader scale. It therefore commissioned two rounds of papers to assist in the tasks of increased conversation and implementation.

Comparative Perspectives: 1983 and 1989

A more comprehensive survey of the state of globalization in theological education in 1989 enables us to assess the degree of change over a six-year period. David Roozen, who conducted the second study, concludes that the evidence “strongly suggests” a significant increase in the emphasis given to global concerns by theological schools. Close to three-quarters of the schools reported some degree of increased emphasis in the preceding five years. Specifically, he describes the global effort as “energizing and catalytic.”

The number of formal and informal programs increased during the six years; more importantly, he found that globalization had become a “conceptual filter” for reflection on the foundations of theological education.

Evidence of increased attention to globalization included the following:

- An increase in the number of international students.
- Theological views from the Second and Third World find greater expression in curriculum and scholarly work.
- More institutions offer courses in other world religions.
- More institutions added courses addressing global concerns than in the comparable earlier period.
- Globalization was becoming more integral to the curriculum in a greater number of schools.

However, the picture was not entirely bright for the future of globalization. First, not all institutions reported an increased emphasis. Much of the increase, moreover, appeared to represent “more of the same” over against exploration into more problematic areas. Apparently no additional schools had formally endorsed globalization as an “explicit curricular objective” in the intervening period. Further, the percentage of institutions reporting special resources to fund work related to their global purposes remained virtually the same. Similarly, the percentage of schools that maintain a regular relationship with other countries had not changed.

What appeared as the major barriers to increased attention to global concerns? Clearly, financial limitations. Ninety-five of the responding institutions saw financial limitations as an obstacle to increasing their emphasis on globalization. During a period of restricted budgets, with many schools fighting deficits, it was a difficult period to make commitments to new programs and additional faculty. This response highlights a continuing problem: the tendency to identify increased emphasis with the addition of new programs. As Roozen concludes: “...one of the biggest challenges to the globalization of theological education may well be the *transformation of existing resources*.”

Vision of Theological Education in the Year 2000

One means the Task Force used to seek to overcome such limitations of thinking about globalization was to engage in a process of “visioning.” Working with three subcommittees, it sought to address assumptions regarding the global context, a vision of theological education in the year 2000, and impediments to that vision. This approach served as a significant catalyst for the work of the Task Force. Major ideas included the following:

Assumptions Regarding the Global Context

Conflicts between differing concepts of globalization became obvious as the three working groups reported. The general tone of the assumptions tended to be liberal Protestant, even while the introductory sentence indicated the desire of the Task Force to lay a firm theological and intellectual base “without supporting a particular perspective or definition of globalization.”

They stated two general assumptions on the disposition to view globalization primarily as human development, and as interfaith dialogue and ecumenical cooperation:

1. There is profound connectedness of human life worldwide, which opens up the possibility of mutual enrichment through dialogue in reciprocal learning.
2. There is also a deeply disturbing threat to the planet itself from human conflict, inequalities, exploitation, and from the misuse of technology.

The following assumptions are then included: The problem of the poor in the world is closely tied to the accumulation of wealth by others. Trade in armaments and military aid are increasing menaces to human life. The global ecological system is subject to deliberate policy decisions and to accidents which threaten our life. Western culture is no longer normative. Secularization is a major movement in Western culture. There is need for better balance in the understanding of the universal church as carrying out its mandate of evangelism and in being faithful to its mission as a servant to the suffering and a prophetic voice for justice. Responding to the changed world reality, the church is divided along many different lines. The church's center is not found in North America and Europe; the church is worldwide.

A Vision of Theological Education in the Year 2000

While recognizing the complexity of projecting the future, the Task Force used a process of "visioning" what a theological seminary or center might be like in the year 2000 if it were more fully faithful to the global context. While recognizing that the initial vision was partial, it hoped that it would serve as a stimulus and provide a sense of direction for future exploration, research, and planning.

A theological school, at the beginning of the next millennium, that has incorporated a fuller view of globalization might well reflect many of the following marks:

1. *Mission and Purpose* — The global reality with its complex, interdependent structures of power, its religious diversity, and its extreme stratification of human beings—economically, politically, spiritually, and socially—shapes the context for the mission and ministry of the school. The mission statement reflects the intention of the school to prepare Christian leadership for this context, understanding itself as a spiritual and academic center that orients all life to the reality of God.

2. *Curriculum* — The academic functions of the school are carried on within an ethos that recognizes the essential relational dimensions in

teaching, learning, and spiritual growth. The curriculum embodies the global context of theological education by making explicit, for example, the multicultural nature of biblical sources and examining various forms of pastoral practice in relation to cultural conditions. Students are required to achieve competence in cross-cultural understandings through study or ministry opportunities especially in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Students and faculty from the Two-thirds World, or non-Western cultures, serve as teachers and teaching assistants. World religions hold a prominent place in curricular offerings; bibliographies include the writings of biblical, historical, and pastoral theologians from the six continents.

3. *Community Life* — The worship life of the theological community reflects its global awareness through liturgy, prayers, and hymns from other cultures. The spirituality of North American students is enriched by contact and dialogue with first-generation Christians and those witnessing situations of oppression.

4. *Faculty* — Faculty members are expected to gain significant cross-cultural experience as a requirement for appointment, promotion, and retention. The lifestyle of faculty members, administrators, and students reflects their commitment to a global openness in the commitment of their time and resources.

5. *Leadership* — The style of leadership in administration reflects power sharing with groups within the theological community, with sensitivity to diversity and the inclusion of participants from the Two-thirds World on policy-making committees. The school maintains close ties to its constituencies. The global theological community, denominationally and ecumenically, is regarded as a collegial network, and representative linkage with schools throughout the world is maintained.

6. *Finances* — The budget of the school reflects its commitment to global theological education by providing scholarship funds to make global experiences available to students, to enable faculty to gain global exposure, and to provide resources for students and faculty from the Two-thirds World to participate in exchange programs. Further, the investments of the school are managed according to policies that recognize the priority of global social responsibility.

Impediments to the Globalization of Theological Education

In addition to presenting the positive vision, the Task Force tried to discern the impediments to change, those realities that will hinder the actualization of the vision, those elements in the internal and external environments that will slowly draw theological schools back to their former situations. The following were identified as most critical.

1. A high degree of theological and cultural ethnocentrism is present in our Western Culture, its institutions, and thought. Thus the cultural experience of most seminary faculties is restricted to North America and Europe. Only a few have had significant experiences in Two-thirds World cultures.

2. A language barrier exists. If faculty are bilingual, usually the second language is a European language. This places a serious limitation on faculty if they seek to understand another culture but are limited to the use of English.

3. While the global vision includes bringing faculty from the Two-thirds World to North America, this raises the ethical issue of contributing to the brain drain by taking some of the finest scholars and teachers from other cultures and bringing them to North America.

4. A series of issues relate to the curriculum. The theological curriculum is already overcrowded in most seminaries with insistent pressures to add new courses. While new courses are called for, traditional courses must be approached from a more cross-cultural and global perspective.

5. Exchange programs for North American and international students pose a set of problems. International students coming to North America face problems related to the selection process, finances, English language ability, culture shock, and adjustment to a new culture. North American students attending overseas institutions may occupy places that would otherwise be open to students from that country. There may be further student concern about how much work from an overseas institution will be credited to their North American program. Students may fear that they will lose academically if they involve themselves in cross-cultural experiences.

6. Seminary constituencies pose obstacles to globalization to the extent that they live out of a provincial ethos. Some do not see the relevance of globalization for the training of North American pastors; others are threatened for ideological reasons by the consideration of global, economic, and political problems.

7. Funding priorities: Reallocation of budgetary priorities will be required for most seminaries. Reallocation of finances will threaten—and thus raise the opposition of—those whose departments and programs will be reduced.

8. The final set of factors is theological. Theological perspectives need to be broadened to include a faithful grappling with the issues of the poor. Western theology needs to be more open to discover the immediacy of God's activity in human life (see the rapidly growing Pentecostal churches in Asia and Africa). Uncertainty about the uniqueness of Jesus Christ in the context of world religions, and the relation of missions to social issues and development, need to be faced.

Changing Fundamental Patterns

The last several years have seen a continued increase in commitment to globalization among member schools. While a few schools were sensitively exploring the frontiers of the concern, more were at least adopting proven programs. During the 1990-1992 biennium, the Task Force therefore attempted to address two objectives: (1) Have theological educators undertake an intercultural experience in the company of peers who would be able to reflect on the implications for their own schools and (2) Have the core theological disciplines address more centrally the concerns of globalizing their disciplines. To those ends, three major endeavors were designed:

A two-week Summer Institute for Globalizing Theological Education enrolled 75 participants from 35 different schools. Designed to address the needs of schools at various stages of development in globalization, participants spent the first week in suburban Chicago studying various approaches to globalization. A basic resource was a series of case studies that enabled them to reflect on the mission and program of their own institutions.

A second week was spent in one of three intercultural field sites: in Northern Alberta among Native American peoples, on the U.S./Mexican border near Tucson, and in Nicaragua. Since the basic experience was positively evaluated, tentative plans were made for conducting a second Institute during the summer of 1993. Follow-up evaluation indicates that where more than one participant attends from a given school, institutional change is more likely to occur. Most participants represented the field of ministry studies.

In order to address the classical theological disciplines more centrally, two programs were developed. First, a Consultation on Globalization and the Classical Theological Disciplines was held in March 1992 and explored six commissioned papers. Focusing on the teaching of Old Testament, New Testament, Systematics, and Church History, the papers and subsequent discussion addressed the shape of introductory courses that would incorporate a global perspective and illustrate how greater cross-disciplinary efforts might be encouraged. A parallel consultation dealing with the practical theological disciplines was held in March 1993.

During this period faculty development grants favored team projects and specified a focus on globalization and the classical disciplines. A related effort involved negotiations of the Task Force with the Society for Biblical Literature (SBL) that resulted in an international keynote series at the Annual Meeting of the SBL.

Another sign of the institutionalization of globalization in theological schools has been the adoption of an accreditation standard regarding this matter. The standard was positively tested during the 1990 biennium. Schools are responding to the standard in their self studies. From such experience, guidelines will eventually be developed.

Concluding Reflections

The last dozen years have experienced the movement of the concept of globalizing theological education from the dream of a few educators to the beginnings of institutionalization. The majority of schools have some type of global effort in place. Foundation monies are available to support significant projects. Several organizations have been developed to assist theological schools in their efforts to globalize their curricula. Three major religious publishing houses have launched publication series on globalization. The first World Conference of Associations of Theological Institutions (WOCATI) was held in conjunction with the 1992 Biennial Meeting of the ATS.

While the question of the extent to which the efforts at globalization represent more than a passing theological fad is muted, concerns about Western domination in theological education remain. Speaking of only one small aspect of the problem, an Asian theologian who has been teaching in the United States for well over a decade observed:

In every field of study, Western academic degrees open the way into the world of universal prestige. Degrees are shrouded with mystique and prestige. International students studying in theological schools in the West are willing to go through any difficulties and obstacles to achieve the degrees.

Representatives from other parts of the world remind theological schools in the West that globalization is a North American concept, behind which they still fear subtle but real colonial domination and voyeurism. One remembers the response from South India when the first efforts at globalization were shared with colleagues around the world:

Globalization is only a smoke screen for a dominant and powerful culture to comprehend, dominate, absorb, and gather in all other people and territories in our planetary system.

Thus the vision of a more global theological education for the future involves continuing confession and sensitivity to wounds that remain painful in spite of our best intentions concerning mutuality. Reflecting the words of Donald Shriver, who chaired the initial Committee: We picture our work as a pilgrimage in which we are moving theologically and programmatically into an unknown future. On this pilgrimage we are thankful to God for a group of companions dispersed across the globe who share a common commitment to preparation of men and women for faithful ministry in the church.

Globalization and the Task of Theological Education in North America

Don S. Browning

When the invitation came from the officers of the Association to address the 1986 Biennial Meeting, it was suggested that there might be some link between practical theology and globalization that would be worth investigating.

When I first read the letter my eyes dwelled mainly on the words “practical theology” and less on the term “globalization.” After accepting the invitation, and upon further reflection about its content, I began to realize that the issue of globalization was the real point of it.

My reflections soon compelled me to admit that the word “globalization” was not one I had heard uttered very frequently within the halls of the Divinity School of the University of Chicago where I teach. I trustingly assumed that we must have our equivalencies, but I was not sure. But being an aspiring practical theologian, at least on Mondays and Wednesdays, I decided to do what I have been told that good practical theologians do. I should go study the situation; that is, I should immerse myself among the indigenous populations who use the term and try to describe both what the language of globalization means and the kinds of actions it is supposed to describe.

This led to a round of pleasant lunches and conversations with the leaders of the native tribes of theological education in Hyde Park. I soon learned that indeed the term globalization was widely used in Hyde Park’s many theological schools and that it had a wide range of meanings, as indeed it does in Cardinal Arinze’s extremely important and challenging opening address. Although these meanings are distinguishable, they are not necessarily contradictory. But it is interesting to observe which meaning of globalization a particular educator has in mind and which of its various meanings a particular school chooses to emphasize or downplay.

The word globalization has at least four rather distinct meanings. Cardinal Arinze’s challenge to us contained, to varying degrees, all of these uses of the term. For some, globalization means the church’s universal

Editor’s Note: The text of this article is the plenary address given by Don S. Browning at the 1986 Biennial Meeting of ATS. His address and that of Francis Cardinal Arinze appeared in the Autumn 1986 issue of Theological Education.

mission to evangelize the world, i.e., to take the message of the gospel to all people, all nations, all cultures, and all religious faiths. Second, there is the idea of globalization as ecumenical cooperation between the various manifestations of the Christian church throughout the world. This includes a growing mutuality and equality between churches in First and Third World countries. It involves a new openness to and respect for the great variety of local theologies that are springing up within the church in its various concrete situations. Third, globalization sometimes refers to the dialogue between Christianity and other religions. Finally, globalization refers to the mission of the church to the world, not only to convert and to evangelize, but to improve and develop the lives of the millions of poor, starving, and politically disadvantaged people. This last use of the term is clearly the most popular in present-day theological education; it may also be the one most difficult to convert into a workable strategy for theological education.

All of these uses of the term globalization in theological education have one element in common: the context for theological education can no longer be simply the local congregation, the local community, a particular region, state, or nation. The context of theological education must be the entire world, the entire global village that influences our lives in multitudes of direct and indirect ways and which we influence and shape in ways we do not fully understand. To say that the entire world needs to be the context of theological education says something both very important and quite broad and indeterminate. To say that the entire world needs to be the context of theological education does not answer how we should balance global contexts with local contexts. As Cardinal Arinze warned us, we also live and have our ministries in local contexts, and it is the height of both forgetfulness and arrogance to become so preoccupied with the problems of Africa or Asia that we overlook the particularity of our own social location or the continuity between the two. Hence, to put meat on the dry bones of the idea of globalization demands that we return to the most specific and sometime competing uses of the term.

I want to have a three-way conversation between the powerful remarks of Cardinal Arinze, the very stimulating and important new design for theological education recently put forth by Joe Hough and John Cobb, in *Christian Identity and Theological Education*,¹ and my own local experience of being deeply involved with a church and one of its committees that has been dealing with global issues for several years. All three of these sources emphasize the global context of ministry, have different understandings of

globalization, and put the question of globalization in both ministry and theological education in different social situations.

A Local Group

I realized that although I did not frequently hear the word globalization, I participated in a practical theological discussion and action group that has met twice weekly on the global ministry of the church around such issues as American foreign policy in Central America, issues of nuclear deterrence, refugee questions, and the link between these issues and the emergence of the underclass in urban communities of the United States. When I saw this, I thought I must do what practical theologians should do, begin with some description of the action that my primary communities are performing to address the issue in question. This is part of what it means to emphasize the priority of *praxis* and the importance of beginning with a description of the “situation.”

This group meets in the context of a rather large Sunday morning adult church school class and as a steering committee, for breakfast on Tuesday mornings. Over the last three years, it has led the congregation to study a wide range of documents on Central America, to vote to become a sanctuary church, to actually sponsor a family of Guatemalan refugees, to commission the preparation of a professionally crafted and commercially marketed video of this sanctuary experience, to vote to become a nuclear free zone, to discuss the problems of the inner city and to seek for the themes that relate to these seemingly disparate topics. What can I learn from this group, as well as from Cardinal Arinze and Hough and Cobb, about globalization and the task of theological education? First, toward what view of global ministry has this experience gravitated? Upon which of these four definitions of globalization has this local, grass roots group centered its ministry? Second, what motivates the members of this group? How do they put their religious convictions and personal motivations together? What has sustained them for three years of thinking and action? Let us look at the first of these questions now.

The great bulk of this group’s thinking and action is guided by the last of the four definitions, i.e., globalization as human development. This group is interested in the health and welfare of Central Americans, the protection of all people from nuclear destruction, and the freedom of political refugees from harassment and physical harm. There is no talk whatsoever in this group of globalization as evangelism. There is also almost no conversation about

globalization as a dialogue or conversation with other religious faiths outside Christianity. There is some interest in globalization as ecumenicity. For instance, there is awareness of the local theologies that are emerging throughout the world, especially out of the liberation theologies and base communities of Central and South America. There is some interest in ecumenical cooperation at the local Chicago level. But there is only faith interest, I fear, in the global aspects of practical ecumenical cooperation. There is some desire, for instance, to relate to a sister church in Nicaragua, but little interest in relating to the programs of the World or National Council of Churches or the overseas departments of the various Protestant denominations.

I tell you these things to demonstrate the practical differences that exist between various groups and individuals who are all intensely interested in the global context of Christian ministry. For instance, this group's scale of values on issues of globalization is almost diametrically opposed to those of Cardinal Arinze. For the Cardinal, globalization first of all means evangelization. He presented a powerful array of scriptures supporting the idea that the church has a universal mission to make disciples of all nations, to witness to the "ends of the earth," and to make known God's acceptance of even "the pagan's repentance." Closely related to this emphasis is Cardinal Arinze's interest in enculturation—the concern to simultaneously infuse a culture with the essence of the Christian Gospel but to do so in such a way as to only minimally disrupt the integrity of that culture. Second in importance for him is globalization as ecumenical witness on the part of the entire Christian church, in all parts of the world, across national and denominational lines. It means listening to the new theological voices from around the world and entering into ecumenical cooperative enterprises whenever possible. There is a clear but somewhat minor emphasis in his speech on globalization as dialogue with other faiths. Clearly last in emphasis is what Cardinal Arinze calls "issues connected with human promotion, liberation, and development." Even then he warned the church that "All temporal and political liberation is bound to fail if it has no spiritual dimension, if it sets aside, or regards as irrelevant, salvation and happiness in God." Even though this word of caution strikes a note that few of us would contradict, it still leaves us with the impression that human promotion and development is the least important for Cardinal Arinze of the four meanings of globalization.

This will not be the case with the analysis from Cobb and Hough, as it has not been with the church group I described. To introduce more profoundly a

global perspective into theological education means first of all to orchestrate and give priority to the various meanings of globalization that are competing to claim our attention.

Before turning to the voices of Hough and Cobb, we should hear Cardinal Arinze's recommendations for actually programming a global emphasis in theological education. He recommends that the minds and hearts of the faculty and staff must first be opened to the importance of a global emphasis. Exchange of faculty and students with seminaries throughout the world should be increased. All of this must be done in ways not to estrange our faculties of theology from their local church or from the guidelines and direction of the ordained authorities of our various religious bodies. Beyond these basic suggestions the Cardinal has little more to add. For instance, he makes no basic recommendations for the fundamental reconceptualization of our theological curricula, probably out of respect for the diversity of programs in both Canada and the United States.

The Recommendations of Hough and Cobb

The differences in both substance and educational process between Cardinal Arinze and the Cobb-Hough team are striking. I mention this to illustrate the richness of the conversation that looms before us. First, Cobb and Hough make education for global awareness the very heart of their proposals for theological education. Their analysis and recommendations must be seen as nothing less than revolutionary. Education for global awareness would not be simply a matter of extracurricular programs, exchanges, and travel. It would constitute the very core of the theological curriculum. Their proposals say hardly anything about globalization as evangelization. Rather, the weight of their emphasis is upon global awareness as human promotion and development—as practical action that addresses the myriad ecological and sociopolitical problems which beset the world community. Globalization as interfaith dialogue and ecumenical cooperation are also developed, but to a lesser degree.

The major enemy of authentic Christian witness is for them the legacy of Enlightenment individualism that has infected and poisoned Western understandings of both political and religious life. To counter this, Hough and Cobb recommend an interconnected and relational understanding of the world, the church, and God's relation to the world. The task of the church and theological education is to keep alive the memory of God's concern for the entire world as this is revealed through the history of Israel and the life of Jesus. They write:

...the growing interconnectedness of all aspects of the biosphere and human involvement in it necessitates recognizing the importance of the global context to Christian self-understanding. In this sense all Christian theology today should be global theology.²

Theological education must be intentional inquiry into the global situation of the world today—into the threat of nuclear holocaust, the problem of world hunger, the exploitation of the poor by the rich, the problem of debtor nations, the world ecological crisis, issues of sexism and racism, and the population explosion. Cobb and Hough are not recommending that every seminary course directly address these issues, but their ideal seminary curriculum does make the analysis of such questions a major component. As they say flatly and decisively, “Serious assessment of the global crisis should become part of the seminary curriculum.”³

Lest you think that the Hough and Cobb proposals amount to little more than a radical politicization of the seminary curriculum, I should acknowledge that they balance their issue-oriented view with some emphasis upon interfaith and ecumenical dimensions of globalization. Cobb and Hough would not just introduce the student to ancient Judaism as a background to early Christianity; they would systematically trace the history of both Christianity and Judaism into the twentieth century. They would address some interfaith issues by showing the influence on the internal history of Christianity of both Greek and Roman philosophy and religion. The teaching of American religious history would interweave not only Christian and Jewish religious history, but give careful attention to black, feminist, and ethnic contributions as well, thus balancing global inquiries by giving consideration to the local context of the American church. Finally, in the midst of courses on practical theology, they would break all molds and schedule a required course on world religions, indicating that the contemporary interfaith dialogue is a practical necessity and not just a theoretical luxury.

The most striking aspect of their proposal is the promotion of the image of the minister as practical theologian as the central goal of theological education and the linchpin of the church’s ministry in a global context. The seminary and divinity school, they argue, can lead the church in its efforts to influence global issues by training a new generation of ministers whose professional identity is built around competence as practical theologians. The minister should be an expert in both practical theological thinking and in what is required to be a reflective practitioner. Furthermore, the minister

should be an expert in stimulating the congregation to be a community of practical theological thinking and reflective practice.

Hough and Cobb place their proposals within an intriguing sketch of the history of the images of ministry in the United States. The dominant image of ministry during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was the minister as Master. The minister as Master was the authoritative and scholarly interpreter of the central Christian texts. Because of this competence, the minister was expected to be a commentator on current events and issues of public policy. But the emerging pluralism of traditions in American religious life undercut the taken-for-granted authority of the minister as Master. Ministers then had to attract and hold the attention of a general population with increasingly more diffuse religious identities. Due to this changing social situation, the image of the minister as Master was replaced in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries by the image of the minister as Revivalist and Pulpiteer. These images in turn were replaced by the image of the minister as Builder, an image that itself evolved into the contemporary images of the minister as Manager and Therapist.

It is against the background of the recent images of the minister as Manager and Therapist that the image of the minister as practical theologian seems so shocking and, perhaps, so impossible, especially as Cobb and Hough portray this image. How is it possible for ministers who manage committees, form consensus, and administer therapeutic support suddenly to become experts in practical theological thinking of the kind that helps religious communities shape not only their lives together but their strategy for addressing the major social and ecosystemic problems of their day? The answer, of course, is that there is no easy and rapid transformation that will bring about this radical shift in images. It will take several decades of a highly intentional and reconceived theological education before such a proposal can seem little more than wildly unrealistic. But it is precisely this kind of long-term reform of theological education that Hough and Cobb are proposing.

The New Interest in Practical Theology

Their proposal to make the image of the minister as practical theologian the center of theological education, although freshly stated and powerfully linked with a global vision as the context for ministry, is not unique. It must be seen as a part of the general international effort to revive and reconstruct the theological genre of practical theology and to make its mastery central to the purposes of theological education.

The new interest in practical theology seems to have two interrelated foci. First, there are those proposals that search for a new unity and definition of what the eighteenth and nineteenth century encyclopedia called the practical theological disciplines of religious education: pastoral care, homiletics, and liturgics. The second current use of the term practical theology can be found in such authors as Dennis McCann and Charles Strain in their *Polity and Praxis*⁴ where it serves as a designation for all the new political, liberation, or older American theologies that assign a priority to *praxis* in the doing of theology. What is exciting about the current conversations are the proposals to develop common theological methodologies that link the traditional practical theological disciplines with the new political and liberation theologies, with their emphasis upon the priority of *praxis*.

Both strands of the conversation repudiate the older model of seeing the practical theologies as merely the application of the doctrinal truths of fundamental or systematic theology. Both conversations are calling for a new methodological sophistication in the practical theologies. Both expressions of practical theology claim that (in contrast to the idea that the practical disciplines are the least sophisticated, the least complex, and the least elegant of the theological disciplines) when rightly conceived, they are the most demanding, the most multifaceted, and the disciplines requiring the greatest range of methodological decisions, imagination, and synthetic power. These two emerging conversations further claim that theological education has too often patterned itself after the monographical scholarly styles of the humanistic disciplines. Furthermore, they claim that although the monograph and the related phenomena of the discrete academic disciplines are useful in furthering certain types of theoretical knowledge, they are highly limited in further practical knowledge that seeks to ask questions in the form of “what shall we do in the future?” These conversations, frequently inspired in part by the great theoreticians of *praxis* such as Aristotle, Kant, and Marx, believe that practical thinking and its relation to religion may be something that can submit to systematic inquiry, and that disciplines such as pastoral care, religious education, and theological ethics can greatly profit by anchoring themselves in the study of the nature and structure of practical thinking as this might function within a Christian context.

The proposals of Cobb and Hough should be understood as extensions of these two lines of conversation about the nature and scope of the practical theologies for our time. They too are working to link these two trajectories of practical theology. They too are attempting to overcome the priority of the

theoretical that has gripped much of theological education in recent centuries as manifested in the centrality of the scholarly monograph and the discrete academic disciplines. Not that they reject the role of either the monograph or the special disciplines; they simply place them within the context of the category of the practical and seek to heighten our awareness of what these disciplines do and do not contribute to the clarification of practical theological thinking. They too, like the practical theologies upon which they build, believe that all the theological disciplines should begin with some descriptive awareness of the social, individual, and ecclesial practices that dominate the situations of our lives. They further suggest that we see all such situations as nearly as possible within a global context.

I think rather highly of this book and believe that it should be widely studied and many of its proposals seriously considered. It carries forward the discussion initiated by Edward Farley's *Theologia*⁵ even though it does not go beyond the clerical paradigm Farley proposes. Hough and Cobb believe that theological education must be dedicated primarily to the development of the leaders of our congregations and parishes and that in most instances this will consist of education for ordained professional ministers. They do go beyond the clerical paradigm as Farley defines it because of their expanded definition of the minister as a practical theologian. The minister as practical theologian should not just be able to think theologically about her or his practice as an ordained professional; according to them, the minister as practical theological thinker should be able to think practically and theologically about the entire range of the church's practical ministry in the world. Seen from this perspective, the differences between the Hough-Cobb team and Farley on the question of the clerical paradigm tend to disappear.

If there is a shortcoming to this important book, it is that it does not really provide a model of practical theological thinking. The authors do provide important pointers. In one place they write echoing Metz that, "Practical theology is critical reflection on the church's practice in view of the dangerous memory of the passions of Jesus."⁶ The memory of the stories of the entire Christian tradition is the source of Christian identity, and this memory is also the main source of practical theological thinking. "To think as Christians," they argue, "is to think from the memory of the church. The church remembers many who have undertaken so to think in the past."⁷ Even though they acknowledge that theology and ethics are the disciplines "most closely related to Practical Christian thinking," they express reservations that theological ethics as it has been practiced in the recent past can provide the

models of practical theological thinking that we need. Theological ethics, they believe, tends “to substitute principles or norms for the total internal history” of the church.⁸ Even though they do not want to substitute norms and principles for the internal memory of the church, they do acknowledge that there may be some usefulness in stating “for the church in its present situation which norms and principles appear at this juncture to be the most relevant and convincing.”⁹ Although rightly wanting to place norms and principles within the larger framework of the internal memory of the church, Cobb and Hough’s language suggests that some principles will be more relevant at some points of history whereas others will be more relevant at other times. This moves them close to a situational ethic of the kind that has been most severely criticized in our time. To suggest that their position ends in a situational ethic is unfair because it is premature. They simply do not say enough about their model of practical theological thinking to clarify which direction they will go. Their reluctance to clarify their model of practical thinking should serve as a warning that unless we do this, misunderstandings and distortions will emerge.

It is not unfair to request such a model, at least the beginning outlines of it. For their proposal is bold. Their emphasis is so clearly on globalization as human development and promotion, and they are so confident that the Christian church has something directly to contribute to the amelioration of human suffering, that their reluctance to actually suggest such a model is puzzling. It is my conviction that although the Christian church does have something to contribute to the mitigation of the history of suffering, in reality these issues are of great complexity. Furthermore, it is my conviction that because of this, theological educators will be required to provide more complex models of practical theological thinking than they have in the past. The models should work out the logic of how Christian narratives, moral principles, knowledge of human needs, and empirical knowledge of social, economic, and ecological systems all relate to one another to inform practical thinking. The closer one gets to the actual analysis of practical issues the more one becomes aware of how these different kinds of judgments and perspectives function in our practical thinking.

Although it seems “wildly Pelagian” to some to hear talk of the need for such models, I think this need not be the case. To refine our models of practical theological thinking is not necessarily to believe that we humans alone can solve our problems or even that the improvement of human life on this earth exhausts the meaning of the Christian religion. It simply means

that if the church presumes to be concretely relevant to these problems, we should attempt to be as clear as possible. The need for such models tempts me to set forth my own view of practical theological thinking, but I already have done this in a variety of writings.¹⁰ I have resisted this temptation and propose now to turn to a few final reflections on the concrete motivation of lay persons and ministers for long-term vocations as practical theologians and reflective practitioners for the global concerns of the church.

Hough and Cobb and the Hyde Park Group

Hough and Cobb make suggestions similar to those of Cardinal Arinze about the role of experience in forming the practical Christian thinker with global concerns. They too mention exchanges of faculty and students. They recommend living with the poor to deepen our sense of solidarity and identification with their plight. Such recommendations moved me to ask the question, what brought some of the principal leaders of the group I attend to make the global ministry of the church such a central concern? The majority are ordained ministers who have received theological education, although none now principally functions as a minister of a congregation. They are retired professors, urban educators, graduate students, theological educators, and administrators of religious agencies. All are extremely interesting, but I want to tell you the story of two of the most motivated and reflective. My concern will be to glean from their stories insights into the task of theological education in forming leaders with global interests.

Jim is thirty-seven years old and has recently finished his Ph.D. Next autumn he will teach pastoral care in a midwestern Protestant seminary. Jim is very knowledgeable about both the political and technical aspects of the policy of nuclear deterrence. In the middle of writing his dissertation, that dealt with a completely different topic, he wrote a 150-page book on the theology and ethics of our nuclear situation. The six chapters of the book were written for a six-week adult church school class. Jim is extremely reflective and not in the least impulsive. He thinks his way through a variety of contemporary issues, mostly global in character, discovers his position, and witnesses and acts on behalf of his convictions. He is remarkably open to refinement and change on the basis of further dialogue and inquiry. He is the first to volunteer to pray at the beginning of a committee meeting addressing such issues. He is clearly the most interested of any of the group in the relation of spirituality and social ministries. For years he was chair of the worship committee of the church he attends.

What are the formative experiences that have led to his present practical global interests? Jim is the son of a career diplomat who lived as a child in India. He learned to view the United States as that part of the world views our country. This made his high school years back in the States somewhat difficult, and he joined a church because it was the only place he could talk about “the issues that really interested him.” College at Princeton University in the 1970s introduced him to student protests and Eastern mysticism and led him to lose patience with the church. But later at the University of Chicago he transferred out of the social sciences into the Divinity School because, once again, it was the only place in the University that would permit him to discuss the issues that he really thought were important. Casual contact with a local church deepened. His experience in his Eastern meditational retreats, although still inspiring, became less satisfying because he could not place them in a familiar and useable Western historical context. He decided he would be a Christian and go as deep as possible in that tradition. As he told me, “to go deep and be universal, one must start with a particular tradition.”

What did his theological education give him? It gave him his first grasp of the Bible and the view of history that it provides. It gave him tools in theological reflection, and it introduced him to theological ethics and moral philosophy which he increasingly uses to clarify and criticize his first impressions. It gave him a deeper grasp of the social sciences which help him analyze situations and probe more deeply into the motivations and needs of people in various contexts.

What have we learned from Jim’s experience and interests? Jim’s practical global interests may stem from multiple sources—the tensions created by his intercultural childhood and his experienced sense of oneness with the whole world that arose from his mystical experiences. It may be that the universalism of the Bible and the Christian story did not so much create these unitive experiences as provide culturally useable symbols that helped to further consolidate and give meaning to them. His theological education added the firmness and power of a cognitively deepened grasp of the Bible that gave further form to experiences that occurred basically outside the precincts of this formal education. His formal theological and ethical studies gave him additional control and self-critical awareness over experiences and motivations that came from his intercultural, mystical, and ecclesial experiences.

I do not offer Jim as a normative model of the kind of person theological education is trying to create if we take Cobb and Hough seriously. But he does exhibit many of the features of their image of minister as practical theological

thinker on global issues. His experience raises the question as to whether theological education itself can provide in more formal ways, for all its students, the range of factors which seem to have gone into the shaping of Jim's practical global interests. Can it provide intercultural experience, the opportunity to see our countries of origin the way others see them, a spirituality that both connects one with a sense of the whole and roots one in a particular tradition, familiarity with the Bible and the internal history of the memory of the church, and the models of practical theological thinking needed to critically reflect on and bring into action all of this richness of experience?

Finally, can theological education have complex enough educational and theological methodologies to see the analogies between Christian experience and other kinds of experience so that some of the allegedly non-Christian experiences which our increasingly pluralistic culture provides can be appropriately interpreted to positively contribute to the deepening of a practical global ministry? Jim's maturing as a Christian occurred in a context that made it possible for him to positively use his so-called non-Christian mystical experiences. Jim has never been embarrassed by these experiences and insists that there is a point of continuity between them and his more recognizable Christian experiences, and both have fed his global concerns. Cardinal Arinze and Hough and Cobb, but especially the latter two, say things that help us understand how this can be the case, and appropriately so even on sound theological bases.

Another leader of our group is a retired professor of theological ethics. His story is almost entirely an intellectual history. It was Tillich's emphasis on the "situation" that led him to take concrete contexts seriously. But it was Richard McKeon, the great Aristotle scholar, who led him to take the *global* context seriously, because it was McKeon who led him to see the importance of the whole for the understanding of the particular. It was the abstractions of a secular philosopher that helped him become concrete about the global implications of the Christian symbol of the Kingdom of God. The formal categories of philosophy performed a function for this professor analogous to Jim's experiences with Eastern mysticism; they provided him with a view of the whole that enriched and deepened his more specifically Christian experiences and categories. The analogies between what H.R. Niebuhr called our internal and external histories enriched his Christian identity and global awareness. Seeing how this worked in this professor's life illustrates the usefulness of what some of us call the "revised correlational method" in practical theology.

Theological education that will deepen our sense of the global context of ministry will have to be multidimensional and flexible. It must bring new international and intercultural experiences and presences to the environment of theological education. It should also make substantive enrichments of the actual curricula of theological education along the lines of those advanced by Hough and Cobb. It must not approach these challenges with impatience. To educate the leaders of the church to become practical theological thinkers and reflective practitioners with a vital interest in global issues, and to equip them to lead congregations also to be practical theological thinkers and actors, will take a revolution of massive proportions both in the seminary and in the general culture.

It will take decades before a significant sense of accomplishment will be ours. Our first task is to gradually reorient our images of the ministry and the church so that our culture can understand the centrality of this task of the church. Education to meet the global challenges of today and tomorrow must be more than one more passing fad of the day. Even though we have mainly concentrated on globalization as human development, we should remember that this can only find its proper place in our commitments if we place the meaning of this concept firmly within the context of the other three meanings of the word as well, in spite of the tensions that will inevitably emerge between them.

ENDNOTES

¹Joseph Hough and John Cobb, *Christian Identity and Theological Education* (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1985).

²Ibid., 43.

³Ibid., 103.

⁴Dennis P. McCann and Charles R. Strain, *Polity and Praxis: A Program for American Practical Theology* (Chicago: Winston Press, 1985).

⁵Edward Farley, *Theologia* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), 85-87.

⁶Hough and Cobb, 91.

⁷Ibid., 105.

⁸Ibid.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰See Don S. Browning, *Religious Ethics and Pastoral Care* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983); "Psychology as Religioethical Thinking," *The Journal of Religion*, 64:2 (April 1984), 139-157; and *Religious Thought and the Modern Psychologies* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986).

If Our Words Could Make It So

Comparative Perspectives from the 1983 and 1989 Surveys on Globalization in Theological Education

David A. Roozen

It is difficult not to become immersed in globalization these days. As a colleague recently put it:

Globalization is happening! Driven by economic and geo-political forces, and embedded in everyday consciousness through the technological virtuosity of the media, one cannot escape the awareness that the reality of global interdependence is increasing—spiraling through amazing and chaotic patterns of polarization and reconciliation. It's even happening in theological education. We don't have to make it happen. It's happening, and there is little we can do to prevent it from happening—in spite of ourselves. The only question is how to make it happen more effectively, how to make it happen more intentionally, in dialogue with our commitments as Christians and as educators.

It has been almost ten years since the leadership of The Association of Theological Schools came to a similar conclusion and began a series of organizational initiatives to act on its further conviction that globalization represented more than a trendy challenge that would fade over time. Rather, it represented:

a highly significant issue that must be seriously addressed. Minimally it involves escaping from ignorance and provincialism; in its most serious consideration it involves us in questions regarding the church's mission to the entire inhabited world.¹

Of course they appointed a committee. Of course this committee began by sketching out a series of foundational questions²—questions that continue to be foundational, the nuances of new understandings notwithstanding. Of course the committee conducted a survey, the results of which are reported by David Schuller.³ And of course that survey did not, could not, and was not intended to answer many of the foundational questions. But the survey did provide a broader picture of accomplishments, thinking, tensions, and expectations among ATS member institutions than had previously been available. It did provide perspective on several of the foundational questions, and it did establish a 1983 benchmark from which change might be assessed.

By 1989 the committee on globalization had become a task force, and as one step toward preparing a plan for the 1990s, it sought to use the 1983 benchmark in two ways. One was to include a number of questions dealing with international student enrollment and faculty involvement with international travel and study in the 1989 annual report forms submitted to ATS by each member institution. The second was to commission a survey to replicate portions of the 1983 survey, to develop questions for possible inclusion in future annual report forms, and to explore the diversity of meanings and purposes attached to globalization by ATS institutions. The purpose of this report is to provide a summary of the 1989 survey findings, giving special attention to changes since 1983 and to the diversity of meanings and purposes attached to the term “globalization” by responding schools. The complete survey follows this article.

The 1989 Survey

The 1989 survey⁴ on “Institutional Response to Global Theological Education” was conducted by the Hartford Seminary Center for Social and Religious Research, in cooperation with the survey subcommittee of the ATS Task Force on Globalization. Chief academic officers of the 205 ATS affiliated institutions received the survey protocol in April 1989. Completed questionnaires were received from 155 (76%) institutions in time to be included in the tabulations and statistical analysis. Completed questionnaires were subsequently received from an addition 13 institutions, increasing the total return to 168 (82%) schools. While not included in the tabulations and statistical analysis, their written comments are reflected in this summary. The high return rate and comparisons between responding and non-responding institutions suggest that with the exception of a very slight bias toward institutions within the “evangelical” Protestant tradition, the survey data are highly representative of the entire population of ATS schools.⁵

Comparisons with the 1983 survey are suggestive, important, and will be made. However, methodological considerations warrant some caution in this regard. Even for non-purists the two surveys are *not* exact replications. For example, as an exploratory study, the 1983 survey relied primarily on open-ended responses; building on that work the 1989 survey was able to use more “efficient” close-ended formats. The earlier survey was sent to CEOs, with different sections then forwarded to a variety of offices; the later survey was sent to and completed by academic officers. The 1983 survey received returns from 110 institutions; the 1989 survey received returns from 168. Conclusion: look for collaborating evidence before risking too much on a direct comparison.

The Emphasis on Globalization Has Increased Since 1983

The above cautions notwithstanding, the weight of evidence contained in the 1989 survey strongly suggests that the emphasis given to globalization in our theological institutions has increased over the last six years. Regardless of whether the future judges globalization to have been a passing fancy or a fundamental reconceptualization of preparation for ministry, there is little doubt that at the current time it is an energizing and catalytic concern within theological education.

Already in 1983, survey results pointed to a high percentage of schools that were both conceptually and programmatically responding to globalization. Additionally, the 1983 survey identified a relatively high percentage of institutions (just under half) that were planning to increase their emphasis on globalization in the near future. The 1989 survey clearly suggests that this planning has paid dividends, that indeed the emphasis on globalization has increased among ATS schools over the last six years, and that it has increased both in terms of a variety of formal and informal programmatic dimensions, and perhaps more importantly, has increased as a conceptual filter for reflecting on the very theological and the epistemological foundations of our educational efforts.

Nearly three of every four academic officers responding to the 1989 survey indicated that the overall emphasis on globalization at their institution had increased at least somewhat in the last five years. One in four indicated that the emphasis had increased significantly. This perception of increased emphasis is supported by a number of comparisons between the 1983 and 1989 surveys.

The most “global” measure of the importance given to globalization in the 1983 survey was the question: “Overall, what degree of importance does the issue of globalization receive on your campus?” Responses were structured along a five point scale ranging from “very important” to “not important.” This exact question was repeated in the 1989 survey. As shown in the following table, there was a significant shift over time toward the “very important” pole of the scale. From 1983 to 1989, the percentage of responding institutions indicating that globalization was more than important (response categories 1 or 2) increased from just over a third to just under two-thirds.

Importance of Globalization					
	Very Important		Important	Not Important	
	1	2	3	4	5
1983	17%	22%	45%	16%	1%
1989	26%	37%	32%	5%	0

Although a bit more tenuous because of differences in question and reporting format between the two surveys, the following are also indicative of an increased emphasis on globalization in the last six years:

- The number of overseas students appears to have increased. In the 1983 survey, 14% of responding institutions reported no “non-North American” students, 33% reported having 10 or more, and the mean number reported was 12. In the 1989 survey, 6% reported no “non-North American” students, 48% reported 10 or more, and the mean number reported was just over 25.
- “Theological views from the Second and Third Worlds” appear to have more affect on scholarly work and curriculum. In the 1983 survey, a third of the responding institutions reported this affect to be minimum, and another third reported it to be moderate. In 1989 only 15% reported the affect to be minimum, 44% reported it to be moderate, and 38% indicated it was “significant.” In both surveys, “liberation” themes dominated the comments describing which theological views were most influential.
- A greater percentage of institutions appear to be offering courses in “other world religions.” The reported figure for the 1983 survey is 68%; the comparable figure in 1989 is 81%.
- More institutions have added courses designed to address global concerns in the last five years than in the years preceding the 1983 survey. The 1983 survey report notes that “slightly over half” had “recently added” new courses to their curriculum “designed to address global concerns.”

- In 1989, 80% of responding institutions reported at least some increase over the previous five years in the courses focusing either on “Third World cultures” or “global issues.”⁶

Comments written in the 1989 questionnaire margins give insight into the nature and diversity of the changes that have occurred. Among them:

Globalization is integral to the new curriculum that was adopted last year.

We have created a new budget line for a position in Global Christianity.

We have developed a fund that promotes exchange of faculty and students with seminaries in the non-Western world.

We have recently re-organized ourselves to increase our number of international students and to better serve and be served by this increasing constituency.

In two lengthy faculty discussions about globalization it was determined that rather than add another course or two to integrate these concerns, it would be better for the faculty to integrate them into existing courses and to modify syllabi to reflect this incorporation—which has begun to happen.

Two years ago we started a Center for Global Mission which has as its goal the permeation of our curriculum with mission/globalization themes.

We have included the requirement of participating in transcultural experiences as an integral part of our M.Div.

We have added courses and faculty in the areas of African, Asian and Latin American theologies and movements.

No programmatic change yet. However, the faculty is engaging in some dynamic discussion with positive movement including the appointment of a special task force.

Even More Change May Lie Ahead

To the extent the 1983 survey provided a representative portrait of institutional intentions, the increased emphasis on globalization evident in the 1989 survey should be no surprise. Forty percent of institutions responding in 1983 indicated plans to increase their work in areas related to the globalization of theological education. In the 1989 survey, just over 50% of responding institutions indicated that they had plans to increase their work related to globalization. To the extent the past correlation between “current”

plans and future increases continues to hold, one can anticipate even more sizable changes in the immediate future than evidenced in the past five years.

Those institutions indicating in the 1989 survey that the overall emphasis given to globalization had increased significantly over the last five years were especially likely to attach the greatest importance to globalization. Similarly, those institutions which have experienced increases over the last few years are also especially likely to have plans to *further* increase their concerns with the globalization of theological education. Clarity about how “global educational programs should best be implemented,” and the availability of special financial resources are also strongly related to plans for increased efforts toward globalization. Institutions with plans for increased efforts toward globalization are, not surprisingly, also most actively seeking special funds for these efforts, this being true even for those institutions that already have some such special funding available to them.

Unfortunately, it is difficult to determine whether projected changes will be basically more of the same (that is, the diffusion of recent innovations) or will push out into unexplored or more problematic territory. Based on the written comments to the survey, my perception is that it will be more of the former than the latter.

Not all ATS institutions, of course, reported increased emphasis being given to globalization in the 1989 survey. Even for those that did, it is difficult to determine from the survey data the extent to which the changes touch the core ethos of the institution. In regard to the latter, both my reading of the survey data and personal experience with numerous schools over the last few years suggest that in most cases, as encouraging as the changes may be, they are more a matter of tinkering around the edges than of fundamental changes of direction, more a matter of addition than of transformation.

Not All Indicators Are on the Upswing

Although the vast majority of items in the 1989 survey point in the direction of an increased emphasis being given to globalization, four items in particular present a cautionary counterpoint.

- The percentage of institutions indicating that “globalization (perhaps identified by other terms) is an explicit curricular objective that has been formally endorsed” is virtually the same in both the 1983 and 1989 surveys (just over two-thirds).

- The percentage of institutions indicating that they have special resources available to fund work related to their global/overseas purposes shows virtually no change from 1983 to 1989 (slightly over half). Additionally, the current survey indicates that less than half of responding institutions are actively seeking additional special funds for such purposes.
- The percentage of institutions indicating that they maintain a regular relationship with another country/other countries is virtually the same in both the 1983 and 1989 surveys (just over half). However, it appears that a larger percentage of institutions that maintain any such relationships have expanded the number of countries with which they maintain contact.
- Despite apparent increases from 1983 to 1989 in the number of international students, the amount and kind of special programming offered to help them become an integral part of a school's community varied as widely in 1989 as it did in 1983. Just under a third of responding institutions indicated in the 1989 survey that they offer no such special programming, and another third said they had only limited orientation/advising programs for overseas students. Additionally, only a fifth of 1989 respondents indicated significant efforts to use the experiences and perspectives of their international students in classes or structured occasions to teach American-born students about life in other cultures.

Bridges and Barriers to Change

In a fall 1989 address to a group of consultants working on issues of globalization and institutional change in theological education, G. Douglass Lewis, president of Wesley Theological Seminary, observed that theological education is much better at analyzing what is and what should be, much better at thinking and talking about change, than it is at actually changing. The poignancy of his remark was very much in evidence at the November 1989 meeting of the Task Force on Globalization, during which several participants expressed frustration over our lack of information and models that would better enable institutions to act on their commitments and conceptualizations. A series of six analytical case studies of "globalization" programs, being developed for use in the 1990 Summer Institute for Globalizing Theological Education, were intended to provide an in-depth look at the interrelationship between commitment, conception, and institutional

change. Nevertheless, the 1989 survey provides some perspective on the bridges and barriers to institutional change as they relate to concerns for globalization.

By far the most frequently mentioned obstacle to change in the 1989 survey was “financial limitations,” and conversely one of the most robust predictors in the survey data of a strong emphasis on globalization was the availability of special resources to fund such an emphasis. These statistical indicators are supported by such comments as:

Limited budget is the biggest problem. We are fighting deficits and thus it is not the time to make a significant commitment to new programs.

Given the small size of our faculty and the fact that all of us are overworked already, anything additional would be next to impossible.

Plans are in place to fund a chair in mission and evangelism—only financial restraints prevent extensive developments in these areas.

Please note that all of these comments follow the tendency to identify an increased emphasis on globalization with *adding* new programs, which of course requires additional new resources. But in a time when more persons are talking financial retrenchment than fiscal expansion in theological education, one has to be concerned about the long term-viability of a strategy of *globalization by addition*. Alternatively, one of the biggest challenges to the globalization of theological education may well be the *transformation of existing resources*.

Perhaps the best news in the 1989 survey regarding this is that the majority of our institutions have special resources for globalization: six of every ten responding institutions. Half the responding seminaries have special funds restricted for scholarships for overseas students studying in North America. About two-fifths have funds for faculty to travel and study overseas. A smaller proportion have funds for lecture series and guest speakers on globalization (30%), and a few have special budgets for centers focusing on globalization themes. Whatever the specific use of these special resources, they are most likely to be restricted endowment funds (40%), denominational grants (29%), foundation grants (21%) or special fund raising drives (19%).

The bad news is that 95% of responding institutions see financial limitations as more than a minor obstacle blocking their efforts toward increasing the emphasis they give to globalization, and in a third of the institutions, it is seen as a major obstacle. Relatedly, lack of adequate staffing

ranks as the second most serious barrier: noted as more than a minor obstacle by 87% of institutions; as a major obstacle by 19%.

Funding is obviously a crucial consideration, especially within a strategic framework that emphasizes addition. A major second factor identifiable in the 1989 survey in regard to the potential for change is more related to the possibility for transformation. Both within the “mainline” and the “evangelical” Protestant traditions, independent seminaries give considerably greater emphasis to globalization than their denominationally related counterparts. A breakdown of Roman Catholic institutions by whether they were diocesan or order seminaries is not available in the survey data, but conversation with several Roman Catholic educators suggests that one would find a similar difference, with order seminaries giving greater emphasis to globalization than diocesan seminaries. Why this is the case is a matter of speculation, but I suspect a major dynamic at work is related to the following comment from a seminary that gives relatively little emphasis to globalization and has no current plans to change:

Our primary responsibility is to prepare pastors to serve in our churches in the United States.

Since denominationally and diocesan related seminaries are numerically dominant within ATS, it appears that another one of the major challenges to the globalization of theological education is the clear articulation of the *utilitarian* value of a globalized perspective for the typical local church pastor. Perhaps relatedly, over half of respondents to the 1989 survey indicated that, “lack of theological clarity as to the weight that should be placed on global as compared to local contexts” was a significant block toward increasing their institution’s emphasis on globalization.

In addition to the availability of special funding and “denominational independence,” institutions giving high emphasis to globalization are especially likely (1) to have globalization as an explicit curricular objective, (2) to have the highest percentages of minority students in their M.Div programs, and (3) to indicate that the amount of new programming of all kinds (not just that related to globalization) has increased over the last five years. Further, they are least likely to point to lack of educational clarity concerning pedagogy, the disinterest of senior faculty, or maintaining “the tradition” as obstacles to their efforts. There is no significant relationship between the orientation toward globalization most in keeping with an institution’s fundamental commitments (see below), and the degree of emphasis given to globalization.

When asked who has provided the initiative for their school's concern with globalization, just over 80% of responding institutions in 1989 pointed to presidents and deans, and just under 80% pointed to senior faculty. Two-thirds of the institutions also noted international students in this regard. Junior faculty, guest lecturers, and missionaries on campus, and students in first degree programs were credited by just over half of the institutions. The initiative of ATS was noted by just over a third of the responding institutions.

A Diversity of Meanings and Purposes

As a generic term in ATS discussions, "globalization" refers to:

programs and resources designed especially to aid students in understanding and appreciating Second and Third World social and cultural perspectives as they influence and are influenced by religious communities.⁷

We all know, of course, that globalization has a rather wide range of more specific meanings, and that concerns with "globalization" can be and are directed toward a variety of purposes. To the extent the term has a consensual core, it appears to include, at the very least, the development of cross-cultural sensitivities. With which cultures, and to what purposes, however, is a bit less clear.

With regard to "which cultures," the 1989 survey suggests that our institutions are increasingly connecting with African and Latin American cultures—both at home and abroad. It also suggests that historical ties to China and the Philippines are increasingly being re-established. Given the strong ties of North American theological education to Western Europe identified in the 1983 survey, especially in relation to faculty experience and travel, it seems highly probable that the dramatic political developments of the last year will lead to a similar movement of "re-connection" with Eastern Europe. How this might enhance or restrict the "Third World" emphases developed in our theological institutions over the last ten years is an interesting question to ponder.

In regard to the question of "toward what purposes," the 1989 survey provides both interesting new insights and confirmation of old suspicions. Don Browning's "Globalization and the Task of Theological Education in North America,"⁸ identifies four distinguishable but not necessarily contradictory orientations toward globalization, which were incorporated into the survey. For brevity's sake, I will refer to the orientations in the following as:

ecumenical, social justice, evangelical, and inter-faith dialogue. It should be noted, however, that the survey questionnaire used slightly modified versions of Browning's extended definitions, not these shorthand labels. To respect Browning's caution that the orientations are not necessarily contradictory, respondents were first asked how much emphasis was given to *each* orientation at their institution. Then they were asked which *one* of the four was most in keeping with their institution's fundamental commitments, and following that, which *one* was most implemented in their school's program and ethos (see questions 2 a-d, 3, and 4 in the appended questionnaire).

Consistent with Browning's caution, 70% of responding institutions indicated that two or more of the orientations received either "a great deal" or "much" emphasis, and a third indicated the same for three or more of the orientations. The ecumenical, social justice, and dialogue orientations were most frequently inter-related; the dialogue and evangelism orientations, least frequently inter-related. Just over a third of the institutions indicated strong emphasis being given to both the evangelism and social justice orientations. The tension between dialogue and evangelism in the survey data echoes one of the questions raised by the original committee on globalization: "Is 'proclamation' compatible with 'dialogue'?"⁹ Apparently it is not, at least in the practice of the majority of our institutions. On the more affirming side, the frequent commingling of ecumenical, social justice, and evangelistic orientations in the survey data is consistent with the committee's commitment to relating theological education's service to church unity with its service to the mission of the church to the world.

From the perspective of multiple orientations co-existing within any given school, the survey findings suggest that the greatest overall weight of emphasis within ATS is given to the social justice orientation, what Browning describes as the "mission of the church . . . to improve and develop the lives of the millions of poor, starving, and politically disadvantaged people." Seventy percent of academic officers responding to the 1989 survey indicated that this receives "a great deal" or "much" emphasis at their school. "The church's universal mission to evangelize" and "ecumenical global cooperation" were virtually tied for second ranking, with just over half of respondents checking either "a great deal" or "much" emphasis. "Dialogue between Christianity and other religions" received least overall emphasis, with just over a third of institutions noting it received either "a great deal" or "much" emphasis. It should be noted that the overall middle ranking of "evangelism"

arises because of the “averaging” of extremes, i.e., of the four orientations, it was most likely to receive either “a great deal” or little or no emphasis.

When asked which *one* of the four orientations was *most* in keeping with an institution’s fundamental commitments, a pattern emerges that is very different from the multiple weightings. Just over half of respondents pointed to the evangelism orientation as most in keeping with their fundamental commitments; social justice (23%) and ecumenical cooperation (21%) were virtually tied for second, and only 5% of respondents pointed to dialogue with other religions. When viewed from the perspective of this priority listing, the survey data raise at least two concerns relative to the original committee on globalization’s, and the subsequent Task Force’s, orienting questions and assumptions. First, given the predominance of institutions within ATS with fundamental “evangelical” commitments, are dispositions that tend to view globalization as human development, and as inter-faith dialogue and ecumenical cooperation, warranted? Second, dialogue among different Christian traditions within North American theological education may be as necessary as, and perhaps even more problematic than, dialogue among the religions of the world.

For the vast majority of schools (80%) responding to the 1989 survey, the orientation “most actually implemented” was consistent with the orientation most in keeping with its fundamental commitments. Within Roman Catholic institutions and denominationally related seminaries associated with “main-line” Protestantism, however, there were noticeable tensions between either a commingling of evangelical commitments, and especially social justice implementations, or a commingling of social justice commitments and ecumenical implementations. Perhaps such tensions shed further light on why both these groups of institutions tend to give less overall emphasis to globalization than other groups.

Responsibility, Knowledge, and Contextual Perspective

When put specifically in terms of institutional goals for students related to globalization, the greatest overall weight of emphasis among schools responding to the 1989 survey fell into three areas.

- Ensuring that students are confronted with questions of their global responsibility.
- Ensuring that students have a basic grasp of *facts* about the cultural, racial, ethnic, and other special groups to/with whom they may minister.

- Helping students gain interpretive perspective and tools on:
 - how their own faith is shaped by their own personal experience;
 - the particularity of the social context of their likely ministry settings; and,
 - on their own national or ethnic culture so that they can better distinguish between what in it is of value and what is problematic.

This final point underscores the absolute centrality of the issues being addressed by the research papers commissioned by the Task Force on Globalization, including:

- the kinds of social analysis being advocated;
- the relationship between theology and culture being advanced;
- the approach being taken to bridge the universal and particular; and,
- the extent to which our pedagogy is truly appropriate to our intention.

To the extent that other current initiatives focusing on the globalization of theological education in North America, including the case studies being prepared for the ATS Summer Institute, provide new perspectives on institutional change, on the ability of our theological disciplines to incorporate “non-theological” scholarship, on our capacity for theological engagement across Christian traditions, and on our use and abuse of international students and institutional partners, there is much evidence that the increasing emphasis on globalization within our theological institutions is not only happening, but is happening with an increasing sensitivity to the issues at stake. Whether our thinking bridges to doing—whether our words can “make it so”—remains to be seen.

ENDNOTES

¹David S. Schuller, "Editorial Introduction," *Theological Education* XXII (Spring 1986): 5.

²Donald W. Shriver, Jr., "The Globalization of Theological Education: Setting the Task," *Theological Education* XXII (Spring 1986): 7-18.

³David S. Schuller, "Globalization in Theological Education: Summary and Analysis of Survey Data," *Theological Education* XXII (Spring 1986): 19-56.

⁴The 1989 survey and its initial comparative analysis with the 1983 survey were co-directed by Adair Lummis. Her expertise, insight, and perspective are foundationally present both in the structure of the 1989 questionnaire and this interpretive rendering of its results.

⁵Specifically, comparisons between responding and non-responding institutions show no significant differences in regard to size, region, or percentage of minority group or women students. However, denominationally related seminaries within the "evangelical" Protestant tradition are slightly overrepresented among respondents, and both "mainline" Protestant independent and Roman Catholic seminaries are slightly underrepresented.

The questionnaire consisted primarily of close-ended, multiple-response format questions developed from an analysis of responses to the largely open-ended questions used in the 1983 survey. These were supplemented with two new sets of questions dealing with the meaning and purposes of globalization, plus a number of open-ended probes. Exact question and response category wordings and the original order of questions can be found in the tabulations appended to this report.

⁶Additional evidence of an increased emphasis on globalization appears in the 1989 survey's set of questions exploring perceptions of change in a variety of programmatic areas. Eleven items in this set of questions deal with various manifestations of a concern with globalization. For ten of the eleven items, a majority of responding institutions note at least some increase over the last five years. For only two of the eleven items does the percentage of institutions indicating some decrease reach five percent. Significant increases in the number of courses dealing with globalization and the number of international students have already been noted. Study opportunities in Second and Third World countries for students and faculty are also among those areas that have increased the most.

⁷Schuller, "Globalization in Theological Education: Summary and Analysis of Survey Data," 19-56.

⁸Don S. Browning, "Globalization and the Task of Theological Education in North America," *Theological Education* XXIII (Autumn 1986): 43-44. This article has been reprinted in this issue.

⁹Shriver, "The Globalization of Theological Education: Setting the Task," 9.

ATS Task Force Survey of Institutional Response to Global Theological Education

The survey was conducted for the Task Force by the Hartford Seminary Center for Social and Religious Research during the spring of 1989. Tabulations are based on 155 returns (76%) from the 205 institutions originally receiving the mailed questionnaire. The number of "no answer" (NA) for any given item is less than 7 (0.5%) unless otherwise indicated.

1. Is globalization (perhaps identified by other terms) an explicit curricular objective that has been formally endorsed at your institution?

68% YES 32% NO (NA=12)

2. Whether or not globalization is an explicit objective, as you hear conversations and discern commitments to "globalization" at your institution, how much emphasis is given to each of the following four distinguishable (but not necessarily contradictory) meanings of globalization?

	AMOUNT OF EMPHASIS					Mean
	A Great Deal	Much	Some	Little	None	
a. The church's universal mission to evangelize the world, to take the message of the gospel of Jesus Christ to all people and nations that they will come to know Jesus as Lord and Savior.	34%	22	21	17	6	2.40
b. Ecumenical global cooperation among the various manifestations of the Christian church, including working toward unity and exhibiting greater mutual respect among churches of various theological perspectives in the First, Second, and Third Worlds.	22	32	36	8	2	2.36
c. Christianity's dialogue with other religions so that each religion may be better understood by the other, and deepen its own self-understanding.	9	26	38	21	5	2.88
d. The church's mission to the world to address the immediate needs of, and underlying causes related to the poor, the hungry, the homeless, and the politically and economically powerless.	32	38	23	6	1	2.06

3. Looking back on the four meanings of globalization on the last page, which one do you feel is:

	a	b	c	d
a. most in keeping with your institutions most fundamental <u>commitments</u> ?	51%	21	5	23
b. <u>most</u> actually implemented in your seminary program and ethos?	42%	27	7	24

4. To what extent **is** each of the following an important goal of your institution?

	As A Goal, It Is:					Mean
	VERY IMPORTANT		NOT IMPORTANT			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	
a. Evangelization of persons in "first world" cultures	40%	26	17	10	7	2.18
b. Evangelization of persons in "second and third world" cultures	30	22	22	16	9	2.51
c. Developing a sympathetic understanding of the religious alternatives to Christianity	5	14	42	29	10	3.24
d. Teaching students about other religions so they can better appreciate and proclaim the value of Christianity	9	30	35	19	7	2.85
e. Ensuring that all students are confronted with questions of their global responsibility	40	33	23	3	0	1.90
f. Teaching students to value ecumenical cooperation with other Christian denominations/traditions	33	34	23	8	2	2.12
g. Teaching students to value working cooperatively with those from other religions	12	26	30	24	8	2.89
h. Ensuring that students have a basic grasp of <u>facts</u> about the cultural, racial, ethnic and other special groups to/with whom they may minister	38	35	22	4	1	1.93
i. Helping students reflect on the complex global problems of hunger, population growth, preserving natural resources, etc. from the perspective of the Christian faith	30	38	26	5	1	2.10

	As A Goal, It Is:					Mean
	VERY IMPORTANT			NOT IMPORTANT		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	
j. Teaching students to reflect theologically on the differences between themselves and people of other nationalities and cultures	23	42	29	6	1	2.20
k. Equipping students to teach others to/with which they will minister to be more sensitive to global issues	23	35	36	6	0	2.24
l. Helping students gain interpretive perspective and tools on:						
i. how their own personal faith is shaped by their own personal experience	47	37	14	2	0	1.72
ii. the particularity of the social context of their likely ministry settings	38	45	14	2	1	1.81
iii. on their own national or ethnic culture so that they can better distinguish between what in it is worthy of praise and what should be rejected	28	44	23	5	0	2.04

5. Overall, what degree of importance does the issue of globalization receive on your campus:

As A Goal, It Is:

VERY IMPORTANT			NOT IMPORTANT	
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
26%	37	32	5	0

6. To what extent are theological views from the Second and Third Worlds affecting the scholarly work or curriculum of your school?

Check one

- 15% minimally, in a limited number of cases or courses
- 44 moderately, these are central to the work and teaching of a few faculty
- 38 significantly, many faculty take account of these views in their own research and teaching
- 3 don't know, it is difficult for me to assess the extent such views are used or taught here

7. **To the extent there is interest in globalization** on your campus, from where has this initiative for concern with globalization come? Check all that apply

- 81% chief administrators, e.g., presidents, deans
- 20 board of trustees
- 79 senior full-time faculty
- 55 junior full-time faculty
- 47 department of missions/institutes or centers for global issues, world religions, peace and justice, etc.
- 15 alumni
- 52 students in first degree programs (MA, MTS, M.Div.)
- 18 students in advanced degree programs
- 67 foreign students
- 53 visiting faculty, guest lecturers, or missionaries on campus
- 30 denominational executives and leaders
- 8 university departments or faculty with which we are affiliated
- 36 ATS
- 8 other: Who? What?

8. Over the last **five** years, has your institution increased or decreased its offerings, personnel, or other resources in the following areas?

	INCREASED		STAYED	DECREASED		MEAN
	MUCH	SOME	SAME	SOME	MUCH	
a. The overall emphasis on globalization at your institution	22%	51	25	1	1	2.06
b. The number of courses with a focus on Third World cultures	9	56	34	1	0	2.26
c. The number of courses with a focus on global issues - world hunger, ecology, peace, etc.	6	43	49	2	0	2.47
d. The proportion of foreign nationals in the student body	15	46	33	5	1	2.31
e. The number of second and third world visiting faculty or lecturers on campus	9	32	57	2	1	2.54

	IN THE LAST FIVE YEARS IT HAS					MEAN
	INCREASED		STAYED	DECREASED		
	MUCH	SOME	SAME	SOME	MUCH	
f. The number of special events on campus dealing with second or third world cultures or religions	6	47	43	3	1	2.44
g. The number of special events on campus dealing with global issues - world hunger, ecology, peace, etc.	10	53	34	2	1	2.30
h. The number of study opportunities in the second and third world you offer to students and faculty - traveling seminars, exchange programs, etc.	18	43	38	1	1	2.23
i. Student or faculty involvement in national religious or secular programs for world assistance: CROP, Pax Christia, Bread for the World, Nuclear Freeze, etc.	7	32	56	4	1	2.60
j. Student or faculty involvement in local task forces or organizations for advocacy or service for the needy, environmental and/or global concerns	6	46	47	1	0	2.43
k. The number of full-time faculty who have taken study leaves or sabbaticals in countries outside of North America	13	41	44	1	1	2.35
l. The amount of new seminary programming of any kind and/or significant revisions of existing programs	20	54	25	1	0	2.06
m. The amount of seminary endowment (other than through appreciation)	15	40	40	5	1	2.36
n. The amount of foundation, private, or denominational funds for developing new programs of any kind	15	31	49	4	1	2.44
o. The extent of cooperative programs or sharing of resources with other seminaries and colleges	9	34	55	2	0	2.51

9. **Approximately (your best estimate)** how many non-North American students are enrolled in degree programs at your institution in 1988-89?

6%	0 or no answer	10%	20-29 students
46	1-9 students	16	30-39 students
18	10-19 students	5	100 or more

10. *If More than One or Two Foreign Students Are Enrolled, Please Answer the Following Questions. If Not, please skip to question 11 below.*

A. Do you have a program(s) to assist such students to become an integral part of the seminary community? **Check One**

29% No, foreign students use the same advising, orientation, etc. as North American students;

34 Yes, limited special program(s), e.g., one/two days of orientation for foreign students and families and/or at least one or two individual or group interviews with a foreign student advisor;

19 Yes, moderately extensive program(s), e.g., a foreign student office with an active faculty advisor who arranges regular meetings for foreign students as a group and is also available for individual counselling;

10 Yes, quite extensive program(s), e.g., active foreign student club(s) on campus with regular meetings and social events, a foreign student office with several advisors, and seminary attention to seeing that overseas students are comfortable on campus and are incorporated into the seminary community;

8 Other. NA=29

B. To what extent are the experiences and perspectives of the foreign students here used in classes or specially arranged occasions to teach American-born seminarians more about life in other countries?

21% quite a bit

63 some

14 little/none

2 no idea NA=24

C. To what extent are informal relationships encouraged between foreign nationals and American-born seminarians - by dorm arrangements, social events, retreats, etc.?

61% quite a bit

32 some

5 little/none

2 no idea NA=25

11. Is there a specific region or country(ies) with which your school maintains relations?

55% YES 45% NO (NA=9)

If Yes, please name the country, and for each country named briefly describe the nature of these relations (type of contact and how maintained).

COUNTRIES

7%	British Isles
8	English Speaking (Canada/Australia)
5	Western Europe (Italy/France)
13	Middle East
34	African nations
26	Far Eastern
4	Soviet block
11	Caribbean
22	Mexico and South America
1	Western European
5	Third World generally
1	Israel
1	Scandinavian

ACTIVITY IN LISTED COUNTRY ABOVE:

27%	Scholarships, recruiters to get foreign students to come to the U.S. seminary
31	Faculty and/or student exchange programs
38	Other cooperative arrangements between U.S. seminary and foreign seminary or branch of U.S. seminary in other country
7	Traveling seminars or overseas field placement (outside of higher education institution) for U.S. seminary students
29	General activity of denomination of seminary in country in establishing churches, schools, hospitals, or alumni activity as missionaries

12. For each of the following: (A) please indicate whether this offering currently exists at your seminary, **and** (B) whether the seminary intends to continue the current offering as it is now, increase or decrease its offering in this area, within the next few years.

	Circle Answer for both A and B:					
	Now Has		Plans To			(NA)
	Yes	No	Same	Increase	Decrease	
a. world religions survey, comparative religion	60%	40	75	25	0	(28)
b. Islam	31	69	73	27	0	(48)
c. Judaism	58	42	84	16	0	(40)
d. Eastern religions	37	63	78	20	2	(49)
e. sects	41	54	87	13	0	(46)
f. missiology, missions	77	23	57	43	0	(35)
g. social justice, peace	88	15	72	28	0	(26)
h. ministry to ethnic minorities	68	32	49	51	0	(32)
i. cross-cultural communication and race relations	66	34	56	44	0	(35)
j. learning to read/speak Spanish	34	66	75	24	1	(40)
k. learning to read/speak other non-biblical languages, which:						
ka. _____						
kb. _____						
kc. _____						
l. global ecological and population problems and concerns	45	54	72	28	0	(37)

13. Which of the above courses the seminary now offers are **required for the M.Div. degree** (or for special tracks within this M.Div.)?

Circle letters below corresponding to any of the above courses which are required:

a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j	ka	kb	kc	l
21%	3	10	5	3	39	46	19	19	6	2	1	1	13

14. Are any special resources available to fund work related to the global/overseas purposes of your institution?

59% YES 41% NO

If YES,

a. For what **purposes** are these special financial resources provided? Check all that apply.

39% scholarship funds to support faculty and seminarians travelling and studying outside of North America

50 scholarship funds to help support foreign students coming to the United States to study

14 for the work of one or two of the seminary's special centers or institutes

30 to put on a special lecture series or the like

10 other

b. From what **sources** are these special financial resources obtained? Check all that apply

40% specified seminary endowment funds

29 denominational grants/support

21 foundation grants and assistance

19 special fund raising drives by seminary constituencies, e.g. Alumni, Women's Auxiliary, etc.

11 other

15. Is your seminary actively trying to get additional special funds for global educational programs or overseas studies and students now?

32% no

13 no, but intend to soon

41 yes, to some extent

14 yes, to a great extent

16. The following are obstacles that can block efforts toward increasing an institution's emphasis on globalization. For each, please indicate the extent to which you perceive it to be an obstacle to such efforts at your institution.

	Great	Much	Some	Little	None	Mean
a. Lack of adequate staffing to put on such programs	19	32	36	9	3	2.45
b. Financial limitations	33	39	23	4	1	1.99

	Great	Much	Some	Little	None	Mean
c. Lack of theological clarity as to the weight placed on global as compared to local contexts in reflection, mission, and ministry	5	13	37	28	17	3.40
d. Lack of educational clarity or agreement as to how global educational programs should best be implemented here	6	14	42	24	14	3.26
e. Senior faculty not interested	1	5	26	33	35	3.95
f. Students not interested	1	7	26	42	25	3.86
g. Real questions as to whether this seminary can provide foreign students an education they can use in their countries	6	16	30	32	16	3.35
h. Difficulty of doing programs involving two or more departments, fields	1	7	24	40	28	3.87
i. Dean/president cannot/does not use negative sanctions against departments or faculty for failure to follow through as agreed on programs, courses	2	0	7	30	61	4.48*
j. The faculty cannot seem to agree on any particular direction for the seminary or curricula here	1	2	11	38	48	4.29*
k. The Board of Trustees will not let the seminary try new programs or make major changes	1	0	6	33	60	4.52*
l. The M.Div. curriculum is set by the denomination: its given standards cannot be altered either for foreign students or to make course substitutions for the many required classes	3	9	15	19	54	4.13*
m. The emphasis is on maintaining <u>the tradition</u> here, avoiding changing for "fads"	2	3	27	32	35	3.95
n. In recent years, experimental and innovative programs have not proved successful here, and this has resulted in reluctance to try anything new	1	1	6	39	53	4.43*

*NA range from 8 to 13

17. Has your school developed plans to increase in any fashion its concerns with issues related to globalization in theological education?

59% YES 41% NO (NA=16)

The Quest and the Questions

Assumptions and Issues of Theology for Theological Education That Means to be “Global” in the North American Context

Donald W. Shriver, Jr.

*“We shall not cease from exploration
and the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.”¹*

T.S. Eliot’s lines apply supremely to that presumptuous branch of human knowledge called theology. But even a little knowledge of “the One with whom we have to do” requires some sober extensions of the Eliot line: To know God for the first time is to know that there are many new times ahead, when we shall have to learn again what we thought we knew, in order to learn it better.

Perhaps this is nothing more than the theological spirit which the Protestant Reformation sought to recover from the legacy of biblical faith—“God has yet more light to break forth from God’s Holy Word.” So to confess, with Pastor John Robinson, is to suggest an image of the Christian life that affects the method of Christian theology: the image is pilgrimage, and the method is one that assumes that the “light” apparent to previous generations of the faithful, while worth returning to, is never adequate to illuminate the new paths upon which one’s own later generation must walk. This image also suggests that even in our dependence upon self-revelation for our knowledge of God, we cannot expect to receive that revelation in abstraction from the times, the circumstances, and the events in which we now live. Some Christian theologians sometimes dispense in principle with the contextual, historical prisms that catch and reflect the Light by which Christians mean to live, but such abstractness seems remote from the faith of our biblical forebears.

It also seems remote from the meaning of orthodox New Testament claims like “no one can say ‘Jesus is Lord’ except by the Holy Spirit” (I

Editor’s Note: This paper was commissioned by the ATS Task Force on Globalization in 1988.

Corinthians 12:3). Christians who claim to know anything of God, in any generation, count on the presence of this Spirit as the great Interpreter of the Word, the great Companion on the pilgrimage, the great Guarantee that the One we know anew is God and not an idol. What can divine presence mean to us if not presence in the concrete times and circumstances of our lives? Apart from that present presence, orthodox faith in the Creator and in the Incarnation means nothing.

Perhaps the most colossal, scarcely spoken theological assumption in all the discussion of “the globalization of theological education” in recent years among North American theological schools, is here: Whatever else “globalization” may mean, it means something that the very present Spirit of God is seeking to teach the world and those who presume to teach anything in the name of God. “Test the spirits to see whether they are of God,” the writer of I John 4:1 advised Christians; discern the Spirit of the One who raised Jesus from the dead. As Professor Christopher Morse of Union Theological Seminary frequently reminds his students, theological education seeks to enable the future spiritual and intellectual leaders of the church to test the spirits by the Spirit, so that neither the church nor the world may fall into idolatry. The quest for a more “globalized” theological consciousness, ethos, and curriculum among our schools has been undertaken—we dare to believe—because the Spirit urges us to this quest. If we are uncertain where it will lead, even uncertain about where we are located in it, we can still believe that it is a right and urgent quest because it is “of the Spirit.” Like every other experience leading to our conversion and reconversion to this faith, we can celebrate stumbling in a right direction as preferable to a confident walk in a wrong one. Far less important than names we choose for this pilgrimage is the fact that we are on it, in response to a Guide more knowledgeable than ourselves.

What Would a Globalized Theological Education Look Like?

If we knew, of course, we would not be merely stumbling towards it. But we know enough from the intentions of the faithful who preceded us, from our deliberation upon our own times, and from signs lifted up around us, to discern some outlines ahead. Like all such outlines in the misty human future, some of these will prove to be misperceptions on our part. But others may be anticipations of the Eschaton. So far in the discussions of globalization among member schools of ATS, the anticipations have certain features. What would a globalized theological education look like?

1. It would open faculty and students to continuous learning from churches, cultures, and religions in other parts of the world, as educational

response to *what it means to believe in God who is Creator, Ruler, and Savior of the whole world, now and forever.*

2. It would affirm the educational partnership of the churches of the world as necessary for defining the mission of the whole church to the whole world, *on grounds of a new sense that the church is one body with many members equally participating in the witness of the whole body.* Educationally, the whole participates, not merely in performing the mission but in envisioning it from the beginning.

3. It would incorporate into every major aspect of the educational ethos of the school the attempt to break out of provincial theological understandings of the Gospel, the Church, and humanity, and it would do so in patterns of regular communication with other “provinces” of the globe. A major instrument of this communication would be the presence of Christian scholars and students in each other’s institutions, *because personal presence, we believe, remains a primary and indispensable instrument of the Spirit’s presence in the church and the human world.*

4. It would address, regularly and for many years to come, one expression of human sin which is old in human history and presumably well-known to educated Christians: the proclivity of the strong and well-off to ignore the weak and the poor. Globalized theological education will address this proclivity, *because we believe that the God of Jesus Christ crucified and risen is especially attentive to those humans whom other humans are paying the least attention to, “the least of these my brothers and sisters.”*

5. It would assume, for purposes of curriculum construction and training of future teachers of all theological disciplines, that *all of those disciplines* must open their intellectual windows to contributions from the history, the experience, and the intellectual formulations of churches and their teachers from many parts of the world, *because we understand that all our academic understandings are vulnerable to provincialism, because in no part of its knowledge of God does any part of the church have the right to claim superiority, because the whole theological curriculum should be deemed “basic,” and because global perspectives are equally basic to the whole.*

6. It would open its students and faculty to the significance of global Christian consciousness for the understanding and performance of every local Christian ministry and mission, *because we believe that God stands already self-revealed in Jesus of Nazareth as the Lord of every locality in relation to every other.* It would therefore, be education, as always in church

history, for particular ministries and missions, which are at once very local and very global, *because sensitivity to the riches of the human knowledge of God around the world will, we believe, sensitize us to those same riches on our own doorsteps.*

This dimly envisioned outline of a global theological education of the future owes more to underlying (and here underlined) theological beliefs than to programmatic patterns implicit in some of the outline. Our exploration of programs will further clarify and extend these beliefs. But already, in the ATS discussions and in many a North American theological school, theological questions arise in the midst of this quest. Some of these questions are implicit in our attempt to bring coherence to these beliefs and correspondence between them and our times and circumstances. Other questions grow out of honest perplexity on our part as to how we can be faithful to certain older theological and practical commitments of our churches, while being open to new theology and new practices. Yet other questions arise on the margin between our best theological reflections and the heavy inertial weight of institutionalized habit in our schools. Below is a summation, and brief illustration, of what seem to be the major substantively theological questions requiring much further exploration. (Doubtless this is not an adequate listing of the issues. When any list of key issues appears in any document written by Christians in any part of the world now, we must assume that the list is inadequate, not only because God remains “above all we ask or think,” but because the whole company of Christians, like the whole company of humans, is above what any one member of the company can ask or think.)

Questions that Meet Us in This Quest

As is appropriate to any faith that expresses itself regularly with a holistic, universal concept, one cannot easily disentangle theological issues from other human issues at stake in this discussion. What will globalization *cost* us in budget priorities and shifting of funds from one budget line to another? It is not conventionally theological to ask this question, but in an institutional world where human ultimate economic concerns are often assumed, without revision, to be already correlated to the Gospel, such a question is already heavily freighted with something theological. It assumes that we know where some of the false spirits lurk: in seminary budget lines. This short paper is intended only as a summary of theological assumptions and related theological issues, but the *defiance of the incarnational principles* in much of our writing of this sort should not go unnoticed. Theologies of

globalization are only a bare start towards globalization itself. Theologians, especially, need frequent reminding of that.

1. *How can contemporary Christians think evangelically without thinking imperialistically?*

The question is deeper than the repentance required of every Christian generation for its idolatry of cultural baggage. It concerns the very idea of a Gospel, which, like the exclusiveness of monotheism, requires sharing by one group of witnesses with every other human in the world. In their revolt against the alliance of Christian missionaries with imperialism, some leaders of the no-longer-younger churches decry the missionary impulse altogether. It is as though, for them, Matthew 28:19 is out of date or no longer applicable. If one says that the indigenous churches are now the carriers of the Good News to people in their locales who are not Christian believers, the problem is merely relocated. The issue is spiritually, theologically momentous. It has much to do with Christians' relations with people of other faiths and people of no faith at all. And it has even more to do with the integrity of Christian faith with its own biblical tradition.

2. *Can there be a true birth of globally enriched theological education without a rebirth of ecumenical urgency in the way we all define and experience the church?*

Critics of the organized ecumenical movements of this century tend to forget that the modern ecumenical impulse had its most powerful roots in two groups of church leaders in the late nineteenth century: missionaries and Bible scholars. The mission field experience provided great pragmatic confirmation of John 17:21: "...that they may all be one...so that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." Missionaries discovered that the static of Christian denominationalism obscured the call to conversion to One Lord, so that one of the imperialisms that they and their converts learned to suspect was this legacy of division imported from Western church history. Simultaneously, an upsurge of new biblical scholarship united the scholars across not only Protestant-Protestant lines but Catholic-Protestant lines. Ironically, North American theological education reflects a resplitting of theological party-loyalties between those schools that acclaim the evangelical mission (and the sole authority of the Bible) and those that affirm ecumenical openness to partnership with the maturing churches of the globe. The theological issue here is not about words but about the integral, biblically-

based, intimate relation between one Gospel, one Lord, one Mission, *and* one church. Church unity was low on the list of theological priorities in the teaching of a majority of theological schools in North America in the 1980s. The globalization of theological education in the 1990s will require a rebirth of ecumenical seriousness, or it will not be a globalization equally internal and external to the churches.

3. *What is the relation between our quest for community among the churches of the world and our quest for community among all humans of the world?*

The eruption of the globalization concern among us owes as much to our experience in the contemporary world of global economic, political, and cultural contiguity as it does to our theologies and missionary imperatives. Our concern for “peace with justice,” for example, springs from promises and dangers facing humankind on an unprecedented scale, and assessment of these changes—in terms of “what the Spirit says to the churches” through them—is an ongoing requirement for Christian theologians who mean to serve the cause of human survival into the next century. Perhaps our normative, theological priority should be for the issue of peace, justice, and survival for humans around the world rather than for our intellectual and missionary partnerships with each other in the world Christian movement. If God loves the world (and not just the church), if God was in Christ reconciling the world (and not just humans who now believe in that reconciliation), how can we any longer use the term “ecumenical” or “global” without primary reference to humanity as a whole? Some liberation theology, with its weak doctrine of the church and its strong doctrine of social change, may be on the right track here. Or are we called to make any such choice? Should the strengths of both doctrines grow reciprocally?

4. *Is globalization of theological perspective an imperative for theological education throughout the world, or is it an imperative peculiarly appropriate for the churches of the so-called First World?*

A Caribbean theologian put the issue to the ATS Globalization Committee in 1984: “You North Americans need to be globalized; we need to be indigenized.” Almost any visit to the churches of the developing world—China is an example—informs the visitor that Christians there are very conscious indeed of the churches of the West. In China, the struggle against the Western denominational legacy is tangible in almost every congregation. Many leaders in this struggle fear a return of an old form of global Christianity

in the form of a return of American missionaries and a resurgence of the old denominationalism. It is a truism that in a world where the strong and the weak relate to each other unequally, the weak are invariably aware of the strong as part of their survival. The strong can afford to be relatively unaware of the weak, or presumptuous regarding their needs. How do theologians protect the word "globalization" from turning into another term for theological (and kindred) imperialism? The question is peculiarly pertinent to the churches and seminaries of North America. Minority Christian communities of many countries have a conscious need for membership in a world Christian community, a need often unknown to Christians in North America. We are the ones who most need to be taught our need of them, if we mean to observe the letter and the spirit of I Corinthians 12. And we are the ones who most need to repent of imperial globalism in our own religious past.

5. *By what diversity of means will the weak of the earth speak to the strong of the earth in the churches? Who, what, and where are the instruments of the Spirit's word in this global relationship?*

This issue arises on the border between the theological questions posed under 3 and 4, in the previous section, and programmatic approaches to exchange of persons among theological and church centers of the world. Should the emphasis in exchange of persons be upon North Americans who go for some period to live in settings in Africa, Latin America, and Asia? Is the need equal for the other half of the exchange? The practical problems here are many: Scarce monies for travel from the Third World to the First; increasingly scarce monies from the First to subsidize such travel; perceived scarcity of time and energy for such travel among students and (especially) faculty of North American schools. None of these problems should obscure our sense of the *theological* indispensability of such mutual personal presences, a sense fortified in all those ecumenical meetings whose lifetime fruits have often been the friendships begun there. But scholarly exchanges and ecumenical meetings will probably always be experiences open to a minority of church leaders, and the minority will always tend to be disproportionately larger in those churches and countries with the greatest resources to support these exchanges. What then are other instruments of theologically significant communication and education among the members of the world Christian community? Of the world human community? The key qualifier for us has to be, "theologically significant." In our ordinary schooling, books are our chief answer. In the extraordinary electronic dawn which the whole world is now experiencing, a ready ordinary answer is probably "televised evange-

lism.” There is much testing of spirits still to come in or assessment of both of these answers. Means shape ends: media, messages, languages, meanings. We do not yet know how to match all these theological and communicative integrities. We must learn to do so.

6. *Can spiritual vulnerability to others be combined with the intellectual integrity of theological disciplines which have originated chiefly in the labors of many generations of Western scholars?*

There is a clash here—well known to most theological faculties in Europe and North America—between the mutuality appropriate to Christians who confess to each other, “I have need of you” (cf. I Corinthians 12:21), and the intellectual hierarchies at work in the current disciplines of the Euro-American theological curriculum. These hierarchies, and their scholarly standards, have already deeply influenced the theological schools of Africa, Latin America, and Asia. The influence is clearest, perhaps, in the discipline many of us like to acclaim as the most basic in our curriculum: biblical studies. The field is dominated by Europeans and Americans. Shall proponents of globalization dismiss this fact as simply a notoriously intransigent example of intellectual imperialism in the world theological community? Or might Western biblical scholars be one of the resources which the Spirit calls the church to acknowledge as the Western side of the exchange of gifts which will include equally unique contributions from all sides? On the other hand, until Western biblical scholarship includes in its dialogues a far more vocal set of participants from all parts of the world, how will its leaders detect possible Western cultural biases in their interpretation of the Bible? Neither to deny nor to revere overmuch the findings of any generation of scholars seems to be the necessary theological and intellectual rule here. In none of the usual disciplines of the North American seminary curriculum do we yet know what contributions and what corrections we need to receive from colleagues around the world. We are too new to the thought that we need each other to be sure of what we know and what we do not. “Refashioning theological education so as to overcome Western provincialism is a work that will take several decades of highly intentional and reconceived training of ministers and theologians. Indeed, this refashioning is a work of conversion.”² Which is to say that it is a work of the Holy Spirit, whose globalizing messages to the disciplines of the Western seminaries are only beginning to come. We are obliged to wait for them and to practice intellectual hospitality to the bearers of these messages.

7. *What is the Spirit saying to us in the new attention which we feel bound to accord other religions?*

This question is an extension of the first, above, regarding evangelism and imperialism. It unsettles Christian theological education profoundly, and again we are only at the beginning of discovery of what this unsettling means. Those who leap to renewed evangelical aggressiveness towards other religions and those who leap towards new versions of equality between religions, both seem to take easy, old paths into this relationship. Learning to learn from other *cultures* seems obviously mandatory to open-minded people generally in our new global society; learning to critique one's own culture in light of others seems the same. But what if one's religious faith, by its very nature, is the critical measure of all cultures, one's own included? As a critical theologian, H. Richard Niebuhr used to say that "Christians have views of the Absolute, but no absolute views." But as a confessional theologian, he saw no alternative to particularity in a faith that took seriously its own claim to divine self-revelation, and he held back from a liberal, quasi-Hindu assertion that there are simply many paths of approach to God, all of them equal.³ That is more than Christians seem authorized to say. But the co-presence of the world religions is an important new fact in our times and circumstances as theological educators. As in other dimensions of the global theological challenge, we are called to be patient and to avoid the temptations of premature solution to old perplexities newly unavoidable.

8. *Is there a North American contribution to theological education that we are called to fashion hopefully and without imperialism?*

The very question may be premature, and immature as well. The contributions that humans make to each other are often unintended and even surprising to the contributors. As every teacher knows, students cherish the most surprising elements in our teaching. But the question is worth including here as an implication of the globalization-contextualization dialectic which has emerged as one of the key points in the whole deliberation to date. It is a real dialectic: the global without the local is abstract; the local without the global is provincial. Given our reclaiming of the imagery of the church in I Corinthians 12, we are bound to believe that every part of the world Body of Christ has an *essential* service to every other part. This has to include the North American part. As we North Americans learn to repent of our easy past assumption that this was to be "the American century," and as we learn a style of theologizing that owes as much to listening as to speaking to the rest of the world, we are not to lose sight of the new particularities of our calling as

members of this Body. Hypotheses for the nature of these particularities should be encouraged among us, with the help of those theologians outside our culture who know our weaknesses and our strengths better than we do. The old alleged strengths—national wealth, national power, the rich church—have begun to look like weaknesses. The old alleged weaknesses—our long isolation from the international system, our founding as a nation of relatively poor people, and our national struggle to become a pluralistic and not merely an Anglo-Saxon democracy—may have in them the seeds of a new unimperial North American Christian service to the world. What Sidney Ahlstrom said about the potential contribution of the American Black Church to the shaping of church history on this continent is a clue to the sort of “strength in weakness” which could become the theological gift of the American churches to the theological riches of the world church.

Post-Protestant America requires an account of its spiritual past that seeks to clarify its spiritual present. And such an account should above all do justice to the fundamentally pluralistic situation which has been struggling to be born ever since this country was formally dedicated to the proposition that all (humans) are created equal.

The basic paradigm for a renovation of American church history is the black religious experience, which has been virtually closed out of all synoptic histories written so far...⁴

But once again, theologians who advance such hypotheses live in hope and not in self-confidence. In this pilgrimage, what we are to become, theologically and otherwise, does not yet appear. What does appear is the gift of a new, welcome set of globally-dispersed companions on the way. And, since right theology issues in prayer, we are surely right to thank God for them, in advance of many a dialogue to come along that way.

ENDNOTES

¹T. S. Eliot, “Little Gidding,” *Four Quartets* (New York: Harcourt and Brace, 1943), 39.

² The Association of Theological Schools, “Globalization: Theological Education for the Whole Church,” 1987, 14-15.

³H. Richard Niebuhr, *The Meaning of Revelation* (New York: Macmillan and Company, 1941).

⁴Sydney Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People* (Image Books; Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, 1975), Vol. I, 40.

Contextualization from a World Perspective

Robert J. Schreiter

Introduction: Some Theological Assumptions

I have been asked to address the question of contextualization from a world perspective; that is to say, from the perspective of a Roman Catholic, as a member of an ecclesial body whose center of gravity is outside the United States. To hear about contextualization from a world perspective is an experience this Biennial Meeting has already had. Kosuke Koyama and Mercy Amba Oduyoye, the two previous plenary speakers, have already provided such a perspective, in their lives and ministries, and again in the words to us here.

However, there are things that can be added by speaking from a theological tradition that has “catholic” in its name and tries to live out that particular heritage. Before turning directly to what those things might be, it is important that I delineate a bit just how that theological tradition shapes what will be said here about contextualization. While such a presentation is necessarily incomplete, it does sketch out some of the theological options that shape what will follow in this presentation.

Roman Catholicism is the largest of the over twenty thousand ecclesial bodies that make up Christianity. There are over nine hundred million Roman Catholics, located on all the inhabited continents of the world. They represent tremendous cultural variety and diversity. The largest Roman Catholic population in a single country is to be found in Brazil. Latin America is the largest such content, with Africa now vying to be in second place ahead of Europe. Unlike some of the denominations represented in the ATS, the center of gravity for Roman Catholics as a church is clearly outside North America. Many would look to Rome itself as the center; still others would point to the Southern Hemisphere where the majority of Roman Catholics live. Indeed, it is precisely this latter attitude, looking to the Southern Hemisphere, that gives Roman Catholics a special perspective on the contextualization question.

Theologically, a number of assumptions shape Roman Catholic approaches to the question of contextualization and (as I shall argue shortly)

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globalization. There are four in particular that will be mentioned. Together they create what Koyama called in his opening address a “spirituality of cultures,” a theological approach that opens itself up in attitudes and *praxis*. Let us turn to these four assumptions about how to approach the question of contextualization.

First of all, Roman Catholics continue to see the economy of grace as expressing itself primarily in the nature-and-grace dialectic, rather than the sin-and-grace dialectic preferred in many of the Reformation traditions. A major consequence of this is the attitude of the effects of sin on nature, an attitude that sees nature damaged by sin, but not irreparably so. Consequently, there is a more positive valuation of nature and therefore also of culture. As theologians in the Reformation tradition rightly remind those of the nature-and-grace inclination, such a position can lead us away from a dependence upon God’s grace alone, and lure us into idolatry of one sort or another. But this is a risk that Catholics are inclined to take, since they, along with the Orthodox, would want to affirm that God’s image is reflected in creation, albeit distorted and tarnished by sin.

Because nature is an image of God, images play an important role in theology, even more sometimes than concepts. It has also become increasingly evident that images are a constitutive part of the contextualization process, often of greater importance than concepts. This may be in part due to the fact that the majority of all Catholics (and likely, all Christians) live in primarily oral cultures. A heavy use of conceptuality presumes a literate culture, where the analytic paring of metaphors and symbols can be matched with a storage system (written texts) that allows for this clear though (from an oral perspective) slightly impoverished way of thinking. Oral modes of knowledge are not inferior to literate ones, but they are different. Oral modes are often more redolent of meaning and more commendable to memory. Literate modes emphasize clarity and focus.¹ Abstract nouns are the stock-in-trade of literate cultures and of academic theology. Two encounters of my own might help to illustrate this point.

Several years ago, I was lecturing (in English) in a seminary in Tanzania on a topic in spirituality. Midway through the series one of the students told me how much he and the others were enjoying the lectures, especially how it was being connected with their own experience. “Of course,” he added, “these can never be translated into Swahili. You use too many abstract words.” In fact, there is no direct equivalent in Swahili for the word “spirituality” itself. He did not mean this as a reproach, but as a simple

acknowledgement of the different worlds our languages represented. Similarly, two years ago a Chin student from Myanmar was in my local theologies seminar and began his presentation by recalling his difficulty trying to translate “contextualization” into his first language. After a good while, he managed to do so by rephrasing it as “water-and-earth theology”—something that captures the meaning in an exceptional way. Likewise many of you are familiar with East Asian languages, such as Chinese, where the ideograms are really concrete counters standing for more abstract concepts.

I make this digression because, whether Catholic or Reformed, contextualization in much of the world requires an ability to work with images. The so-called global culture that will be discussed a little later on has become what some have called a secondary oral culture, relying on immediately recognizable images to convey meaning across cultural boundaries.

But back to theological assumptions. A second assumption is the centrality of the Incarnation of Jesus Christ. This is, of course an assumption held by all Christians. But the special perspective from Catholic traditions is that the Incarnation is also a statement about creation; namely, that creation can somehow bear and carry the Christ, despite its sinfulness and brokenness. Christ comes not only to justify us before God, but to restore creation. To emphasize the Incarnation is not to deny the saving power of the death and resurrection of Christ; it is only to see it through a perspective that embraces not only sin and the sinner, but all of creation. It is captured best in the cosmic vision of the hymns at the beginning of the Letters to the Colossians and Ephesians, the visions of bringing all things together and of reconciliation.

The centrality of the Incarnation leads to a third theological assumption; namely a sacramental view of the world. The world is “charg’d with the grandeur of God,” as the poet Gerard Manley Hopkins put it. Through attending closely to the world we come to know God, and God speaks to us through nature as well as the Revealed Word. Again, this assumption is marked more by emphasis than difference. But it does make a difference in how one views the world and the cultures within it. It results in seeing culture as a vehicle of God’s grace rather than an obstacle to it. The danger is always idolatry, but Catholics think it is a risk worth running lest we veil or tarnish God’s image in the world.

The final theological assumption regards a popular Catholic theological expression, the “evangelization of cultures.” The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (*Gaudium et spes*) from the Second Vatican Council, and Pope Paul VI’s *Evangelii nuntiandi* from 1975, have been

foundational in shaping a Catholic approach to culture and how the Gospel encounters culture.² Pope John Paul II has taken the evangelization of cultures as a prime theme of his speeches in his many travels around the world. What evangelization of cultures stresses is that the evangelization process has to include but go beyond the evangelization of individuals. Individuals are social beings and also inextricably bound up in their cultures. Consequently a vision of a renewed humanity, a just world order, and a human community attuned to the message of Jesus Christ requires the transformation of cultures as well. But this transformation does not mean suppressing them or substituting something else for them; it means that the Gospel enters deeply into the life of the culture, transforming it from within. Indeed, as Paul VI points out in *Evangelii nuntiandi*, in the evangelization of cultures, the evangelizer is converted more deeply to the Gospel as well. Consequently, contextualization will only thrive if the point of view of evangelization is not just the conversion of individuals to Christ, but the transfusion of the culture as a whole with God's grace.

These, then represent four theological assumptions that shape what follows. It may seem to have been an inordinately long prolegomenon. However, I would maintain that, twenty-some years into the discussion of contextualization, we need to become more refined in our theological assumptions that undergird our efforts. In some instances it will call for more than refinement; it may well entail some change in our assumptions.

We turn now to the central topic of this presentation: the challenges of contextualization from a world perspective. It will be presented in four parts:

1. What contextualization looks like from a world perspective;
2. A more concrete delineation of the issues that the world situation poses for contextualization;
3. A perspective on globalization to help understand contextualization; and
4. Implications for theological education, especially in North America.

What Does Contextualization Look Like from a World Perspective?

As North American theological educators struggle to clarify their understanding of contextualization and its correlative form, globalization, the perspective of the wider world, particularly the world outside the North Atlantic region, can be of great use here. What those regions of the world might be able to tell us can be summed up under four headings.

***Globalization is inevitable;
hence contextualization becomes essential.***

The United States (and to a lesser degree, Canada) is just beginning to realize what other parts of the world have known for quite some time: globalization is here and is a presence that cannot be escaped. Because of its economic power, the United States has often been the agent of globalization without having to feel its effects. Especially since the end of the Second World War, the United States has asserted its presence around the world. Other countries have had to come to terms with that, whether they wanted to or not. The U.S.'s neighbor to the North, Canada, is itself a rich and powerful nation, but was perceiving what globalization was about before the United States. The United States did not really come to understand the implications of globalization until it began to become "globalized" by other countries, notably those of the oil-rich Middle East, Western Europe, and Eastern Asia. Most effectively, perhaps, globalization began for the United States in 1973, when the OPEC cartel began to impose prices on the worldwide market that the U.S. could not control. "Globalization" becomes a full reality when we realize that we are inevitably part of a worldwide flow of information, technology, capital, and goods—a flow over which no single nation has effective control any more.

This leads to a second reflection. The globalization that is now the subject of our discussion is but the latest round of globalization on our planet. As I will argue in the third section of this presentation, we are experiencing what may be the transition from the second to the third round of globalization to take place in the past five hundred years. The point here is that the periods of colonial expansion of previous eras that continue to be experienced by much of the Southern Hemisphere as oppression and continued structural injustice were forms of globalization. That is why people in that part of the world today are often so suspicious of the language of globalization on the lips of those from the North Atlantic. They welcome our visits to their countries in the hope that we will learn what we have done to them in our previous acts of globalization, and not repeat the mistakes of history. We are becoming aware of globalization in the North Atlantic sphere because the Four Dragons of the East (Korea, Japan, Taiwan, and Singapore) are now full-fledged players in the globalization game. As the European Community takes shape, it represents a third major player.

Much of the reflection in this section has been devoted to the correlate of contextualization—globalization. But what of contextualization? In view of this perspective, for most of the world contextualization is a matter of finding

one's voice and protecting oneself from the onslaughts of globalization. Both of these efforts are going on at the same time in many parts of the world. The ravages of colonialism and the disappointments of the independence movements following colonialism have continued to stifle the development of the authentic voices of many of the cultures of the world. Local cultures are considered inferior and backward to the shining world that the global media present. Women must not only struggle with the bonds of patriarchy present nearly everywhere, but must do so under the restraints of cultures that long told them they were not worthy vessels of "civilization." All of this happens at a time when markets are flooded with cola, denim jeans, and gym shoes, as well as music and entertainment, especially from the United States. The sight of children and adults wearing T-shirts with English sayings emblazoned upon them—sometimes fractured in grammar and not infrequently obscene in innuendo—bespeaks the invasion of cultures. This is especially the case when the glittering goods portrayed on television, or in the wealthy sections of a large city, or in tourist districts are goods far beyond the reach of the majority. The gap between the two worlds reinforces the message of the inferiority of the local culture.

Contextualization becomes, therefore, a means to help hold up what is noble and immensely human and humane in a local culture against the onslaughts of forces—both historical and contemporary—that seek to undermine the dignity of the local culture.

***Our conceptions of globalization
and contextualization are interdependent.***

Turid Karlsen Seim, in her response to Mercy Amba Oduyoye's address, cited a study of the Lutheran World Federation that, in those places where concerns for contextualization are strong, so too are the concerns for globalization, and that the converse is true as well. Thinking about context often begins when the larger, global reality impinges uncomfortably. Likewise, our concepts of globalization have implications for what we do in our own locales. "Think globally, act locally" has become a familiar saw in theological education circles. Thus, if how we think globally is to content ourselves with exploring what we Northerners see only as the grand, sweeping elements of globalization, we run the risk of overlooking the profound injustices that globalization can cause elsewhere and especially in our own backyards.

On that basis I would like to propose the hypothesis that a healthy, balanced, and critical understanding of globalization requires a similarly

healthy, balanced, and critical understanding of contextualization. The two can serve as mutual correctives as we measure our faithfulness and our growth in our educational settings. Thus, if globalization can only mean something far away and removed from our immediate setting, chances are that our contextualizing efforts will suffer from the same abstraction.

Globalization is currently profoundly asymmetrical.

Recent analyses being made by theologians in the Southern Hemisphere of the shifts in the world order and its effects on globalization are illuminating. The collapse of the Soviet bloc since 1989 has shifted the axis of awareness in globalization away from the East-West point of view into a new North-South directionality. And although the East-West struggle was seen as roughly in parity as regards military strength, and it put forth a vision of an alternate economy to that of the capitalist West, the North-South axis has lost the energy and creativity of that tension. From the point of view of the North, capitalism has won. As captured in one statement brimming with hubris, we are now at the “end of history.”³ In winning, capitalism not only overcame the grim realities of state socialism, but effectively snuffed out the vision of any real economic alternative to the new form of global capitalism. The North does not look to the South as a new partner, but as natural resources to be exploited and cheap labor to be called upon as needed. The people of the South become a “left-over people.”⁴

Seen through these eyes, globalization will only press further the asymmetries that have long existed between North and South. The flow of information, technology, capital, and goods simply bypasses the majority of people in the world. While one can urge a greater participation of the South in the global capitalist economy, and point to countries like Chile where the economy is expanding, this does not account for the great numbers of people who are forced into ever greater poverty, who do not have any safety net to catch them as they fall. The tensions at the Rio Summit on the Environment were emblematic of the problems facing a globalizing planet.

The asymmetries are reflected in other things than economics and military hardware. The population in the South continues to expand while that of the North is maintained largely through migrations. The average age of a person in the United States today is thirty-three; the average age of a Christian worldwide is fifteen. Religious orders in the Roman Catholic Church are by and large not growing in North America and Europe (even the

erstwhile growth in Poland is now dropping off sharply). One expects that, early in the next century, the majority of human resources for the work of the religious orders will come from the South (India has already long had one-third of all the novices among the Jesuits each year), while the material resources remain in the North. What kinds of conflict is this likely to create? Already missionaries from the African Independent Churches are sending teams to evangelize in Britain and the United States. How will the Christian churches respond to the vigor of its Southern counterparts as they come North?

Our struggle to correlate contextualization and globalization is challenged by the asymmetries of globalization on a worldwide scale. Put in other terms, that is what the struggle for justice has been all along. But by seeing the shifts taking place we may gain greater insight into how the struggle for justice links the rich and the poor, the powerful and the oppressed, the North and the South. Likewise, the profound asymmetries can quickly give the lie to the discourse of “mutuality” coming out of the North. What does mutuality mean in such a profoundly unbalanced situation?

Contextualization is coming about slowly—more slowly than its correlate, globalization.

In the 1960s and early 1970s, there was considerable optimism about the contextualization of forms of Christianity around the planet. The newly formed democracies in Africa looked forward to being truly Christian, truly African. The Second Vatican Council and the World Council of Churches urged greater sensitivity to cultures. Yet now, from nearly a quarter-century’s perspective, the gains have been relatively modest. A dance and offering to the ancestral spirits by a Korean theologian could still arouse considerable controversy at the last General Assembly of the World Council of Churches. Many Roman Catholics feel that they are losing ground in the contextualization process with the centripetal policies of the Vatican. Contextualization is coming far more slowly than had first been hoped.

So what has gone wrong? Four things seem to play a major role. First of all, overcoming uniformities in previous practice, and the depredations of colonialism are taking far longer than any had realized. That is because these were not simply absences of local culture; they represented a local theology in themselves, a local theology of considerable cohesion and power. We know the pain of being robbed of one’s culture, but we still do not understand the reach and the impact of that pain sufficiently clearly. Moreover, many suffered in throwing over local custom and culture to become Christian. Now

they are being asked to take back what they had distanced themselves from at great pain.

Secondly, contextualization must contend with the overwhelming power of what is called global culture. This global culture is not “culture” in the same sense as local culture, but is so analogously. It carries many of the trappings of culture, but does not of itself create a culture in which one can live completely.⁵ However, it often embodies the aspirations of a local culture, and can seduce local cultures in trying to achieve the goods of this global culture and to neglect the development of the local culture. The power of globalization is so overwhelming as a technological, economic, and political force that it can make contextualization seem a weak agenda best relegated to the private sphere of a hobby, of tending one’s garden. (It might be noted that a too-strong globalization would account for a too-weak contextualization, if the proposed hypothesis is correct.)

Third, the North seems to resist too much emphasis on building a more contextually sensitive world. Sometimes this emphasis is read by the North as a rejection of its values in favor of local ones (as indeed sometimes it is!). Other times there are fears that contextualization makes those interested in pursuing local values seem less flexible about moving around to service the new economic configurations. If people get too attached to one place, they may not be willing to pick up and follow where they are needed in the economy. But perhaps most of all, contextualization may mean simply doing things differently. And the inertia that greets the challenges of innovation (especially in an aging society) may be the greatest obstacle to contextualization.

Fourth and finally, there are ambivalences in the South. I have already mentioned the ambivalences those Christians face who are asked now to embrace what they once were asked to reject and so courageously did so. Another set of ambivalences arises out of a suspicion that the sudden Northern interest in contextualization after so many years of rejecting it is but another ploy to cut the South out of the future. “Are we yet again not good enough to be part of the new global culture?” they query. Moreover, the resources are often no longer there in the South to create the kind of context desired. Languages have been forgotten, customs destroyed, stories suppressed. And sometimes the sheer struggle for survival makes these kinds of questions utterly moot.

Viewed, then, from another angle, the quest for contextualization reveals itself as considerably more complex. It is, at this time in human history,

linked closely to the forces of globalization. To fail to see this is to try to create *tableaux vivants* or cultural reservations rather than a truly contextual response to the gospel.

Three Concrete Issues Facing Contextualization

Among the many issues facing effective contextualization in the many cultural contexts around the world, I would like to focus upon three major ones that impinge upon cultural settings over and over today. They are by no means the only major ones. They do, however, represent issues at the crucial juncture between contextualization and globalization. They are: the uprooting of peoples, the question of reception, and the shape of our belonging.

Deracination: The Uprooting of Peoples

Perhaps more than ever before, we have experienced in this century an uprooting of peoples. We have before us countless examples and cautionary tales of what happens when a people is wrenched out of its culture. Cultures are more than social relationships even as they include them; they involve language, familiar places, shared memories, food, a cycle of the year, and a place to remember the dead. The three forms of uprooting that I wish to focus upon here as complicating contextualization are: colonialism, refugees, and urbanization.

There have already been several opportunities in this presentation to refer to the effects of colonialism on culture. While decrying the effects of colonialism, the gospel mandate to share the Good News with all people seems inevitably to create a colonizing opportunity, if not the colonial fact. Moreover, the gospel message is about transformation, about *metanoia*, hence change is about to happen. Some changes are definitely for the better. Gambian-born theologian Lamin Sanneh has assiduously pursued this side of the equation.⁶ The negative side has also been more than amply documented. Only recently have scholars tried to explore the nexus of ambiguity in wanting both to honor the dignity of a culture and to engage in changing it at the same time; such an example would be that of Australian-born anthropologist Kenelm Burridge.⁷

Having said that, we need to return to the uprooting of peoples created by colonialism. On the island of St. Lucia in the Lower Antilles, a Catholic parish church burned to the ground. After the edifice had been replaced, the pastor commissioned a noted local artist by the name of St.-Omer to decorate the interior with a mural representing scenes from the life of Christ. When

the artist had completed his work, the pastor and congregation went in to look at it. The people were outraged, for St.-Omer had depicted all the people in the huge mural as black (ninety-eight percent of the St. Lucian population is of African descent)! Apart from the fact that the pastor had not consulted the people prior to the commission, what shows through here is the nagging effects of colonialism. The people could not imagine Jesus as being “one of them”; He was surely white! Happily, after much discussion and some long-delayed catechesis, the conflict was happily resolved and the people are now proud of their church and their mural. But sadly, this history has been repeated over and over again around the world. Colonialism sends the message that to become a Christian one must despise and reject one’s own culture in order to embrace a superior Christianity. Too often, embracing Christianity has been experienced not as deliverance into New Life, but as the loss of the old life with nothing to replace it. Or, put in the plaintive words of a Pueblo from the U.S. Southwest, “When Jesus came the Corn Mothers went away.”⁸

Our task in the contextualization process vis-a-vis colonialism is to help create the space where the loss can be mourned, the anger expressed, and the necessary constructive steps taken. Often those constructive steps may seem artificial or misguided to outsiders. Purists may scoff at African Americans learning Swahili or celebrating Kwanza, noting that Swahili was never spoken in Western Africa and that the feast of Kwanza is an American invention. Likewise, the importing of Lakota pipe rituals from the U.S. Great Plains for native Canadian rituals in the Northwest Territories may seem contrived. But ultimately, it is not. The point is that every reconstruction of the past is largely imaginative, and what is important is that it is *their* reconstruction, and not one imposed upon them.

The second kind of uprooting important for our discussions here is that of refugees. The United Nations High Commission on Refugees recently estimated that there are now more than twenty-one million political refugees forced out of their homelands into foreign exile. They are a presence here in the United States and Canada. And they are worldwide. If one adds to these the economic refugees, that is, those forced to leave their homes in order to support their families, the numbers would be even greater.

How does one talk with refugees who long for their homeland about embracing a context? Two examples might give an insight. In 1990, The Association of Theological Schools sponsored a summer workshop on globalization for theological faculty. Part of that experience was a brief immersion

in another cultural setting. I led the group going to Lac Ste. Anne in Alberta, there to camp with eight thousand native peoples gathered from the Northern and Northwestern parts of Canada. In one discussion we were having, one of our number asked whether, given the oppression that native peoples had experienced, the biblical symbol of the Exodus was important for them. The respondent began with a wry smile, and then said: "You see, you don't quite understand. In the biblical story of the Exodus, we identify with the Canaanites, whose land was invaded and taken away from them by a group that called themselves the Chosen People." In the course of our conversation, the suggestion emerged that the return from the Exile in Babylon might be the more appropriate image, and that a recovery of their land and a rebuilding of their culture might be their Second Temple.

A second example comes from Vietnamese students I teach regularly in a course on Christology and cultures. For many of them, boat people and other escapees from Vietnam, one of their most powerful images of Christ is that of the Flight into Egypt. That is certainly suggestive of the kind of imagery that might best express the faith of refugees today.

What I am saying here is that this particular kind of uprooting will call for other sets of imagery from the Bible and from our traditions than we are wont to call upon.

A third uprootedness is the urbanization of so much of the world. In Nicaragua, for example, a third of the entire population now lives (or better, struggles to survive) in Managua. This is a story repeated over and over again across the cities of Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Even as the cities become huge unsustainable and unsustaining megacities (Mexico City is now the largest, with a population of nearly twenty-four million people), people continue to flock to them, mainly because the situation in the countryside is even worse for them. Nineteenth century models of industrial economies simply do not fit. One finds most of the people surviving in the so-called "informal economies" and through what others have referred to as the "rurification of the cities."⁹ What does "context" mean in these settings where, if people find work, they must walk for miles each way from their location on the urban periphery in order to reach the place of employment? Are our models of "Christian community" not often models more suited to rural and village life than to the dislocation of the *favelas* and *pueblos juvenes* ringing these cities? The small ecclesial community movement and the planting of small pentecostal churches have been the most effective responses, it seems, to create the new "contexts." Here there is still much to learn.

Reception: How the Gospel Message Is Received

Reception has to do with how the Gospel message is received in a culture, as opposed to how it is sent. Much literature about contextualization has focused upon the sending process, to assure that the evangelist or contextualizer is presenting an orthodox account of the biblical witness. But it is becoming increasingly apparent that the reception of that message needs more attention than we have given it in the past. The assumption has largely been that, if the message is clearly presented, it will be clearly perceived. What such an approach does not account for is the cultural universe in which the message is lodged: its semantic location (how it relates to other meanings in the culture) may be significantly different from where it was located in the universe of the sender.¹⁰ This is the area that Koyama referred to in his address as “vernacularization.”

Too often the reception of the message that has taken place is deemed imperfect because of the lack of proper evangelization. Consequently, efforts are undertaken to create a more intensive evangelization. Some of the recent calls for a “new evangelization” in the Roman Catholic Church, or the many schemes to convert the world to Christ by the year 2000, often carry, albeit unconsciously, this assumption. But this does not account for the fact that the message is not only often lodged in a different place in the world of the receiver than that of the sender, but that these alternate readings regularly persist over long periods of time. A few examples of well-intentioned reception that seem wrong or at least odd to seasoned Christians might help to illustrate the point here.

A noted Bible translator told of his experience of presenting a fresh translation of the Psalms and the New Testament to a Thai university student. The student was not a Christian, and the intent of the gift was to see if the translation was intelligible to a non-Christian, not just syntactically (at the level of the correct grammatical usage), but also semantically. A few weeks later, the translator encountered the student again and asked what he thought. The student admitted to having read the four Gospels, and was at that point reading the Acts of the Apostles. “What a wonderful person, your Jesus!” the student exclaimed. The translator, clearly excited by the response (for he is also a devout evangelical Christian and saw a potential convert here), asked the student to elaborate. “What a marvelous story,” he continued, “of how your Jesus was born, lived, died...was reborn, lived, died...was reborn, lived, died...was reborn lived, and then—in the Acts of the Apostles—ascends into Nirvana! Just four incarnations to reach Buddhahood, and it

took our Gautama a thousand lives to achieve that!" No doubt the more exalted language of the Gospel of John contributed to this reading of the spiritual maturation of Jesus.¹¹

Another example of reception and cultural universe occurred with the aforementioned 1990 trip of the ATS summer globalization group to Canada. In conversations with a Belgian missionary who had spent over thirty years among one of the native peoples of Northern Saskatchewan, he recounted how he tried to foster liturgical adaptation by introducing the pipe ceremony into the celebration of the Eucharist. The elders and the people clearly humored him in this venture, but it was clear that they did not find this innovation a contextual improvement. They waited until he realized how backward he had gotten it: it was the Eucharist that needed to be celebrated in the context of the pipe ceremony, rather than the other way around. At that point, participation increased dramatically.

A final example has to do with how we read the Bible, and how each tradition in Christianity tends to create its own canon within the canon. In a study done in the early 1970s among African Independent Churches by Harold Turner, Turner tried to ascertain which books of the Bible were preached upon most frequently in those churches. At the time, the Gospel of Matthew figured most prominently in the Roman Catholic lectionary, and the Letter to the Romans certainly loomed largely for many Protestant churches. To his surprise, the books of choice for African Independent Churches were the Book of Proverbs in the Old Testament and the Letter of James in the New Testament. What sorts of cultural universes would prompt these choices? And, for that matter, what cultural universes would prompt the choice of Matthew and Romans?¹²

Another way of misunderstanding how the reception process expresses itself is by labeling it in an uncritical way as "syncretism." Oduyoye made this point in her address as well. We have often made distinctions between syncretism as a social process (which has to do with the shaping of religious identity), and syncretism as a theological judgment (which is understood as a distortion of the theological tradition). But more and more, this distinction can be shown to be really unhelpful. It does not tell us why particular configurations of belief emerge and, more importantly, why they perdure. Studies arising out of the 1492 commemoration in the Americas on the beliefs of native peoples provide an ample opportunity to rethink how we use the term syncretism theologically.¹³ A few studies have been trying to take on this question from a theological point of view that has been informed by the social sciences.¹⁴

A way of opening up the syncretism question within contextualization is to ask: *whose* syncretism? The evergreen trees that bedeck our sanctuaries at Christmas time come from pre-Christian Germanic and Slavic religion. An interesting and somewhat embarrassing case arose some thirty years ago when the new Roman Catholic cathedral was built in Kyoto. One of the stained glass windows had a portrait of St. George slaying the dragon. This image of St. George goes back to an amalgam of pre-Christian, Eastern Mediterranean lore. The problem in its context in Kyoto was that the dragon is not a symbol of Satan or of evil. Throughout East Asia, the dragon is a symbol of royalty and of heaven! Needless to say, the window was removed.

Much still needs to be done here, not only to see how peoples are shaping their religious identities, but also to critique the syncretisms that have accrued within Western Christian beliefs. The Reformation was one attempt to do that, but that was an intracultural critique. We now have the resources in the Southern Hemisphere churches to have an intercultural critique of both Catholic and Reformation forms of Western European Christianity.

Ways of Belonging

In the shaping of identity, multicultural theorist James A. Banks suggests that belonging was one of three most defining characters of communities (the other two being the sources of moral authority for the community and the frameworks for explaining events for the community).¹⁵ Christians often cite believing as the criterion for authentic Christianity and can have a tendency to underestimate the role of ways of belonging.

A clearer emphasis on belonging is needed because people find themselves in multiple worlds of reference: they define themselves by a variety of communities to which they belong. These can include the communities of immediate and extended family, work, leisure activities, charitable activities, education, and so on. Belonging is rarely as simple as having one point of location.

In matters of contextualization, we see people struggling with multiple belonging in their religious worlds of reference. This phenomenon is sometimes referred to as “double belonging,” since it often involves relating to two worlds. Three worlds are not uncommon in Southeast Asia, where one has local traditions, Confucian traditions, and Christianity. In many parts of the world multiple belonging does not pose a cognitive or emotional obstacle; Japan is the clearest example of that, where there are almost twice as many

religious adherents as there are people in the population! But for Christians this has long posed a vexing and difficult problem.

Sometimes it is a matter of competing worlds (that is the world-view of many Western Christians). For many people in these situations, however, it may be a matter of complementary worlds or even objective, non-communicating worlds—what cultural psychologist Richard Shweder has called “multiple objective worlds.”¹⁶ An example might help here.

Some years ago, a Roman Catholic missionary pastor was visiting the villages in Northern Ontario. He paid a pastoral call on a native woman on the first anniversary of the death of one of her two sons; he had been killed in an oil-rig accident. He accompanied her and her surviving son to the cemetery outside the village to pray at the gravesite. As they were coming out of the cemetery, a buck walked slowly out of the woods and stopped, facing them only a few yards away. Both the woman and her son dropped to their knees and began to pray in their native tongue—she, wailing; he, muttering softly. The buck did not move, but continued to stare at them intently. After a few minutes, the prayers ceased and the buck turned around, walking slowly back into the forest.

When they all returned to the house, the mystified priest asked the young man what had happened. He explained patiently, “That buck was the guardian spirit of my deceased brother. He came to thank us for remembering my brother on the anniversary of his death. You see, my brother communed closely with his guardian spirit. In fact, the spirit came to warn my brother on his last visit home that he would not return alive. My brother confided that to me before he left for the last time.”¹⁷

Multiple worlds? False worlds? Obviously the mother and son saw no incompatibility in praying traditional Christian prayers for their dead son and brother one moment, and in addressing a guardian spirit immediately thereafter. Do these worlds relate, or are they separate dimensions of time and reality that break into each other’s realms?¹⁸ Enlightenment North Atlantic types find difficulty making room for this kind of thing, but peoples elsewhere do it routinely. Yet we find parallel beliefs in the New Testament in Paul and the Letter to the Hebrews. There, too, is the belief that Christ has overcome the Powers and Principalities, but Paul and Hebrews do not deny their existence.

Not much research has been done to date on multiple belonging, but a few things are beginning. How to classify the varieties of such belonging has still not been resolved satisfactorily. I would suggest that there are at least three

types that recur: (1) Multiple belonging out of protest—such would be the case of people forcibly Christianized who maintain their local ways as an act against the oppressor. These are found frequently among the native peoples of the Americas. (2) Multiple belonging out of the inadequacy of Christianity to deal with local spirits and immediate, quotidian issues such as healing. This is common in Africa. (3) Multiple belonging out of inevitability, where the religious culture is so strong that one cannot be a member of the culture without participating in some fashion in another world. This is the case throughout much of Eastern and Southern Asia.

I have sorted through three of the issues facing contextualization in our world (or worlds!) as it now is. This gives some idea of the complexity in which we find ourselves. To fill out the picture, we need to look at contextualization's correlate—globalization—to set the stage for a “world” perspective.

Globalization: The Long View

Along with our understanding of contextualization, we need a fuller understanding of globalization. I wish to sketch out a proposal here of how we might understand globalization from a perspective useful for theological education and ministry. Space does not permit working out the interaction with contextualization, except to make some suggestions in the closing section.

I wish to present this perspective on globalization by taking a longer view chronologically than we have been wont to do in theological education circles. Most frequently, we trace the interest in globalization back to the late 1970s, just as globalization itself is traced back to the early 1960s in business and education, or to the League of Nations in politics. However, I think that blinds us to those “world” perspectives we are hearing from the Southern Hemisphere. Globalization is a phenomenon much larger than theological education—something we all know, but tend to forget. It is larger than the phenomenon of religion, although religion plays an important role in it.¹⁹

To aid us in this, I want to make a rough adaptation of Immanuel Wallerstein's world-system theory as a basis for understanding globalization.²⁰ I am proposing that globalization (as seen from the point of view of theological education) has gone through three stages. Each of these stages is shaped by larger developments that serve as the *carrier* of these developments; i.e., they form a frame of reference for which societies of that time articulate their reality. This articulation, in an integrated fashion of all

elements of society, creates that phase's sense of *universality*. Religion in turn responds within the carrier to this universality. This is its *theological mode*. And this brings about certain *results* that reflect what, at that phase, constitutes effective globalization.

Schemata always distort reality. But they can help us see a bigger picture and help us raise questions about what we do and see relationships that may have heretofore eluded us. The categories here of *carrier*, *theological mode*, *universality*, and *results* are meant heuristically—not to foreclose, but to make us think.

It should be noted too that each of the three phases continues into those of its successors. But as we shall see, what happens to the theological modes of the previous phases is that they meet a different set of challenges than they had encountered when they were the dominant mode. The phases should not be read in an evolutionary pattern from low to high, either. They represent, rather, a change in the conditions of the world and the carriers of those conditions. Let us turn to this long view of globalization.

First Phase: 1492-1945—Expansion and the Building of Empires

The first phase has its period of dominance from the European voyages of exploration down to the conclusion of the Second World War. It is a time of European expansion and the creation of new European territorial space on the other continents of the world. The *carrier* of this phase of globalization is an image of expansion and establishment of political power over wide areas of the world—empire. The mode of *universality* giving justification or credence to this expansion is the concept of civilization that is invoked. In the early stage, the peoples encountered are seen as either animal or demonic; in the later stage, as not fully evolved.²¹

On the religious side, we see a concomitant development, reflecting the envelope of the carrier in which it acts, and the universality in which it works out its own understanding of globalization. Images of expansion of the church, of a *plantatio ecclesiae* come to the fore. There is a sudden interest in worldwide evangelization (first among Roman Catholics in Spain and Portugal; later among churches of the Reformation as England and the Netherlands become worldwide powers). The *theological mode* responding to this is *world mission*, understood as saving souls and extending the church. The *results*, by the height of European empire building in the nineteenth century, is a worldwide missionary movement. Globalization, at this point, means extending the message of Christ and His church through the whole world.

Second Phase: 1945-1989—Accompaniment, Dialogue, Solidarity

The Second World War finished what the First World War began: the dissolution of the overseas empires of Europe. From the late 1940s into the 1960s, region after region was given independence (at least “flag” independence) and it looked as though the shackles of colonialism would be cast off. There was an optimism about a new world at that time, fueled by economic expansion in the North and a discourse of “development” of the newly formed nations. All of this presaged a new kind of world. The *carriers* of this second phase were *decolonialization, independence, and economic optimism*. The mode of universality was *optimism* about overcoming the evils of the past.

On the religious side, Reformation churches found themselves overcoming their old antagonisms (partially as a result of the student missionary movement and the experience of the Resistance in Europe during the Second World War), and they started coming together. The Roman Catholic Church abandoned at the official level its fortress mentality against the modern world and embraced that same modernity in the Second Vatican Council. Both of these Western embodiments of Christianity found themselves welcoming a new partnership with the churches of the South. The shift into the new phase called into question the dominant universalities of the previous phase. What “mission” meant came under close scrutiny. Meanwhile, many Catholics and Protestants continued to practice mission more or less as they had in the previous phase, while others sought modifications, and still others called for the outright abandonment of mission.

The response toward ecumenism, the ambivalence toward mission, and a new attention to the churches of the South was developed in the carrier envelope of decolonization, independence, and optimism. The *theological modes* that emerged were those of solidarity, dialogue, and accompaniment. Solidarity bespoke the new partnership that led to a sense of mutuality and commitment to the churches on the churches’ own terms; it gave birth to liberation theologies. Dialogue was a reaction to the evangelizing mode of the first phase, and emphasized respect for the other and left the possibility of conversion deliberately vague. Accompaniment was meant to overcome the hegemonic patterns of leadership from the colonial period, and replace them with greater mutuality. The *results* were a new definition of globalization as ecumenical cooperation, interreligious dialogue, and the struggle for justice.

These were all couched in the optimistic universality of the 1960s that the world’s problems could be overcome. The tension between mission and these

latter three went largely unresolved, and for many there was a clear divide between mission, on the one hand, and ecumenism, dialogue, and justice on the other. Many, however, struggled to create a new synthesis. Globalization came to embrace all four by the 1980s.

Third Phase: 1989- —Between the Global and the Local

Paul Tillich and others said that the twentieth century began in August 1914 with the outbreak of the Great War. It could equally be said that it ended in 1989 with the fall of the Berlin Wall. But the conditions leading up to that political event were also shaping a larger understanding of what is sometimes called the postmodern world. The date of the OPEC oil embargo, 1973, is often given as the date when economic power and the concomitant modes of production began to shift. New technologies, especially in communications, marked a move away from largely industrial economies to economies involved more in the flow of information, technologies, goods, and services. Just when the South was struggling to attain nation-states, these states were becoming more and more superfluous as information and capital drew their own map of the world—one beyond the eighteenth century ideal of the nation-state.

The *carrier* of this new postmodern reality is a new *global capitalism*. As was noted earlier, the defeat of socialism left no alternative. But the liberal capitalism that had been seen as the implacable foe of Marxist socialism has largely disappeared now into a new form of capitalism that emphasizes the mobility of capital, information, and resources rather than building of large industrial bases. While often having a clear national identity of origin (Japanese, American, German), it in effect moves wherever it needs to in order to achieve its short-range goals. Because profit margins have narrowed since the 1960s, the temptation is to get the short-term profit rather than wait for a long-term return.²² This global capitalism is characterized by postnationalism, a communication system built on network rather than hierarchy, a multicentered view of the world, and a tendency to operate in the short term. While it brings untold new wealth to some, it also breeds asymmetries, conflict, and a sense of no alternatives for those not included in the flow of its information, technology, capital, and goods.

Its mode of *universality* is the new *global culture*, characterized by American cola drinks, athletic and casual clothing, and American movie and television entertainment. It is a culture sent virtually everywhere, but received in considerably different fashions. For example, “Dynasty” is

watched differently in Lagos than in Los Angeles; studies have shown that Canadians see the resolutions of disputes in “All in the Family” differently from the Dutch (Archie tends to be the winner in Canada, while Edith, Gloria, and Meathead triumph in the Netherlands). The universality is both real and unreal at the same time. It is real inasmuch as it is found everywhere; it is unreal in that what it signifies means different things in the reception of the local culture.

What becomes the theological *mode* of the third phase of globalization? Discussions of the meaning of mission continue. Worries about the stagnation of ecumenism, the possibility of genuine dialogue with the religiously other and a theology of religions, and speculation about the future of liberation theology in a no-alternative world bespeak the fact that even as we have moved into a new phase, the previously dominant modes continue with us. After all, most Christians still feel the need to spread the gospel, overcome the scandalous divisions in the body of Christ, understand other religious traditions better, and struggle for justice. But the optimism that marked those earlier discussions has been replaced by a sobered realism (the attitude of the postmodern phase). Can a new mode be identified?

I would suggest that the new *mode* will involve bridge building, finding symbols of hope, and seeking paths of reconciliation. In other words, the barriers in the third phase are not between empire and colony, or between older and younger church, but rather are barriers that run helter-skelter through our communities, created by attempts to hold the global and the local in critical correlation. Even to phrase it as between North and South is too simple, since the South lives in the North and the North in the South. We need to find the cracks yawning in our midst where the global and the local fail to connect. We need too to seek symbols of hope in a world that seems less and less able to hold out opportunities for another vision. Our hope is not the optimistic hope of the 1960s; it is a tempered, more sobered hope, but a hope nonetheless. Likewise, in the tensions and conflicts that emerge, we need to seek paths of reconciliation less an ecologically threatened earth fracture altogether. There are many false paths of reconciliation, to be sure. But in an ever violent world where the majority suffer, reconciliation—the discovery of the gift of true humanity—is something we cannot disdain to seek.²³

Globalization in this third phase, then, becomes a quest for the bridges between the global and the local. The global has changed; its economic face appears to be even less benign than in the recent past. This has prompted new expressions of the local—the eruptions in Central Asia and in Eastern

Europe, the resurgence of native pride in the Americas, but also the rootlessness of much of affluent North America and Western Europe. How shall the global and the local be configured to one another, within communities and across continents? How shall prophetic challenge be maintained? If the hypothesis about the yoking together of the global and the local suggested above is correct, this could well be the shape that globalization will take in the ensuing period, even as we struggle to integrate the understandings of the first and second phase.

Implications for Theological Education

Let me conclude with just a couple of suggestions about what all of this means for theological education today. I make the suggestions in three points and concluding remark about vision.

If the next phase of globalization finds us between the global and the local, we need to prepare ourselves and our students to:

1. *Understand the contextual.* Especially for uprooted peoples, for those who receive in a different way from how it is given, and who seek ways (and it is often plural) to belong. The world has shifted such that we can no longer presume (or perhaps should even presume) an Archimedean point.

2. *Build strong local communities.* Only communities confident of themselves and imbued with the gospel will resist the temptation to become enclaves or fortresses rather than the communities Christ intends.

3. *Interpret the global,* both in its hegemonies—how it destroys human life—and in its gifts of decentralization, democratization, and local empowerment.

To carry these out in the concrete may require some axial changes. The sin-and-forgiveness model that has dominated Western Christianity for so many centuries may need to give way to others. One being suggested from the South is a death-and-life model, since that hues closer to the day-to-day experiences of the poor of the world.

Certain biblical images have often undergirded, at least implicitly, our understandings of globalization. In the first phase, it was undoubtedly the Great Commission of Matthew 28:19-20. In the second phase, Luke may have provided the key: Luke 4:16-20 in the call to solidarity and justice; Luke 24:13-15 in the call to accompaniment.

The Scripture for this third phase may well be Ephesians 2:12-14: "Remember you were at that time without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us."

ENDNOTES

¹There is now a rich literature on orality and literacy, some of which has been applied to contextualization and theology. See for example Anthony J. Gittins, *Gifts and Strangers: Meeting the Challenge of Inculturation* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1989) 68-80. For wider discussions, see Walter Ong, *Orality and Literacy* (New York: Methuen, 1981); and Brian Stock, *The Implications of Literacy: Written Language and Models of Interpretation in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983).

²For accounts of this, see Robert Schreiter, "Faith and Cultures: Challenges to a World Church," *Theological Studies* 50 (1989): 744-760; Aylward Shorter, *Toward a Theology of Inculturation* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1988).

³The statement is from then State Department official Francis Fukuyama in 1989. He has since expanded his Hegelian-Kojevean vision into *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York: Basic Books, 1992).

⁴"Un pueblo sobrante," a phrase appearing more and more in the Latin American literature. For two such analyses that reflect the sentiments described here, see Franz J. Hinkelammert, "El crisis del socialismo y la lucha norte-sur," *Pasos* no. 30 (julio-agosto 1990); Pablo Richard, "La Teologia de la liberacion en la nueva coyuntura," *Pasos* no. 34 (marzo-abril 1991).

⁵For a more complete discussion of this relation of global and local forms of culture, see Anthony D. Smith, "Towards a Global Culture?" and Arjun Appadurai, "Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy," ed. Mike Featherstone, *Global Culture: Nationalism, Globalization and Modernity* (Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, 1990), 171-192 and 295-310, respectively.

⁶Lamin Sanneh, *Translating the Message: The Missionary Impact on Culture* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1989).

⁷Kenelm Burridge, *In the Way: A Study of Christian Missionary Endeavours* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1991).

⁸Ramon Gutierrez, *When Jesus Came, The Corn Mothers Went Away: Marriage, Sexuality, and Power in New Mexico, 1500-1846* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991). The Corn Mothers were the creators of Pueblo culture.

⁹In the growing literature here, see for example the Cambridge University Press series "Urbanization in Developing Countries."

¹⁰I have dealt with the sender-receiver problem in more detail in *Constructing Local Theologies* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1985), ch. 3; "Some Conditions for a Transcultural Theology," ed. Paul Knitter, *Pluralism and Oppression: Theology in World Perspective* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1991), 23-28.

¹¹ This story is recounted by Eugene Nida. For other examples of the problem of Bible translation, see Eugene A. Nida and William D. Reyrburn, *Meaning Across Cultures* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1981).

¹² Harold W. Turner, "The Contribution of Studies on Religion in Africa to Western Religious Studies," eds. M.E. Glasswell and E. Fashole-Luke, *New Testament Christianity for Africa and the World* (London: SPCK, 1974), 169-178.

¹³ Some recent studies that provide raw material for these reflections on the Americas include Gutierrez, op.cit.; Serge Gruzinski, *La Colonisation de l'imaginaire: Societes indigenes et occidentalisation dans le Mexique espanol XVIe-XVIIIe siecles* (Paris: Gallimard, 1988); Manuel Marzal (ed.), *El Rostro indo de Dios* (Lima: Pontificia Universidad Catolica, 1991).

¹⁴ Among them, Schreiter, *Constructing Local Theologies*, op.cit., ch.7; Hermann P. Siller (ed.), *Suchbewegungen: Synkretismus, kulturelle Identitaet und kirchliches Bekenntnis* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1991); Jerald Gort et al. (eds.), *Dialogue and Syncretism: An Interdisciplinary Approach* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1989). J. Peter Schniller's call for a moratorium on using the word "syncretism" probably only postpones the problem rather than clarifying it. See his "Inculturation and Syncretism: What is the Real Issue?" *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 16 (1992): 50-53.

¹⁵ James A. Banks, "Multicultural Education: Development, Paradigms and Goals," eds. James A. Banks and James Lynch, *Multicultural Education in Western Societies* (New York: Praeger, 1986), 2-28.

¹⁶ Richard A. Shweder, "Post-Nietzschean Anthropology: The Idea of Multiple Objective Worlds," in his *Thinking through Cultures: Explorations in Cultural Psychology* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), 27-72.

¹⁷ Private, unpublished communication.

¹⁸ For speculations from a history of religions perspective on this question, see Ioan Coulianou, *Out of This World: Otherworldly Journeys from Gilgamesh to Einstein* (Boston: Shambhala, 1991).

¹⁹ See the collection of Wade Clark Roof, *World Order and Religion* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1991).

²⁰ Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Modern World-System: Capitalist Agriculture and the Origins of the World-Capitalist Economy in the Sixteenth Century* (New York: Academic Press, 1974), 2 vols.

²¹ For a good history of this development of understandings of the "other" encountered, see Bernard McGrane, *Beyond Anthropology: Society and the Other* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989).

²² For a general description of this new form of global capitalism, see Robert B. Reich, *The Work of Nations: Preparing Ourselves for 21st-Century Capitalism* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1991). For a critique of the relation between the liberal-industrial and global capitalism, see David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989).

²³ I have explored these themes of reconciliation more fully in *Reconciliation: Mission and Ministry in a Changing Social Order* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1992).

Theological Education: Its Unities and Diversities

Kosuke Koyama

We live today in a crisis period of the spiritual life of humanity of which, in the words of Amos, we may say:

Why do you want the day of the Lord? It is darkness, not light; as if someone fled from a lion, and was met by a bear; or went into the house and rested a hand against the wall, and was bitten by a snake (Amos 5:18.19).

Today, we live in the day of the Lord. At the foundation of the day of the Lord is the radical self-giving of God in Christ. Because of this theology of the cross, the unities and diversities in theological education hang together and function meaningfully.

Theological education comes in a variety of packages. In the three historic traditions—Eastern Orthodox, Catholic, and Protestant—the forms and contents of theological education may differ considerably. Because theological education takes place in a variety of cultural and linguistic contexts, because the Bible is read and interpreted in a variety of ways, and because the liturgy of divine service is not uniform, the emphasis in theological curricula differs. How deeply I was impressed by the difference between the liturgical tradition of the seminary in Zagorsk, outside of Moscow, and that of my own tradition! Authority in theological education is located and defined differently from one tradition to another.

Yet, there is unity in the words we use to speak of the God of the Holy Trinity and of the decisive coming of God to humanity in Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is confessed as the head of the church which is One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic. The nature of theological education must reflect and point to the essential marks of the church from which theology draws its life. Theological education is a function of the church's reflection on what it believes. Such reflection comes with the act of social justice.

Editor's Note: The text of this article was an address to the 1992 ATS Biennial Meeting.

Nourished by the community of believers, theological education lives as it is responsibly webbed with the daily life of humanity. “Give the water of life in an Indian cup” (Sundar Singh). The theologian from Myanmar, Khin Maung Din, goes even one step further:

The basic theological problem for Burmese Christian theology is not that which is concerned with “the bottle,” but that which concerns the “wine” itself. The gospel must not only be understood in a Burmese way, but the Burmese and Buddhist understanding of Man, Nature, and Ultimate Reality must also become inclusive as a vital component in the overall content of the gospel¹.

Theological education is inescapably faced by this Myanmar question. While it is a historical fact that Greek metaphysics became a “vital component in the overall content of the gospel,” this is not without its problems. Theological education lives constantly with the critical tension of Myanmar formulation. Its authenticity is demonstrated when it makes concrete the marks of the church as it is engaged in the human communities of all cultures.

Plurality and Relatedness of Theological Cultures

David B. Barrett’s *World Christian Encyclopedia* lists “names for God in 900 languages” (pp. 984-987). God is called *allah*, *bhagawan*, *deus*, *dewa*, *god*, *hananim*, *ishwar*, *kami*, *khuda*, *mulungu*, *mwari*, *nkulunkulu*, *nzambe*, *siong-te* to give some samples. God is called *allah* in 31 languages including Javanese, Hausa, Sundanese, and Turkish. God is called *khuda* in twenty-one languages including Persian, Sindhi, Tamil, and Urdu. And God is called *god* in fifty-six languages, including Afrikaan, English, Moskito, and Navajo. Obviously, there are religious-linguistic groupings among the names of God listed.

Do the Greek *theos* and the Zulu *nkulunkulu* point to the same reality? Are *nkulunkulu* and the Shona *mwari* identical? Are *theology* and *nkulunkulu* the same for the Zulus? What happens to *nkulunkulu* in the Federal Theological Seminary of Natal in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa? Is *nkulunkulu* ousted in favor of the *theos* of Christian theology? Does the sound *god* carry the same religious and cultural meaning for both English people in London and Navajo people in Northwestern New Mexico who speak the Apachean language?

For centuries *nkulunkulu* has lived with the Zulus, and *mwari* with the Shonas. If theology is engaged in the local religious and cultural contexts, the Zulu or Shona Christian theology cannot take shape apart from dialogue with *nkulunkulu* or *mwari*. Barrett lists 8,990 distinct people groups or cultures in the world today. There could be 8,990 distinctive theological cultures in the world! The *theo-* of theology must be experienced differently according to the subtle cultural perception of human spirit. The 528 names for god do not point to one clear unified idea of god. Even in the Bible “God” comes to us in a diversity of ways.

We receive our concept of God from a web of stories that are centered by, or point to, God. In this web, every connective cord must be valued. This is why theology and culture are inseparable. This is why theology is necessarily a public story. The *nkulunkulu* means all of the *nkulunkulu*-centered stories with which the Zulus have lived for centuries. The image suggested here is that of a web rather than an isolated point. To say that “God is love” can be meaningful only as a summary of webbed stories containing God. Unwebbed, it will become abstract and meaningless.

We can neither know nor communicate the story of Yahweh without also having some understanding of the story of Baal. This is so because theology comes together with religious culture. “How long will you go limping with two different opinions?” (I Kings 18:21). It takes “two different opinions” to begin theology. Theology necessarily involves the knowledge of idolatry. Critique of idolatry is the point at which theology becomes a public story. When the limping is no longer there, then the theology as we know it will disappear. Apart from the stories between *nkulunkulu* and the Christian God, Christian theology does not make sense to the Zulus. This is so because Christian theology is fundamentally relationship-oriented. “God is love” (I Jn. 4:8).

The First Commandment of Moses, “You shall have no other gods before me” (Ex. 20:3, cf. Acts 5:29), was the first Emancipation Proclamation given to humanity. Yet, when we conveniently place peoples different from us under the category of “priests of Baal,” we may be acting self-righteously. They are not as stupid and idolatrous as we may think. “We are not unquestionably sages, nor are they unquestionably fools” (“The 17 Article Constitution” of Prince Shotoku of Japan, 604 C.E.). I can only believe that Elijah indulged in overkill. Perhaps that is why he was fired!

Misuse of the First Commandment is ethnocentric theological arrogance. We worship the right God, and you worship the wrong gods! Historical human situations are far more complicated and ambiguous than our neat formulations. There could be 200 different perspectives instead of two. Faith does believe in God even when God does not respond with fire.

Fifty-one and one-tenth percent of the world's population are "Children of Abraham" (Christians, 33.1 percent; Muslims, 17.7; Jews, 0.3). The theological identity of that 51.1 percent cannot be established if the religious life of the 49.9 percent is denied. "It is a terrible, inexorable law that one cannot deny the humanity of another without diminishing one's own." (James Baldwin, *Nobody Knows My Name*.) Christians cannot deny the dignity of Muslims without diminishing their own dignity.

How is *nkulunkulu* related to the Christian *theos*? If we expand that, how is the *nkulunkulu* religion/culture/power related to the Christian *theos* religion/culture/power? Simple as it may seem, this question provides a basic structure for theological education. Education's task is to establish an enlightening and emancipating image of relationship. Education exercises its influence within the primacy of relationship. Therefore, education is public. Theological education is a public act. The truthfulness of theological education must be affirmed by humanity and God. President Lincoln invoked "the considerate judgment of mankind and the gracious favor of Almighty God" upon the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863.

The contents and forms of theological education are diverse. In theological education, the innermost conviction and discourse become public proclamation and discourse. As a public act, it demonstrates its unities and diversities. Whether one admits it or not, unities and diversities in global theological education have been decisively influenced by the Western contents and forms of theological education.

Global Reach of Western Theology

K.M. Panikkar, the Indian historian, calls our attention to the "Vasco Da Gama Epoch of Asian History, 1498-1945" (*Asia and Western Dominance*). Christopher Columbus's first westward navigation to reach "Asia" took place four decades after the fall of Constantinople to the Islamic force. Fully aware of Islamic power, the spiritual energy of European Christendom directed itself towards the Atlantic and Indian Oceans. Asia (via the Cape of Hope) and

the Americas were invaded by the Catholic missions. In the brief ministries of Francis Xavier in Japan and Matteo Ricci in Peking, the momentous encounter between Christianity and the oriental philosophies and religions took place.

The Jesuit mission was a paradigmatic example of the introduction to the East and to the world of the theologies of the First Commandment (“You shall have no other gods before me”) and of the Sacrament of Holy Eucharist (“This is my body which is broken for you”). One cannot address the global reality of theological education today without acknowledging the extensive mission work staged by Christianity during the Era of Great Navigation in the sixteenth century. I shall refrain from describing the tragic ambiguity of the history of humanity in the last five centuries except to mention that the Era of Great Navigation initiated the fateful transatlantic slave trade.

World Christianity has been busy, particularly for the last 150 years, learning Western theology; in doing so, it has forgotten the paradigmatic theology which stands at the intersection of the First Commandment and the Sacrament of Holy Eucharist. Why has theological education paid more attention to the “scientific nature of theological truths” than to the messages of the First Commandment and of the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist? Was it because Western theologians wanted to be accepted by the post-Enlightenment university?

If one wants to be theologically educated, whatever one’s ethnic and cultural background, one must study theologies of the West. Hence, Anselm, Thomas, Luther, Calvin, Schleiermacher, Barth, Niebuhr, and a host of other figures and events in the Western theological world have been diligently studied in Calcutta, Tokyo, Djakarta, Suva, Harare, Freetown, Lima, Sao Paulo, and Buenos Aires. I remember the day when seven A-class Japanese war criminals were hanged in Tokyo in 1948. At the time I was studying the Swiss theologian Emil Brunner’s *Divine Imperative* holding an English dictionary in my hands. Having worked in this manner diligently for the last 150 years, Western theology has indeed achieved a working universality.

A good number of my Asian friends willingly accepted the Western theological “circumcision” and learned to speak competently every respectable word in Western theology. They made the transition with remarkable

swiftness and with serious intellectual commitment. They studied Ernst Troeltsch in the original German and argued persuasively that crucial Asian cultural and religious problems can be illuminated by the erudite words of the German thinker. We were told that the key to understand the religious history of East Asia is found in the writings of Friedrich Nietzsche. Some Asian scholars have written brilliant New Testament studies mobilizing all possible European resources on the subjects.

The impressive quality and scope of Western scholarship in all areas of theological studies must be acknowledged. Spend some time in the library stacks of Union Theological Seminary in New York, one of the most prominent theological libraries of the world (574,834 books; 133,543 periodicals [bound and microform]; 55,000 microforms in 1992). Certainly a feeling of awe in that environment is unavoidable. Each volume on the shelf represents a history of serious intellectual and spiritual engagement. Again, think of the high quality of work demonstrated in the 1,400-page *New Jerome Biblical Commentary*! Indeed, a Thai student must learn English just to get the benefit from this book. Had this book been written in Swahili, theological students throughout the world would learn Swahili to read it.

The South East Asia Graduate School of Theology is a consortium of theological education which serves the countries of Indonesia, the Philippines, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Thailand, Myanmar, and Singapore. In the early 1970s, when I was the dean of the school, it already enjoyed an impressive faculty made up of nearly eighty Ph.D.s, earned without exception from Western centers of theological study. Asian libraries of theological seminaries are stacked with Western books. H. Richard Niebuhr's *Christ and Culture* has been discussed in Asian, African, and Latin American seminaries. Western theological books were shipped to the seminary libraries in China soon after the country was opened again to the West. Most trustworthy works on India are published by Oxford University Press.

A critical comment must be made at this point. Too few in Asia, Africa, and South America have been exposed to the profound theological thoughts and experiences of the Eastern Orthodox tradition. For a greater majority of humanity, "in the beginning was the icon" would have a more spiritual message than "in the beginning was the Word."

Theological education throughout the world is indebted to the achievement of theology in the West. However, the Conference on Theological Education in Southeast Asia, held in Bangkok in 1956 said:

Theology of the West should not be transplanted wholesale to the East. The Christian faith should be presented in relation to the totality of questions raised by the local situation, and it should not be assumed that certain questions are relevant to all times and situations.

Two basic reactions to the dominance of Western theology may be identified:

(a) One group of theologians in Asia, Africa, South America, and the Pacific hold that theological education today must begin by rejecting Western theological formulations. There is no reason, they insist, why the Christian experience of Western white humanity should be the standard of theological experience and expression throughout the world. It has become rather common among Western theologians to speak of the “Strange World of the Bible.” But in many cultures, the world of the Bible may not be so strange.

(b) Another group holds that while Western theological formulations do not have universality, certain aspects of Western theology are globally significant. Theological education must avoid any kind of exclusivity. Instead of rejection, they advocate a search for mutual correction which would be more congruent to the spirit of Christian theology. Western theology is one of a number of ecumenical theologies.

These reactions are, in turn, not without problems. To those who reject Western theology outright, it must be said that it is simplistic to call for the complete elimination of the influence of Western theological thought, for instance, from Asia. It would require the resignation of nearly all theological professors and church leaders from their positions. Nearly all books on every shelf of the theological libraries throughout Asia would be declared worthless. Furthermore, a culturally and religiously “pure Asia” does not exist. Every culture is inter-cultural. Every language is inter-linguistic. Every religion is inter-religious.

On the other hand, to those who seek a mutual correction, it must be seen that prominent theologians of the West are still acting, speaking, and writing as though Western formulation of theological truths is universal. Probably, they do believe in such universality! Innumerable courses listed in the catalogues of theological schools, not only in the West, but even in other parts of the world, support the “universality” of Western theology. So long as the mainline theological schools in Africa (and in Asia) accept the Westernization of theology, without question, any effort toward mutual correction is doomed.

In my judgment, the possibility of mutual correction has more future than the position of rejection. The Western theology is one of several main spiritual and intellectual experiences of humanity. It cannot and must not claim universality. We cannot understand the basic identity of a Lutheran theological seminary in Hong Kong unless we know about the history of the European Reformation. The knowledge of such historical connection is important. But we must go beyond this “historical connection” in research of the self-identity in the world today. Then, a good portion of Western theology must be optional for the students who do not belong to the Western religious and cultural zone.

With this perspective in mind, I move on to examine challenges to theological education wherever it is conducted.

Common Challenges

I will highlight three common challenges:

- a search for a theological methodology of mutuality among humanity;
- a search for the right kind of theological knowledge; and
- a liberation from the global prestige system in which theological education has been caught.

Methodology of Mutuality

Unities and diversities of theological education are revealed in the search for a theological methodology of mutuality. Mutuality is a dialogical concept. It is solidarity-oriented. It demands from us a careful study of religious and cultural comparison. Today we know that this planet earth is one ark with all humanity aboard. How can we make a viable planetary community of humanity without knowing and appreciating the differing cultures and religions of the peoples?

None of us is free from the “middle-kingdom-complex.” In the United States, the denominational-center-complex (denominationalism) is still the norm to the detriment of ecumenical Christianity. The center-complex, always accompanied by the teacher-complex, makes the search for a theological methodology of human mutuality difficult. The search becomes captive to spiritual or intellectual imperialism, if some knees remain unbent when every other knee is bending.

In what sense can theological education speak about mutuality in the great human family? Between races and genders? Among nations? Among ethnic groups? Among religious communities? Between the Hindu Upanisads and the Wisdom Literature of the Bible? Between Thai Buddhism and Japanese Buddhism? Between the Benedictine Rules and the Theravada Sangha Rules? Between the Hindu piety of the Bhagavadgita among the Bengali-speaking people in Calcutta and the spiritual life of Anglican people in Nairobi today? Between the liberation theology in Managua and the shamanism in Korea?

But, why mutuality? Is mutuality an essential part of the gospel? Races and genders will not disappear. The Upanisads and the Bible came from human souls and they will stay with human souls. Buddhism and Christianity will not vanish. Demand for a fair comparison springs from the deep need of human souls. Rightly engaged, comparison can inspire mutual correction and mutual enrichment. We need a new concept of comparison of differing religious symbols and convictions. "And if you greet only your brothers and sisters, what more are you doing than others?" (Mt. 5:47). And again, theologians must search for this mutuality remembering the First Commandment and the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist.

A subtle colonial double standard is concealed in discussions such as "Christ and culture," "evangelism and syncretism," and recently in "contextualization and globalization of theological education." These formulations betray an element of Christian-center-complex. The center-complex expresses itself in voyeurism. The theology of the cross says that the opposite of voyeurism is solidarity even to the point of martyrdom. Today's liberation theology literature is particularly vulnerable to the invasion of voyeurism. How can we purge the "contextualization and globalization of theological education" of voyeurism?

Can the idea of mutuality be theologically expressed? Will Mt. 5:47 give us a sharper insight to discern unities and diversities in our theological education?

What Kind of Knowledge?

Early in my theological study I was given the strong impression that theology is a respectable subject of study (science) only in its Western intellectual formulation. Outside the academic and cultural tradition of the West, theology is at best an inspiring poem, and at worst a superficial opinion.

Education, defined as a consciously rational activity of the human mind, developed and excelled in the west. The latest edition of *Encyclopedia Britannica* divides the entire corpus of human knowledge into ten parts, and the sub-classifications of them are listed in the subsequent 780 pages. The amazing fact is that in every area of these sub-classifications we find a host of accomplished scholars.

It is not just in the field of theological study then, but in every area of knowledge, that the west, particularly for the last 150 years, has been the active center of humanity's intellectual activities. Human knowledge has been largely shaped or formulated by the Western mind. The 672-page "1991 Calendar of the University of Zimbabwe," which describes the academic activities of its ten faculties, demonstrates that the university could not have been founded in 1955 had it not adopted the model and the contents of British higher education.

The interaction between human knowledge and human welfare has been painfully ambiguous. Why is it that the custodian of knowledge (Western civilization) has been the perpetrator of slavery/colonization, war/ultimate weapon, and individualism/materialism? Why has the possessor of knowledge in every conceivable field of human interest brought all of humanity to the brink of destruction in this century? Is something seriously wrong with the nature of knowledge we so value today? What is the relationship between information and knowledge? Has knowledge pushed wisdom out? Is analytical knowledge inimical to intuitive knowledge? Has the relationship between human soul and knowledge become disjointed?

What kind of knowledge does humanity need today? What kind of knowledge must be demonstrated in M. Div. papers and Ph.D. dissertations? What are we looking for in students' exegesis papers and systematic theology papers? What kind of "logy" of theo-logy do we need? What kind of knowledge does the Bible impart to us? What is the role of historical critical method in our quest for the biblical kind of knowledge? May I paraphrase the words of the apostle: "I am again in the pain of childbirth until Christ-like knowledge is formed in you" (Gal. 4:19).

In spite of their rich indigenous resources, theological reflections outside the West have contributed little to the question of the nature of theological knowledge. Why, during the last 150 years, have there been so few Asian

theologians who have significant acquaintance with Asia's spiritual heritage? No group looks down on its own religious and cultural heritage more than Asian (and perhaps African) Christian theologians. There is no need to point out how deeply and extensively global theological education suffers from this.

Will not Galatians 4:19 give us the principle that will enable us to examine the quality of unities and diversities in our theological education? Should not the unities and diversities demonstrate a Christ-like knowledge?

Uniformity of Prestige System

In every field of study, Western academic degrees open the way into the world of universal prestige. Degrees are shrouded with mystique and prestige. International students studying in theological schools in the West are willing to go through any difficulties and obstacles to achieve the degrees.

A Thai student, whether in Bangkok or in Chicago, tries with heroic effort to understand the philosophical world of Paul Tillich. A Nigerian student seeks to comprehend Alfred North Whitehead. A Beijing woman studies American feminist theology. A student from a Pacific island writes a paper on the theological ethics of Karl Barth. This practice has been accepted by both students and professors wherever they may be in the world. The "academic policy committees" of theological schools hardly discuss what is accomplished by submitting students to this one-way-traffic system of mental torture. "I have observed the misery of my people..." (Ex. 3:7). It is like pulling out a healthy set of teeth and replacing them with false teeth.

Whether students are in Madras or Lima, the theological diplomas they receive are standardized by the level of Western theological education. The basic model of accreditation of theological schools throughout the world comes from the accreditation standard originally written for Western schools. Thus, globally, all theological education belongs to the West-centered prestige system. The structure of curriculum and the method of instruction are basically identical with the Western structure.

Wherever theological schools are located, their curriculum is divided, more or less, into four basic fields: Biblical, Theological, Historical, and Practical. Any change to this system would threaten the approved global

system of theological education. Has this sacrosanct fourfold division been a barrier to global theological education? All theological professors are trained in one of the four fields. They represent a massive power that perpetuates the divisions in the otherwise wholistic vision of theological knowledge.

For the last thirty years, a number of significant experiments have been made to divert the flow of the theological pilgrimage to the West. Most theological educators have been aware of the problems of the pilgrimage. “A poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which are worth a penny.” Jesus’ commendation of the widow’s act suggests a searching criticism of the vast prestige within which theological education operates today. (See Mk. 12:41-44.) How can we deal with the human and social need for prestige in theological education? What kind of prestige in theological education should we seek? The answer is by no means self-evident as long as the Western theological degrees can command universal recognition.

Can we establish unities and diversities of theological education in terms of the theological degrees that schools confer? Will Mk. 12:42 counsel us on how we should examine the vast prestige system the world of theological education has developed?

Theological Paradigms That Need to Be Examined

Let me continue on the note of common challenge. I would like to list three theological paradigms—culture-related, theology-related, and communication-related—which need to be examined.

History and Nature

All cultures originate in the human spirit. Theological education inhales and exhales the air of culture, and lives. There are two main spiritualities of cultures in the world, to paraphrase the words of Psalm 121: the culture which says (a) “My help comes from heaven and earth,” and the other which says (b) “My help comes from the maker of heaven and earth.”

The two types are distinguishable yet co-existing and intermingling. Two types of culture present their respective doctrines of salvation. They both teach social ethics. Both are equally subject to distortion and misuse that can threaten the well-being of humanity and all things.

Questions: Has our theological education taken position [a] seriously? Do the Scripture and tradition of the church reject position [a]? What are the theological traditions, in the past and present, that have indicated a deep appreciation of position [a]? Does position [a] simply represent the teaching of the “priests of Baal”? Will position [a] lead us always to “making offerings to the queen of heaven”? (Jer. 44:18). (See also Jer. 8:1.2.) Why is it that the Western Christian civilization, not the Islamic nor the Buddhistic civilization, is responsible for today’s ecocide, murder of the “heaven and earth”? Is it not in the religious and cultural zone of position [b] that nuclear bombs have been created? Isn’t it true that distortion of [b] is far more destructive than that of [a]? Has theological education made any significant attempt to bring these two spiritualities together for reconciliation?

These questions lead me to ask a further question: Have the categories of “history” and “nature” drawn our theological education astray from the living integral message of the gospel? Should this theological paradigm be challenged? Do the Scriptures and the traditions of the church throughout the centuries really speak of a distinction between “history” and “nature”? Is there something important that the Eastern Orthodox tradition can teach us in this regard? If we say that Christianity is history-oriented, while Hinduism is nature-oriented, what really do we mean by that? This question touches upon the nerve system of theological education.

Will re-thinking the distinction between “history” and “nature” compel us to reformulate our understanding of unities and diversities in theological education? “Time is the heart of existence.”² Can we say theologically that the heart of time is space, and the heart of space is time? Do we not fail to understand the depth of the prophetic passion when we apply our categories of “history” and “nature” to such passages as:

She did not know that it was I who gave her the grain, the wine, and the oil, and who lavished upon her silver and gold that they used for Baal? (Hosea 2:8)

Mystery and Ethics

The best portion of the spiritual heritage of Christianity is the unity between mystery (“Look, here is the Lamb of God!” [Jn. 1:36]) and ethics (“I was hungry and you gave me food.” [Mt. 25:35]). The vertical is one with the horizontal. Abraham became the father of three religious traditions when he united mystery (“I am but dust and ashes” - “numinous”) with ethics in his

intercession (“Suppose five of the fifty righteous are lacking?” [Gen. 18:27,28]). The separation of the two takes the life out of theological education. Abraham Heschel tells us that the pathos and ethos of God are one.

The “love [mystery] towards the stranger [ethics]” (Rm. 12:13) is the shortest formulation of the unity between mystery and ethics. “Strangers” are those who are not “your brothers and sisters” (Mt. 5:47). Outsiders belong to the race, culture, religion, ideology, language, economic ability, or education that is different from our own. They are unfamiliar people. We assume that unfamiliar people are uncivilized and threatening. They can even be enemies. The cross of Christ is the most intense expression of love towards strangers. Thus it unites mystery and ethics.

Seen from this perspective of the theology of the cross, the paradigm of the dualistic “two cities” (a general-profane “city of humans” and a particular-sacred “city of God”) may be questioned. There is no one who is more outside than the crucified Christ. This spells the end of dualism. In place of dualism comes the healing power that emanates from the ultimate outsider. In 1977, Steve Biko suffered martyrdom. With his blood he established the unity between mystery and ethics. His body bore the scars of Jesus that symbolize unity.

This unity is often ignored in theological education. It is true that mystery cannot be taught on Monday mornings from 9:00 to 11:00 in classroom 303. Yet theological education cannot be vital and coherent without experiencing and expressing this unity. Only a few liberation theologians are effecting the cure on this split.

As long as theological education is vitally connected to the life of the church, it cannot be carried out apart from worship. In spite of varieties of liturgies, traditions, and theologies, theological schools share their commonality in the act of worship. Theological communities remain silent before the awesome mystery of God. It is this ineffable moment that gives theological education a clear ethical thrust. “Be still, and know that I am God!” (Ps. 46:10).

Must we not re-examine the unities and diversities in theological education in the light of the unity of mystery and ethics?

Distance from the Vernacular

Theological education begins by taking the vernacular seriously. If it does not, it must be challenged. In 1992, the Bible can be read in 1,978 languages. In the words of professor Lamin Sanneh, “God’s eternal counsels are compatible with ordinary, everyday speech.”³ With the power and dignity of vernacular languages, theological education addresses itself to the cultures, religions, politics, and economics of every region.

The contents of most vernacular theologies are unknown to people who do not belong to that vernacular. Yet, it is there theology breathes and lives. “In the beginning was the vernacular.” The famous 1985 “Kairos Document” of the South African Council of Churches suffers from the fact that it was not originally written in one of the great Bantu languages, such as Xhosa or Zulu. The contents being so thoroughly Western, the Document is not translatable to Zulu. Despising the dignity of the vernacular, it failed to create African theological images. As a result, it is well known in Germany but unknown in South Africa. Elitist papers written by the members of the Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians seem distanced from their own vernacular contexts.

In Thai theological education, the function of the vernacular has been largely to explain Western theological words and ideas. The religious images shaped in the Thai spirituality for centuries are either ignored or subordinated to the images imported from the West. The vernacular has lost its own dignity. This goes against the Pentecostal affirmation of every language.

It must be noted that the higher the level of theological studies is, the greater is the distance of theology from the vernacular. This distance has produced a substantial number of theological students who study “theology” but “do not know the Bible.” A historical weakness of elite theological education is evident here. The history of theological education over the last 150 years has been marked by a lack of theological images and symbols that are rooted in the vernacular, resulting in a dry uniformity that pervades theological studies. Throughout the world “Systematic Theology” is called “Systematic Theology,” “Church History” is “Church History,” and “Liberation Theology” is “Liberation Theology.”

A basic need of theological education is a deep sense of respect towards vernaculars. When this respect is absent, theological education suffers from

cultural dislocation. Sadly, theological schools often have failed to impress upon the students of all linguistic backgrounds this fundamental truth. Asian theologians think in the thought-style imposed by Western language while their own people live deeply in their own vernacular. The gospel can hardly be communicated in this situation. The essence of Christian theology can be expressed in any of the 7,010 languages and 17,000 dialects. Vernaculars will be stimulated, expanded, and enriched when they are made to express Christian theology.

Theological education must encourage students to write biblical commentaries in their vernaculars. A commentary on the Gospel of Luke written by a Shona-speaking person in Shona may not follow the canon of “historical-critical method,” but it will give the world of theological education new refreshing insights and images. For those of us who engage in theological study in New York City, the exegesis of ubiquitous graffiti helps our exegesis of the Bible.

Unities and diversities in theological education will become a more concrete challenge to us when we examine our theological education in terms of our faithfulness to vernacular language.

Pluralism in Theological Education

The unities and diversities in theological education are not static concepts. They are a living expression of the truth the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic church upholds. The unities or diversities which hinder the transmission of the fullness of the gospel must be critiqued. If they enhance the quality of communication of the gospel, they should be fostered. They are servants of the gospel of Jesus Christ. This understanding is consonant with the theologies of the First Commandment and the Holy Eucharist. When these two theologies intersect for us, we may come to an understanding of a theology of pluralism.

“The heart of so great a mystery can never be reached by following one road only.” These are the words of Aurelius Symmachus of the fourth century, critical of the exclusivity of Christianity. This one road, however, permits plurality of many roads of experiences and expressions. “So great a mystery” enables this. This is the mystery that is deeply involved in the concrete truths of the First Commandment (the divine affirmation) and of the Holy Eucharist (the divine self-giving). The most mysterious is the most concrete. The concrete which is not mysterious is not truly concrete.

Theological pluralism is mysterious and therefore concrete. It is the pluralism that emanates from the “indescribable gift” of the grace of God. It expresses itself in the dynamism of unities and diversities. It lives with this dynamism because it points to the generosity of God. This pointing is a response to the mystery of divine generosity, in the light of which we read:

God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers; then deeds of power, then gifts of healing, forms of assistance, forms of leadership, various kinds of tongues (I Cor. 12:28).

Theological pluralism is thus rooted in the generosity of God. When this generosity is ultimately shown in the crucified Christ—this is the perspective of the theology of the cross—pluralism is freed from the possibility of idolatry. In our faith in God’s generosity, we may be enabled to discern diversities expressing unities, and unities diversities. “The eye cannot say to the hand, ‘I have no need of you’” (I Cor. 12:21). A stingy God could not tolerate pluralism of theological truths. Theological uniformity is an expression of a stingy God.

How are these theological truths related to the general cultural and religious truths? Christian theologians must respond to this question in terms of the same divine generosity (the First Commandment) and the perspective of the theology of the cross (the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist). No truths are unrelated to the truth of the generosity of God. No truths will become imperialistic when related, directly or indirectly, to the truth of the Christ crucified. In this way, theological pluralism becomes a public truth. This truth enlightens everyone.

That which can become public truth can be contextualized. How could a gospel which is separated from public discourses be meaningfully contextualized? Contextualization of theology is an expression of the theology of the *crucis*. It is not a matter of cultural rearrangements. The gospel can be contextualized to the 350 million Buddhists or to the eight million people in the city of Djakarta because Christ is publicly crucified.

The generosity of God that “casts out the demons” illustrates the globalization of theological education (Lk. 11:20, Jn. 1:9). When the demons of parochialism are cast out by the finger of God, the “globalization of theological education” takes place. It cannot be achieved simply by the investment of three thousand dollars and 15,000 miles. Such trips produce only a globally expanded parochialism. (If you make a big trip, go to a place

where your language does not work, avoid interviews with big-name people, spend as much time as possible with the people on the street, and remain prayerful so that you may witness the finger of God that casts out demons from yourself and from others.)

Globalization is a deeply intellectual and spiritual experience. It is an experience of repentance before the generosity of God. This is the spiritual experience of the theology of the cross which makes us see the truth of theological pluralism. Genuine globalization brings us closer to the crucified Christ. Therefore, it cannot be imperialistic.

The globalization emphasis is primarily a concern of Western theological educators. For Western theologians, sub-Saharan Africa or the world East of Constantinople is becoming a first-hand experience. Globalization, however, has a relevance for theological educators outside the west. They have been Westernized. They must now be globalized. They must study their own religion, culture, and philosophy. Then they must study theological thoughts and practices in the wide world outside the west. The time has come for them to do this directly, not always via the west.

Westernization, it has been said, makes the human mind dynamic. It is observed that since 1850, the west stimulated the mind of one billion people who are outside the west (Robert Speer, *Missions and Modern History, A Study of the Missionary Aspects of Some Great Movements of the Nineteenth Century*, 1904). Amazing vitality! But today it may be judged that while westernization is indeed global it is also parochial. Judged in the light of the gospel, the Christian West is a parish as confused and sinful as any portion of the Hindu East. Unexamined cultural partiality is detrimental to the health of the human mind. In fact, it is far more difficult to live the Christian life in Christian culture than in other cultures.

The basic theological orientation of this speech is the intersection of the theology of the First Commandment (the divine self-affirmation) and that of the Holy Eucharist (the divine self-denial). Radical monotheism establishes itself through the radical self-giving of Christ. This is the theology of the cross. The gospel comes to humanity with the agitated dynamism of the theology of the cross. "My mind is turning over inside me. My emotions are agitated all together" (Hos. 11:8).

The unities and diversities are not settled formulae, but agitated realities. We live in the day of the agitated Lord. This is the primary context and content of theological education today.

ENDNOTES

¹Douglas J. Elwood, ed., *What Asian Christians Are Thinking* (New York: New Day, 1976), 89.

²Abraham J. Heschel, *The Sabbath* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1951), 3.

³Lamin Sanneh, "Gospel and Culture, Ramifying Effects of Scriptural Translation" *Bible Translation and the Church*, ed. Philip C. Stine, (New York: E. J. Brill, 1990), 1.

Contextualization as a Dynamic in Theological Education

Mercy Amba Oduyoye

“The Diverse Worlds of Theological Education,” the theme before us, is a recognition of the facts of our contemporary theological world.¹ The thirty years of theological education in Africa (1960-1990) illustrate the dynamism in theological education. Indeed my first theological certificate bears the marks of this need for constant transformation. I entered the Department of Theology of the University of Ghana, Legon in 1969 with a view to taking a London University external BD. All the courses I took followed that curriculum. While I was taking my final examinations a “decree went up from” the government of Ghana that Bachelor of Divinity be transformed to Bachelor of Arts in the Study of Religions and that the curriculum be transformed to give more time to African Traditional Religion and to Islam. I was affected by the former. The latter not, since I had already completed the courses and was taking the London examinations. But BD had been “outlawed” so I got a BA. Most African universities study “Religions,” while church colleges and seminaries study “Theology” and sometimes give BDs; most, however, give Diplomas in Theology after studies lasting two or three years.

What were the events that led to this dramatic change in Ghana? For Legon, it was political. Ghana had achieved political independence from Britain, and was doing what was needed to rid itself of all that was not necessary to keep, and to create what would give the people the confidence and pride of citizenship. Educational reform, especially the content, was a priority on the agenda of the new nation. Much of what is described as colonial mentality was disseminated through the educational system. The context of education was colonialization and that chapter was closing. Ghana was entering the chapter of autonomy and nation-building and had to craft a system that would be appropriate for that context. It is interesting to note that in Ghana, one of the first arenas of change was theological education through the state university. The secular state was willing to promote religion but not

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sectarian theology. Indeed religion was and continues to be an integral part of the educational curriculum from primary to tertiary level and is treated as a full member of the humanities.

Thirty Years in Africa

From 1960 onwards, departments of religious studies or departments for the study of religion have had their place in African universities. These departments are ecumenical and interreligious, concentrating mostly on Christianity, Islam and African Traditional Religion (ATR) together with philosophy and phenomenology of religion as well as the languages necessary for reading the scriptures of these religions. Research in ATR has been vigorously promoted, except in certain universities that cater specifically to Islam and therefore do not emphasize the other two. There are, of course, countries like Botswana and Sierra Leone that have Departments of Theology or Divinity; in fact the latter has had such a faculty since 1816, established by the Church Missionary Society. It was a college of Durham University—as later the University of Ghana in Legon, the University of Ibadan, and Makerere in Uganda were to begin their lives as colleges of London University. African governments, by the acceptance of these departments, are recognizing that the religious component of the African milieu cannot be ignored. Religion plays significant roles in politics, social structures, sometimes even in the economy, and is therefore a major element in African cultures.

Africa has what one might call “denominational” institutions for theology run by various Christian Communion. These take the forms of colleges, seminaries, universities, and institutes. Zaire has a Protestant faculty of theology and a Catholic one as well; Nigeria has a Baptist seminary that offers the external BA of an American university. There is a Catholic Institute for West Africa, based in Port Harcourt, Nigeria, offering post-graduate work in theology for Roman Catholics. In all these institutions the theological orientation was towards the North Atlantic; the teachers were either Europeans, Americans, or Africans whose teaching qualifications came from universities in Europe or North America. The theology was that of Western Christianity almost exclusively, as the Orthodox churches (Oriental and Eastern) have had little or no influence in Africa south of the Sahara with the exception of a brief interaction between the Ethiopian Orthodox Church and the Syrian Orthodox Church of India. The heritage, then, is distinctly

Northern and is modified to the extent that the faculty and the national context are strong enough to demonstrate that Christian theology is not a monolith but that the gospel of Jesus Christ is heard at the crossroads of cultural history and the word of God.

No one assumes that theological education in Africa today takes place in a predominantly Christian continent. We shall therefore take account of the key factors that make up the context of theological education in Africa and illustrate how taking them into consideration has become the invigorating element in the enterprise. The dynamism of culture is pivotal in the efforts to distill the relevance of Christianity and most specifically Christian theology for life in Africa. The second consideration is the multi-religious nature of African communities. Few African countries can claim to have all their nationals belonging to one religion, and none can claim that all within its borders practice one religion. Like almost everywhere in the world, inter-religious relations are a factor to reckon with. One cannot do Christian theology in Africa and pretend not to be speaking in a context where Islam aspires to domination and where people's traditional religions are inextricable from their daily practices. Thirdly, we shall look at how the dynamism of pro-justice movements has begun to make an impact on theological education in Africa. An aspect of justice that needs special attention is inclusiveness. We shall therefore review briefly how the voices of groups that have historically not been heard are beginning to impinge on both the method and the content of Christian theology. From these studies of the African scene we shall attempt to evaluate the role of contextualization as a dynamic in theological education, with special reference to Christian theology.

Culture as Context

A people's world-view, way of life, values, philosophy of life, the psychology that governs behavior, their sociology and social arrangements, all that they have carved and cultured out of their environment to differentiate their style of life from other peoples' can be said to be their culture. Rather than the narrow concept of culture as song, dance, and artifacts, I have opted to point to the more non-palpable factors that make a people distinctive. It is with all their distinctiveness including their approach to the divine that they reach out to hear the gospel as transmitted through other cultures, and attempt to immerse themselves into the religion of Jesus of Nazareth.

There is no empty cultural space waiting to be filled. The Palestine of the first century CE and the *oikoumene* of the period had their cultures and, for that matter, cultures as heavily directed by religion with its beliefs and practices, as many African cultures are. The gospel was crafted, preached, and heard at the crossroads of these cultures, and faith in Jesus and his revolutionary ideas of humanity as being destined to become children of God grew. The gospel versions preserved for us have passed through several cultures including that of the specific geographical area that Jesus knew, the Jewish and gentile cultures of the period, as well as the various periods of European culture through which the gospel passed before getting to most parts of Black Africa.

It is for this reason that the term inculturation has come to be associated with the development of Christianity and of Christian theology in Africa. Africans and others who acknowledge that in the encounter of the Christian gospel with *all* human culture there is a *two-way* inculturation, cannot but discover and utilize the dynamism of contextualization in the development of Christian theology.²

Christian theology in Africa has been enlivened and popularized through debates on the appropriateness of traditional ceremonies and forms of religious practices that are being adopted by Christian churches. The discovery of a large area of commonality of these practices with those in Hebrew scriptures is also being debated. The religious significance of what passes for socio-cultural events and the need to bring the gospel as touchstone to these have become serious arenas for theologizing. One cannot teach the gospel story nor the Christian creeds in Africa and bypass the culture of the African. Unless, of course, all we want is to ask people to learn by rote, we have to take account of the fact that aspects of the faith may need re-interpretation in the face of African culture or even need to be challenged by African culture. We short-circuit the cultural context of Black Africa if we forget that the contemporary culture, except maybe in the remotest of villages (and how many do we have left?), is fast becoming an amalgam of Arabic, European, technological, and African cultures. The context is today as it has been shaped by yesterday, and continues to interact spatially within a world of changing cultures.

Religions as Context

Christian theology is developed and taught in multi-religious contexts. Before the Roman emperor Constantine the Great “took over” Christianity, the nascent church was struggling to find its feet in a multi-religious world and to develop a theology as distinct from that of Judaism as it was from the traditional religions of the day, of which there were many. Trinitarian and Christological affirmations were crafted with an eye on these religions and the intention not only to be faithful to the Christ event, as it was being circulated in letters and stories, but most firmly to demonstrate what they saw as the uniqueness of that event and the person who is the event. Whether Europe really lost its traditional religions or not remains to be seen. What is certain is that in the interaction, what is European Christianity predominated, but not without absorbing some of what pertained to the traditional religions. Europeans from this religio-cultural background came to Africa to pass judgment on what is religion and what is not.

It is interesting to review the process by which Christianity itself moved from being considered by some as a sect of Judaism, and by others as a *deisidaimonia* or *superstitio* into gaining status and approval as *theosebeia/eusebeia* or *religio*.

The first set of appellations were applied to foreign cults and the religious beliefs and practices of the “lower orders” and “lower classes.” These were equally applicable to foreign cults seeking to gain a footing in Rome.³ The persisting phenomenon of evaluating religion is the effect of one’s own beliefs and practices in the assessment of “the other”; when we disapprove it is *superstitio*, when we approve it is *religio*. This is putting it crudely, but one cannot help noting that by the second half of the fourth century *superstitio* and *deisidaimonia* were current names for paganism in Christian writers. Christianity was seen as a simple religion seeking to gain admittance as faith for the populace. Emperor Constantine was accused of “having corrupted the simple religion of the Christians by encouraging theological disputes.”⁴

Doing Christian theology in Africa, one runs the risk of being accused of having introduced theological disputes and niceties into the traditional beliefs and practices of Black Africa. Human reflection on life puts the human spirit in touch with the divine, and religions arise. The theological reflection that creates religion begins by engendering a spirituality by which the people live and, it would appear, live happily and with commitment until challenged to

give an account of why they live as they live. Historically the study of the theology of African Traditional Religion arose as an apologia to Christian missionary and theological arrogance which depicted Black Africa as pagan and using pagan with the meaning of having no religion, not knowing the one true God or having too many gods.

Consequently, Christian theologians in Africa have to take account of the theological manifestations in African Traditional Religion and Islam and so tend to articulate Christian theology in terms of its uniqueness. We cannot believe in biblical miracles and the descent of the Spirit of God on human beings and then discount the phenomenon when it is manifested in other religions. Theological education in Africa becomes, in part, a preparation for acquiring the ability to interpret subtle theological concepts to people of an entirely different religious and cultural outlook. It is a delicate business for African Christians partaking of Africa's religio-culture, as it is for the 'foreigners' who come teaching theology in Africa.

As in the fourth century, Christology in Africa gives a very large place to the Christ whose power is strong enough to cancel those of the old divinities, said by the teachers of the Christian religion to be unnecessary, because "Jesus Christ is the true and only way." One other example from the early history would be how popular devotion to the goddess Diana of Ephesus formed a most powerful backdrop to the formulation of mariology, specifically the doctrine of Mary as *Theotokos*.

From the paradigm of the first five Christian centuries one could illustrate how theology and theological education have responded to historical, political, sociological, and even economic needs of various times and places. We turn briefly to look at the context of justice as an over-arching issue of our day.

It is not possible to overlook the context of injustice which makes up the experience of those who theologize in Africa. Imagine for a moment a class of students in Black Africa going over the traditional arguments, around the biblical evidence for the resurrection, and then over the historical, beginning with Paul who says that without this event our faith is vain and we are still living in sin. First the students are wondering how beyond the telling of the story are they going to enable others to appropriate this faith. What does victory over death mean in a context where the experience is the victory of death and all that brings death? If they start listing the agents of death, they

will certainly come with questions of where the just and loving God is when all these things are going on. They will wonder why they give time to this study called theology.

With the resurrection, they are told, comes the first fruit of them that sleep; how is this awakening to happen in Africa, and has theology any part in it? If the socio-political and economic contexts are taken seriously, even experiences at the university or seminary would raise up issues of justice and injustice, of the reign of God and its righteousness, of human nature and its relation to God, of humanity as a community akin to the Triune God. The dynamism of such a course and its implications for a spirituality for righteous living would equal some of the early impulses that led to the formulation of some of the cardinal tenets of the faith. It would certainly challenge the church in Africa to critically reflect on its *raison d'être* in Africa. Of recent it is the experience of struggle against the injustice of apartheid and of non-representative governments that is leading some sectors of the church to review the policy of fence-sitting and to proclaim and work for justice in the name of God. As long as the statements of the “classical” creeds are shrouded in incomprehensible concepts and language, the church in Africa will successfully evade the call to face the realities that the African context presents, for on the surface, the creeds do not provide a handle for tackling them.

In a context of injustice the faith of Christians is sorely tested especially as they begin to analyze and to articulate their own historical experience in view of their faith experience. “Where is God in all this?” is a question often put and to which the African theologian must find an answer. The faithful expect theologians to be empowering them to act creatively and decisively towards changing the situation of injustice. The faithful know the biblical stories and visions of the reign of God, and the liberating power of the gospel of Jesus Christ. They look to theology to provide a tool for the appropriation of the Gospel as they struggle for justice.

In Africa, the years of the so-called “universal” or “classical” Christian theology succeeded in isolating the discipline for elitist study that was not seen as relevant except to give preachers occasion for showing off before their captive audiences. Not even the gospel it was meant to serve was seen as remotely connected with this abstruse study. (I remember how worried my “Christian” friends at the University of Ghana were, that theology would “spoil my faith.”) None of what we went through at those “Christian” meetings

was dynamically connected with the realities of Ghana of that time either. In fact it was itself a type of theological inoculation to fortify us against the hard realities of life. If anything, the study of the history and religion of Israel was for me more of a dynamite exploding the facade of well-being of Ghana of those days.

The faculty, without speaking of liberation, was clearly presenting us with Luke 4:15-21 as the agenda of Christian theology. K.A. Dickson (one of my teachers) later was to write: "Theology must address the human condition and reflect upon what God is doing about the situation to alleviate it."⁵ The temporal situation has to be the context of theology. We know how stimulating church history becomes when seen as history of Christianity with a concern for what the people in the pew believed, practiced, and experienced in the society at large. We discover that far from believing only what the church told them to believe, Christians as believers in a saving God developed and lived by what may be termed "popular theology." They look to the church and to theology to have a "humanizing goal."

The contemporary theological scene has been enlivened by the use of social analysis to expose the oppression of the global socio-economic system and its geopolitical dimensions. It is to this reality that we seek to bring the word of hope, resistance, and transformation from the gospel of Jesus Christ. This context has given a fresh impetus to Christian theology in our day. Underscoring justice as a key parameter for assessing the impact of the gospel, we are led sadly to the conclusion that even the church as an organization is not free from operating as an oppressive system. It is the gospel that conveys to us the word of liberation and of hope in transformation.

African theologians, not excluding several of those who are in close touch with "liberation" theologians from Latin America, and for whom justice is a key factor, are rather cool towards naming themselves as liberation theologians. Not that they have to. What is at issue is whether their theology is liberating, whether they reflect upon what God is doing in Africa, and how they recognize the gospel at work. They are able to promote the dynamism of theology if they can recognize and point to the Holy Spirit at work empowering Africans to resist oppression and to bring forth fruits of justice and love.

Marginalization as Context

Injustice is not the exclusive lot of the materially poor or the colonized. In any social organization those who do not own the instruments of power, even when they constitute a numerical majority, become marginal to the decisions that are taken to run the society and therefore their individual lives. Theology when conscious of what pertains outside the dominant patterns of society gathers strength and strengthens the people so marginalized to become subjects of their own and the community's history.

Theology in the context of the marginalized deals with those considered to be outside the dominant pattern. It is not a spatial terminology, for here we point to the theologies being crafted by women, racially-identified peoples (e.g., Blacks), the poor in a geographical area, and minority Christian groups among peoples of other religions. One could group these into the contexts of poverty, sexism, and racism—experiences that cause people to re-visit traditional ideologies and theologies. These are global issues with local manifestations.

The rising spirit of selfhood found among the poor is reflected today not only in beliefs and practices they create for themselves but also in theological expressions and often a reinterpretation of the meaning of being church. Theology of the poor by the poor is a global manifestation but hits the church most prominently in the economically marginalized peoples of the world. In this field it is the liberation theology arising from the poverty of Latin America that has rocked the placid boat of so-called classical (i.e., Western European) theologies, and it is beginning to disturb the Eastern Christian theologies. Many of the architects of this movement are well-known and have shared globally through the Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians (EATWOT).

The keen interest of Euro-American theologians for dialogue with EATWOT points to the dynamism of the movement. Several courses and publications are being offered on the theology emanating from this source. The movement is significant enough to disturb the Vatican and to cause some others to chastise the World Council of Churches for not having been directly associated with its development. The most challenging concept of this theology is what comes from the Exodus and from Luke 4 as God's preferential option for the poor and the Korean emphasis of the *Minjung*—the people, those in the margins of power. The exegesis of this concept alone is beginning

to fill many books and many more journals. It is to be noted that what constitutes liberation theology varies in emphasis, and whereas Black South Africans would not emphasize the exodus motive because of its use in apartheid theology, other Africans use it as a paradigm for the march from colonialism into the struggles of nationhood. On the other hand, women using the same motive have found other grounds for its importance.

Closely associated with this is Black theology. One's color if Black is likely to lead to belonging also to the materially poor. So the economic analysis used in the context of poverty applies here also. The distinctiveness of this theology is color, a factor which arises from the historical domination of Black peoples by those with white skins, the association of the color black with human fears and with what is deemed negative. Black theology mainly from North America and South Africa is challenging the meaning of race and the value judgement placed on human beings according to their race. These theologians question the use of skin color against people's credibility as people.⁶ One only needs to point to the banning of *Black Theology; The South African Voice* by the apartheid regime and the impact of the *Kairos Document* on theologians, for beyond the borders of South Africa⁷ color has joined class in the analysis necessary for doing theology contextually, and they have themselves become theological issues.

Closely on the heels of these two contemporary consciousnesses is the sex and gender parameter. Biological differences arising out of human genetic composition have had a deeper influence on Christian theology than "classical theologians" would care to admit. The whole theology of sin, original or arising out of harvesting and eating a forbidden fruit, is played out on the stage of human physical sexual encounter. Added to this is the issue of gender. Human beings are culturally cultivated to be feminine or masculine and then assigned roles and limitations accordingly. What is now broadly designated as feminist theology has become a force to reckon with.⁸ The dynamism of this theology is beginning to give birth to studies in seminaries and universities. We are beginning to come to terms with the need to study ourselves as sexual beings. It is as male or female that we are human, there is no hierarchical interpretation or value judgment necessary to account for these facts or to arise from them. Feminist theologians are challenging both classical theology and the men's versions of liberation theology. They are pointing to the wholeness of humanity, community, and human being. They are pointing to

the need to abandon patriarchy and to see humanity and divinity as both *pater* and *mater*. Questioning patriarchy alone has been enough to shake the foundations of most contemporary cultures and religions. No wonder it is feared and dismissed even before it has been studied. Feminist theology is seeking to relive the forgotten concepts of partnership, common search, common witness, and common sharing. In feminist theology, mutual caring brings the margins into the centre. As a liberation theology, it seeks the disappearance of the fear of human sexuality and the use of gender as a death-dealing weapon. Feminist theology would not have us put limits on God's being, before we have studied with honesty God's revealing. Do we indeed have the right to speak of the limits of contextualization?

When a Korean woman dances the power of the Holy Spirit and is charged with syncretism, I am reminded of the women of the early church who also called attention to the absence of the Holy Spirit in the theological efforts of the period and were condemned. But the dynamism of her theology is not *what* she said but *how* she said it, for reading the two papers sitting at a desk one hears the same message from the Patriarch and the woman.⁹

In Africa the research currently energizing the theological field is in the area of church history. Students are tracing the founding of their local churches, the arrival of Christianity in their own villages, and unearthing the dynamic participation of Africans in converting Africa to Christianity. The hagiographies of the missionary period are being nuanced and a rich source of the theology of conversion is becoming available. An aspect of this contextual study was sparked by the continued proliferation of African-Instituted Churches (AIC). The earlier manifestations of these were "break-aways" from Western churches in Africa.¹⁰ The late nineteenth century versions were the result of racism and ethnocentrism of the missions of the period, that would not see anything good in Africa. The mission theologies simply ignored them, or else labelled them syncretistic and not worthy of the name Christian.

The AICs have continued to grow and have become the source of spiritual energy for many. This has meant that much attention has been turned to them. They are being studied by missiologists, both African and otherwise, and more and more they are beginning to tell their own stories and asking to what purpose are we being studied, how will the theological conclusions serve the growth of the church and the coming of the Kingdom and the salvation of the world?

The Dynamism of Context

I have tried to indicate with very broad strokes what the attention to culture, religion, injustice, and marginalization is beginning to mean for doing theology in the contemporary situation. It is of course not a matter for debate that we are not the first generation whose theology is influenced by historical experience. From the beginning of human religious consciousness to our Christian ancestors, we can name and point to theology in context. The powerful impulses of experience make it impossible for one to speak about God and not do so from one's context. If then we pass on this theology or stimulate others to articulate their own, we cannot do so and ignore this principle of context.

Within the contextual theologies we craft are to be found universal concerns. This is inevitable: we have one earth, one human race. It is our different historical experiences that shape us differently. So while we can find the universal in the contextual, we have to be cautious not to assume that our context is the universal. This fact alone can bring much dynamism into our theological education. We dare not be insular or get stuck in one historical period in the recent or remote past. The historical approach to theology injects a most powerful stimulus into the studies. Reading the history of Israel from David to the Divided Kingdom with a class of teenage girls in the mid-sixties in Ghana was revealing. We came to see how theological reflections in the Bible were stimulated by experiences of persons and those of the community.

The very happenings in nature were seen as having theological significance. From here we learned how dynamic the context itself is and also how some truths could become identified as eternal—being applicable from one age to the next. This very observation contains a caution, for one also observes how so-called eternal truths are reinterpreted in a particular age or have even give place to another. When we universalize over time we do so from particular experiences and we therefore have no right to turn these truths into idols. Each generation and each place adopts or adapts the inherited truths, reflects on them in the context of faith experience, and creates/discloses new truths out of the dynamism of the context.

Taking context seriously will prevent us from getting stuck in sectarian and partisan studies. Relativizing is not dynamic, dialogue is. So contextualization in theological education would mean examining the forms of knowing and of reaching the truth, that we encounter in "other" contexts

and theologies. It means listening to the Christian heritage as interpreted in other contexts—spatial and chronological. It is an exercise in mutual accountability which demands that one begin by taking one's own context seriously and working towards obedience to God in that context.

We have assumed in this discussion that theology itself is seen as a dynamic factor in society, that it is a source of power by which we live. If this is so, then we are saying that contextualization will make our theological education more responsive to life, that it will be transforming itself in order to enhance the life-sustaining impulses of all who come into contact with it. A change in one's context or in a community's experience brings with it power enough for fresh theological reflection to take place. Any theological education worthy of the name must have the power to stimulate students to raise questions, challenge what they receive, recreate when necessary a theology to undergird the transformation anticipated, or sustain faith and hope in changed situations that fall short of the anticipated righteousness of God's Kingdom.

We have seen how new awareness of the human condition and what it means to be human have led to questioning old truths and reinterpreting the received theology. We no longer acquiesce to the inferiority or the subordination of persons on the grounds of poverty, gender, or race. It is not only a changed sociology that has brought this about; our very understanding of God is undergoing a revolutionary transformation and so must our theological education. When context is taken seriously in theological education, we shall be engaging the attention and meeting the needs of all who need to participate in a community with Christ for the resistance against evil and death, for theology loses its dynamism if it brings people to taking suffering and oppression as God-ordained. Blacks, women, and the poor have discovered that the oppressive forces that seek to control their lives, whether cultural or ecclesiastical, are demonic and must be exorcised.

Pluralism and Contextuality

In any particular theological institution in Africa we encounter many contexts. The faculty has its formation all over the world and brings with it theologies formulated in those contexts. The library (when it has books) is mostly from the writings of previous ages (pre-1960). Contemporary theological explorations come second- and third-hand to African students, and the colleges are powerless to contribute to the thinking of theological schools in surrounding nations, not to mention those overseas.

The challenges of having a global conversation are many, the economics of it put the Third World at a disadvantage. Europe and North America, now increasingly Australia, can simply walk into Africa and begin to research and write on Africa. The reverse is not envisaged and has not been possible. The North is resisting seeing its theology in its own context of affluence, power, large sectors of poor, racism, and sexism in church and society: the moles we would all rather not have to deal with, being busy with the specks in the eyes of others.

The two-way contact is necessary. Without this global interaction all our contexts become parochial and we dare not universalize them. But to be mindful of one's context is a prerequisite. At least we may be able to stimulate those who preach to take seriously what is happening to the people who hear them, and the church to see and to have compassion on the crowds that have remained so long without bread, and the nations that are like sheep without a shepherd, or worse, shepherds that have no thought for the sheep.

ENDNOTES

¹ Paper delivered at the Thirty-Eighth Biennial Meeting of The Association of Theological Schools in assembly with the World Conference of Associations of Theological Institutions in Pittsburgh, PA, June 1992.

² Justin Ukpong, "A Critical Review of the Lineamenta," *Concilium* 1 (1992): 68-80.

³ Arnaldo Momigliano, "Popular Religious Beliefs in the Late Roman History," ed. G. J. Cuming and Derek Baker, *Popular Belief and Practice*, C.U.P. (1972).

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

⁵ K. A. Dickson, *Theology in Africa*, (1984) 184-6.

⁶ Gwinyai H. Muzorewa, "African Liberation Theology," *Voices from the Third World*, vol. XIII, no. 1, (June 1990): 175.

⁷ Basil Moore, ed., *Black Theology; The South African Voice*, Lord, Hurst, 1973.

⁸ The association of the word "feminist" with secular, middle class women's movements have led Black and poor women to disassociate themselves from the term. Black American women have chosen the word "womanist" from their own culture, while Asian and African women describe their theologies by their continent *vis* African Women's Theology.

⁹ Plenary presentation on the theme "Come, Holy Spirit, Renew the Whole Creation" by Prof. Hyun Kyung Chung and His Beatitude Parthenios, Greek Orthodox Patriarch of Alexandria, World Council of Churches Assembly, Canberra, Australia, 1991.

¹⁰ "Western churches" is used here in the sense of the classical division of Christianity, today manifested as Roman Catholic and Protestant on one side and the Orthodox churches on the other.