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**GAIL BUCHWALTER KING, Editor**

**JAMES L. WAITS, Associate Editor**

**LISA MORSE, Editorial Assistant**

Cover Design

Robert D. Galloway, Artist, Dayton, Ohio

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## **CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS ISSUE**

B. A. ASBURY, University Chaplain-Director of Religious Affairs,  
Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tennessee

BEVIL BRAMWELL, Assistant Professor, Oblate College,  
Washington, D.C.

GEORGE BROWN, Dean, Western Theological Seminary,  
Holland, Michigan

GLENN R. BUCHER, Vice President for Academic Affairs/Dean,  
Columbia Theological Seminary, Decatur, Georgia

RONALD H. CRAM, Associate Professor, Columbia Theological  
Seminary, Decatur Georgia

RICHARD I. DEIBERT, Co-pastor of the Immanuel Presbyterian Church,  
Montgomery, Alabama

PATRICIA DUTCHER-WALLS, Ph.D. Candidate, Graduate Theological  
Union, Berkeley, California

ROBERT M. FRANKLIN, Director of the Program of Black Church  
Studies, Candler School of Theology, Emory University,  
Atlanta, Georgia

BEVERLY R. GAVENTA, Professor, Columbia Theological Seminary,  
Decatur, Georgia

GEORGE W. STROUP, Professor, Columbia Theological Seminary,  
Decatur, Georgia

M. THOMAS THANGARAJ, Associate Professor, Candler School of  
Theology, Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia

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## EDITORIAL INTRODUCTION

### Gail Buchwalter King

For a number of years ATS has been looking at issues around the question of how ministerial education ought to be conducted in a religiously diverse world. During that time W. Clark Gilpin, Dean at University of Chicago Divinity School, wrote about the tension between coherence and inclusiveness. On the one hand he identified the diverse worlds of students, church constituencies and the place of Christianity within the diverse worlds of world religions. He held these in tension with traditional objectives of theological education, the formation of character, the transmission of tradition and the training of persons for professional ministry. Over these years the emphasis has been on basic issues related to theological education within this tension. With this issue of *Theological Education* we wish to shift the kaleidoscope somewhat and look at the context in which learning takes place. Have the complex issues in theological education had an impact on curriculum; its content, and its process?

Our first writer, M. Thomas Thangaraj, brings a unique perspective in that he has taught in India as well as in the United States. In a very interesting way he first traces the developments leading to crises in theological education; he then identifies both emerging questions and challenges, followed by some directions for the future. His future directives come out of his struggle for, and adventure in innovative theological education in India and fall into the major areas of Learning in Community, Learning through Solidarity, and Learning for Mutuality.

Shifting somewhat, Ronald Cram and Stanley Saunders write their article about “role expectations, institutional rigidity, patriarchal hierarchies, and social replacement.” Theirs is a challenging attempt to use biblical studies and Christian religious education to provide clarity about the crisis in theological education and to provide some constructive proposals. Cram and Saunders provide a conversation about the practical function of teaching, arguing that curriculum is an interaction of content, process and action. Pressing for a definition of teaching as communal not unlike Thangaraj, they state that the “curriculum of a theological institution and its pedagogical patterns within describe the style of life necessary to retain the institution’s actual identity.” They go on to argue that,

theological education can continue to operate primarily as an Euro-American, male dominated

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enterprise only at the increased peril of self-imposed exile. Theological discourse has become the language of elites, having little relevance either for the congregations of practicing religious people or for the broader secularized society.

With such a statement, Cram and Saunders go on to build a case for taking theological learning back to the public sphere. In a very clear fashion they then lay out the research related to classroom teaching; styles of teaching, styles of learning, and cognitive styles of information. They present for us a model of theological education whose primary task is to “engage in critical theological reflection on timely issues confronting the Church and the scholarship related to the Church.”

The kaleidoscope then moves slightly to relook at the tension identified by Gilpin; that of tradition vs. diversity. Bevil Bramwell contends that “beneath the diversity of theological disciplines lies a basic unity which has to do with the historical nature of theology itself.” After describing three different options for how theology relates to history, Bramwell writes that each new class is to be seen as the unfolding of the history of salvation for this body of students and faculty. The Scriptures, Tradition and the Magisterium hold the privileged place in the hermeneutic circle of theology and serve as the core from which all diversity is to be addressed. Bramwell appreciates the richness of the faith-histories that each student brings for it is within the context of those stories that theology occurs and together students and faculty alike participate in the shaping of the future as sons and daughters of God.

From a particularized faith tradition we switch to another old tradition; that of our relationship to the Jewish community. Out of his concern that the hostilities that have characterized Christian attitudes toward Jews remain deeply imbedded in the life and thought of Christian people, B. A. Asbury conducted a survey to determine how attentive theological education is to Jewish-Christian dialogue and to the teaching of courses related to a better understanding of Jewish thought. In conducting the survey Asbury asked respondents

for suggestions both in regard to means of determining the sensitivity of those entering Christian ministry to contemporary Judaism and as to how theological education might best take seriously the questions addressed to Christianity by a vital Judaism and by the legacy of the Holocaust.



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Asbury's article describes his findings from this survey. Unfortunately he concludes that today's seminarians learn virtually nothing about post-biblical Judaism or about revisions in Christian theology being undertaken in light of the Holocaust.

Still another perspective that has wide implications for curricular change relates to the well known term "political correctness". This fifth article is a result of a consultation at Columbia Theological Seminary which posed at the outset the tension between the cultural diversity that political correctness implies and a religious tradition. The event was a recognition that theological education takes place in marginalized times. The themes making up the tapestry of this article include: community, First Amendment rights, the stranger, inclusive language, and ideology. All of them again challenge us to be discerning as we shape the curriculum that prepares men and women for ministry.

As the kaleidoscope almost completes its 360°, George Brown, Jr. provides a helpful tool for action by providing for us a select annotated bibliography for education. He wisely states that most of us teach the way we were taught even though research shows promising alternatives. Brown gives us the resources to in fact relearn how we teach so that we can more adequately emphasize critical thinking skills that characterize the new teaching strategies.

## **THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION IN THE UNITED STATES: A VIEW FROM THE PERIPHERY**

**M. Thomas Thangaraj**

My experience in theological education is limited to two countries, India and the United States. Even here it is limited to a few theological schools, such as Serampore College (1965-68) and United Theological College (1974-76) in India and Harvard Divinity School (1980-83) in the United States as a student, and Tamilnadu Theological Seminary, India and Candler School of Theology, United States, as a theological teacher and administrator. The exciting part of this experience is that I have been participating in theological education in two languages, English and Tamil (my mother-tongue). These experiences have given me a particular vantage-point, which I call “periphery”, to look at the process of theological education in the United States. Hence, the view from the periphery.

That we are going through a period of crisis in theological education at this time in our history, is widely accepted by theological educators, theological students and the leaders of the various churches all over the world. A study of one hundred sixty-one theological schools in the United States and Canada, titled, *Theological Education in America*, by Robert L. Kelly in 1924, begins by saying:

This study grew out of the widely-held belief that the machinery and the methods used in educating Protestant ministers were inadequate. It was asserted that the number and the quality of ministerial candidates had been on the decline for some time and that the churches faced a crisis because of the real or the prospective dearth of leaders.<sup>1</sup>

The World Meeting of the International Missionary Council held at Tambaram, India, in 1938 expressed similar sentiments.

In many reports received from different parts of the world, it is stated that there are ministers of a poor standard of education, who are unable to win the respect of the laity and to lead the churches, that some are out of touch with the realities of life and the needs of their people, and are not distinguished by zeal for Christian service in the community. From every field has

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come the conviction that a highly trained ministry is necessary for the well-being of the Church.<sup>2</sup>

H. Richard Niebuhr, writing in 1956, complains of a similar crisis. He writes,

The theological schools of the churches in America share all the perplexities of the contemporary Protestant Community and its ministry. Though they participate in the movements toward clarification and reconstruction apparent in the latter, the first impression they give is . . . an impression of uncertainty of purpose.<sup>3</sup>

The same kind of an experience of crisis is reflected in the most recent books on theological education published in the United States.<sup>4</sup>

In this essay, I want, first, to delineate some of the developments, both within the Church and outside, which have led to this crisis in theological education. These developments will be highlighted without elaborate discussion. Secondly, some of the questions and challenges that have emerged out of this crisis will be mentioned. Here again I will only mention them without a detailed discussion on each. Thirdly, I will point out some of the directions we may take, as I see them, to meet the challenges posed by this deep crisis in theological education. These directions are mentioned with an awareness that in this essay we are dealing more with a “feel” or “sense” of an over-all direction than a full, programmatic description of the direction.

### **Factors Leading to the Crisis**

The crisis in theological education has come about through the impingement of some of the recent developments in the life of the Church, the area of education as such, the composition of the student body in our schools, the changes in the socio-political and the religio-cultural spheres, and the very definition of theology itself. Let me mention some of these:

1. The recent developments in the life of the Church include the emergence of the ecumenical movement and the rediscovery of the laity. The existing form of theological education was found to be inadequate to deal with either the reality of the ecumenical movement or the significant role of the laity in the total life of the Church. The confessional and/or the clerical paradigm of theological education seemed to be too narrow to address these new challenges.

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2. In the field of education itself there has been a significant change of perspectives. On the one hand, the impact of science and technology has pushed education in the direction of specialization and professional training. There has emerged a demand for, what is popularly called, job-oriented education which lays a high premium on the acquiring of specific and job-related skills. This has had its own impact on theological education. On the other hand, the “classical” form of education has come under severe criticism since the publication of Paulo Friere’s *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Education has come to be seen as a form of legitimization and maintenance of the status quo. This has raised a lot of challenging questions about theological education.

3. For centuries, theological education was the monopoly of men. But with the entry of women into theological education in large numbers, new and fundamental questions have been raised with regard to the content and method of theological education. More recently, most of the theological schools in this country seem to attract second-career and older students who have to commute to classes from far away places. This has altered the character of non-residential learning which was the backbone of theological training in the past.

4. Finally, the word “theological” had become a problem. What is theology? What is theological? These questions could no longer be answered with our earlier definitions of “theology” and “theological.” The flood of books on theological method published over the last two decades is symptomatic of this uneasiness and lack of confidence. Moreover, the Liberation theologies, especially the Latin American, Black, and Feminist ones, have seriously challenged the traditional theological activity itself.

What I have mentioned so far are some of the factors that led to the crisis. Each factor can be discussed at length to uncover as to how exactly each had challenged and affected traditional theological education. But we will not go into that now. Rather, I shall highlight some of the challenges posed by this crisis in theological education.

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### Challenges Posed by the Crisis

The challenges posed by this crisis in theological education have been largely understood in terms of a crisis in self-identity. Of course, the question of self-identity can be viewed in several different ways.<sup>5</sup> As Rebecca S. Chopp writes,

Self-identity can be defined by looking at the nature of theological study as creating the identity of theological education, or by focussing on the point of theological education as establishing the identity of Christianity, or by considering the subject of study, who it is that occupies the dominant subject position, as locating the identity of theological education.<sup>6</sup>

The questions which inform this discussion are the following, viz., What is the nature of theological study? what is the point or telos of theological education? and who is the subject of theological education?<sup>7</sup> Farley, Cobb, Wood, Stackhouse, Gustafson, and others have approached the issue of self-identity in their own ways, fitting into one of the above said three ways of delineating the question of self-identity. In the midst of this plurality of views, one thing is clear, namely, that the present crisis in theological education has surfaced issues which are much more fundamental with regard to theological education than one would imagine or desire them to be. But unfortunately, all our attempts to deal with this challenge have been fragmentary and piecemeal. As Farley writes, the call to reform theological education has been focussed more on the symptoms than on the disease itself.<sup>8</sup>

The issue of self-identity is interlinked with several other important but related issues. Let me outline a few of them. First, the word “pluralism” has gained utmost importance in most of the recent discussions on theological education. But one has to ask as to what one really means by pluralism. On the one hand, we seem to imply by pluralism that which is present in the composition of our students. The presence of women, Afro-Americans, Asian-Americans, Hispanics, and students from other parts of the world in our theological schools gives a particular meaning and content to the word “pluralism”. On the other hand, the diversity that is present both within world Christianity and the larger international community brings a different dimension into the question of pluralism. We still need to come up with a tangible theory or understanding of pluralism. Moreover, the way

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we perceive pluralism - either as a problem or as a possibility - is highly significant to our understanding of pluralism. Commenting on the way in which the recent works on theological education view pluralism, Chopp has this to say:

Pluralism, when considered, was always an issue within the identity of a theological school, brought about by diversity of students or the intellectual commitment to take seriously other religions. None of the works considered pluralism as a cultural phenomenon, for instance, the changing trends in religion in America where large numbers of persons are evangelicals, Catholics or adherents of New Age; likewise, none of the works looked at pluralism in the world-wide economic context.<sup>9</sup>

Secondly, the word, “contextualization” has come to occupy a central place in the recent thinking on theology and theological education. Since the time when the Theological Education Fund of the World Council of Churches<sup>10</sup> highlighted the idea of contextualization, the theological schools in the two-thirds world have been actively involved in thinking through the task of contextualization. Similarly, here in the United States too, this word had come to the forefront of theological discussions. This concern is expressed by George Lindbeck when he writes that “theological education needs to be self-consciously particularistic.”<sup>11</sup> But what do we mean by context? (There are some who would argue that the very use of the word “con-text” has already judged the situation as something which can be treated like a text and interpreted with the tools of hermeneutics.) For Lindbeck the context appears as the particular religious heritage of the Christian tradition. For Stackhouse, on the other hand, it is the world mission of the Christian Church. For some others, it is the larger, socio-political, religio-cultural, and/or academic context. We need to grapple seriously with this question. The related question is: how do we weave together our concern for the appreciation of pluralism and our desire to be contextual? To use Lindbeck’s words, how do we ensure “that particularisms be pursued in pluralistic educational settings?”

Thirdly, due to the valuable influence of the liberation theologies, such as, Latin American, Feminist, and Afro-American, the idea of liberation and the concept of justice have come to become central categories to be reckoned with in any theological activity. But how do we really incorporate these liberational perspectives into the core of theological education is still very

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unclear to many. Very often the liberation theologies are placed alongside the “classical” theologies and that results in merely adding the liberational perspectives as an appendix to the main curriculum or viewing them as additional burdens to bear. They are, often, seen as “interesting” but not very relevant to one’s own theological thinking.

Fourthly, the very word “academic” has to be redefined and redeemed in the context of this crisis. Almost all the recent writers on theological education plead for an increase in academic rigor. In defining the theological school as the “intellectual center of the Church’s life,” H. Richard Niebuhr was pleading for an integration of the “academic” and the “the practical training.”<sup>12</sup> In a similar vein, George Lindbeck invites the University related theological schools to be “unashamedly academic.”<sup>13</sup> Though there is a widespread agreement that there should be more academic rigor, what we really mean by “academic” is still unclear. The challenges offered by feminist, Afro-American, and third-world theologies force us to rethink the idea of “academic.”

Finally, if we take the call to rethink our ideas of self-identity, pluralism, contextualization, liberation, and academia seriously, there is a further challenge to incorporate all this new thinking into the academic and administrative structure of a theological school. What does this mean for the curriculum, the hiring of teachers, the method of teaching, the community life within a school, including worship, the process of evaluation, and so on is a difficult question to deal with. How we really effect a radical change without slipping into a simple process of addition or subtraction of a few courses is a question we need to grapple with.

### **Directions for the Future**

The reflections which I want to offer in this section are largely based on my experience as a theological teacher at the Tamilnadu Theological Seminary in India from 1971 onwards. This seminary came into existence in 1969 as a merger of two earlier seminaries, namely, the Tamilnadu Theological College of the Church of South India, and Gurusala, a Lutheran theological college. I had the privilege of participating in the discussions on the kind of theological education we should offer at this new seminary. We came to operate with a slogan which we gave to ourselves that our education

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was going to be “gospel-based, Church-related, and society-oriented.” Though we agreed on the formal nature of this slogan, we had varied opinions on the material content of it. But it was an exciting experience to be a part of this struggle for, and adventure in innovative theological education. With this experience in the background, I offer some directions for the future.

These are offered with the aim to give us a “feel” or a “sense” of the direction we may choose to take. Therefore I am articulating the directions in the form of questions. I have organized these directions under three major headings, namely, Learning in Community, Learning through Solidarity, and Learning for Mutuality.

### **Learning In Community**

Education is not an individual’s exercise in solitude. It is an enterprise of a community. Most of our learning happens in the interaction between us and other persons, and through a conversation that takes place in a community. Therefore, theological education should see itself, and function, as a learning process in community. The community that I refer to has three dimensions to it.

a. **Academic community:** Theological learning takes place in the context of the academic community - the community of teachers and students. This means that we need to consciously foster a sense of community within our campuses. At a time when most of our students are commuting to the school from distant places, how do we facilitate the emergence of a community of conversation and inter-action? How we bring in a sense of community among the faculty who are often burdened by the demands of making a career? How do we help the faculty to be in conversation with each other when their credibility and respect is dependent on the kind of research and writing which they do on their own, and in the solitude of their offices? In what way can we foster community among students when most of our evaluations of them is dependent on their individual work rather than on any group activity? In what ways can we affirm inclusivity within our academic community which facilitates those who are on the fringes of the academia to be full participants in a group process of learning than being left to “make it” on their own? What role does the worship life of the academic community play in the total learning process? Is it an out-house or the central family room of the house of learning? What other occasions are offered to the



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members of the community to be in conversation with each other outside the class room and the chapel? These are questions which need to be asked in discovering a new direction with regard to learning in community.

b. **Ecclesial community:** If theological education is the education of the whole people of God in the Church, such education happens or should happen in the context of the ecclesial community. This means that we cannot see the “ministerial” training and the “lay” theological education as two separate programs. They form an integrated whole. Any theological school which engages in theological education without any reference to the laity in the church fails to meet the challenges of today. Already some of our schools do facilitate a conversation between the laity and the clergy due to the significant number of students who are not planning to enter the ordained ministry of the church. There are also several theological institutions which have a lively lay theological education program. But the question is: how are these two dimensions of our education brought to bear on each other?

c. **Global community:** Given the fact that our theological schools are geographically located and limited, we are also aware that we belong to a larger international community. How do we make that wider context available to our students and teachers in our theological schools? One way to get at this is to offer courses on World Religions, World Christianity, Ecumenism, and so on. We have done that and we also find that, every now and then, some of our students can get by without taking courses on any of these. Another way to address this concern is to have visiting professors from other parts of the world. Here again the possibility of learning in community to happen through the presence of these “exotic” professors is limited. Yet another way is to have a significant number of international students in our schools. But the question is: what do we or can we do with them? How do we ensure that they play a major part in making learning in community possible? Some have tried the way of making such a learning possible through enabling United States students to live and study in some part of the two-thirds world for a brief period as part of their academic program. All these various ways I have listed are generally clubbed together under the latest jargon “globalization.” A lot of serious thinking is yet to be done with regard to this process of globalization. Even when we know what globalization entails and does to us here, there is still an awkward question to

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be asked. What does our globalization do to the people in the two-thirds world? Are we in any way “exploiting” the two-thirds world for our own widening of horizons? These are difficult questions to deal with, but we need to address them.

### Learning Through Solidarity

What we have done in the earlier section is to look at the context in which our learning happens. In a sense, we have examined the concept of contextualization in the broadest sense possible. Now we need to address the question of the method of theological education. As we all know, learning is made possible through participation - participation in the object of study. The biblical meaning of knowledge as union (to know is to be united with) brings out this idea very clearly.<sup>14</sup> What does this view of knowledge mean for theological education? I want to address this question through the phrase, “learning through solidarity.”

First of all, it means that the action-reflection model of education should be taken seriously by theological educators. It is unhelpful to think of supplying ideas and theories to our students which our students, after leaving the theological school, will “apply” to their situation, and in their work. But rather, in action and in critical reflection on that action that the theological students come to acquire the skills of theological thinking. As Gutierrez has repeatedly articulated in his writings, theology is “the critical reflection on praxis.”<sup>15</sup> We need to ask as to how the education in our schools involves this kind of an action-reflection process? What structured and/or unstructured opportunities are available to the students and faculty to engage this kind of theological reflection? Do our field-education programs (supervised ministry courses, as they are called in certain schools) creatively meet this demand for an action-reflection process?

Secondly, we do not mean by “praxis” any action. Praxis is a loaded word. It denotes appropriate or meaningful action. This means that the action that is the source and inspiration for theological reflection is a particular kind of action. The liberation theologians (including Latin American, Feminist, and Afro-American) have reminded us that Christian praxis is an action governed by, and expressed through, a solidarity with those who are poor, marginalized, exploited, and oppressed - action that is marked by an engagement in the world and for its transformation on behalf of, with, and alongside the poor. This view of action is based on the biblical mandate, the

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Christological primacy of the poor, a critical view of our history, and the demands of the contemporary situation. How much of our theological education is shaped by this particular understanding of praxis, and the critical reflection on such praxis? Do we creatively use the socio-political transformational activities in our societies for such learning?

Very often, we are quite open to an action-reflection model when it comes to, what is called, “practical theology.” What I am pleading for is the use of this model in every part of our curriculum. How do we ever understand the Bible (which is the book of the story of the oppressed and their liberation) without reading it in the company of the poor and the marginalized? Is it possible at all to come to grips with the history of the Christian Church without a conscious expression of solidarity with the women, and the Afro-Americans in our communities? How can we even dream of understanding world religions if we do not express our solidarity with the people of other faiths in their worship, community life, and their festivals? Thus the idea of solidarity should govern each of the disciplines in theological curriculum. As we are aware, we have, still, many more miles to go in integrating the action-reflection model into our method of theological education.

### Learning for Mutuality

What is the goal of theological education? This is the question I want to address in the final section of this paper. The emerging trends in theological education have pointed the direction we need to explore in this regard. Our contemporary understanding of the person and role of a minister, the nature and purpose of the ministry of the Church, and the character of education as such compel us to view the goal of theological education as the attainment of an appreciation of, and an openness to mutuality. By “mutuality” I mean three things.

a. **Mutuality in learning:** The Church is a community of mutual learning. The clergy and the laity, women and men, adults and children, young and old, and rich and poor within the church teach each other, and learn from each other. Another feature of the mutuality in learning is the mutual learning between the so-called “evangelicals,” and the so-called “ecumenicals.”<sup>16</sup> How prepared are our students and faculty to attain this kind of mutuality?

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b. **Mutuality in witness:** The present post-missionary era in the history of the church invites us to engage in mutual witness rather than in one-way proclamation. It is not a simple proclamatory witness of the clergy to the laity, nor the Christian's witness to the non-Christian. It is the dialogical witness in mutuality that is the mission of the Church today. How do our schools prepare the students for such a mutuality in witness?

c. **Mutuality in service:** The problems of today's world are all global in their character. Global problems require global answers. Such global answers are achieved in a situation of mutuality. This means that theologians have to discover and align themselves with other partners in service. Christians living in nations where they are a tiny minority have come to understand the significance of partnership in service in powerful and meaningful ways. Recognizing one's partner and engaging in mutual service is all part of the theological enterprise today. How adequate is the present form of theological education for preparing our students for such a mutuality in service?

The trends and issues in theological education offer a variety of challenges and a multiplicity of directions we may take in reordering and revitalizing theological education in this country and elsewhere. I hope that theological educators and the leaders of our churches are able to discern the signs of the times and discover meaningful and relevant responses to these challenging demands. Let me conclude this essay with a passage from "A Statement of the Consultation on Vision and Focus for Theological Education in India Today"- organized by the Board of Theological Education of the Senate of Serampore College - March 18--21, 1987.

At no point, however can we rest with a sense of achievement and satisfaction. Every new stage reached leads us on to a new situation in a spiral process. Every liberating action leads to new insight which in turn will lead to fresh involvement in context, and further transforming action. Only a constant awareness that God is always ahead of us, ceaselessly continuing the work of renewal and recreation, will keep the people of God ever on the move to discern and follow God's renewing activity.<sup>17</sup>

ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Robert L. Kelly, *Theological Education in America* (New York: George H. Doran Company), 1924, p. vii.

<sup>2</sup> *The World Mission of the Church: Findings and Recommendations of the Meeting of the International Missionary Council*, Tambaram, Madras, India, December 12-29, 1938, London, International Missionary Council, 1939, p. 78.

<sup>3</sup> H. Richard Niebuhr, *The Purpose of the Church and Its Ministry* (New York: Harper & Row, 1956), p. 95.

<sup>4</sup> Some of the most recent books reflecting on the crisis in theological education include: Charles M. Wood, *Vision and Discernment* (Scholars Press, 1985); Edward Farley, *Theologia: The Fragmentation and Unity of Theological Education* (Fortress, 1983); and *The Fragility of Knowledge* (Fortress, 1988); Joseph C. Hough, Jr., and John B. Cobb, Jr., *Christian Identity and Theological Education* (Scholars Press, 1985); and Max L. Stackhouse, *Apologia: Contextualization, Globalization, and Mission in Theological Education* (Eerdmans, 1988).

<sup>5</sup> I am depending on a paper written by Prof. Rebecca S. Chopp of the Candler School of Theology, titled, "Lily Funded Projects on Theological Education - Evaluation Report: Younger Scholars Perspective," (Unpublished manuscript) for the discussion of the different understandings of the idea of self-identity.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14.

<sup>8</sup> Farley, Edward, *Theologia*, p. 3.

<sup>9</sup> *Op.cit.*, p. 30.

<sup>10</sup> This is the predecessor to the present Program on Theological Education of the World Council of Churches. As the Theological Education Fund, it was more concerned about the development of the theological schools in the two-thirds world. Now as Program on Theological Education it has a much more global agenda.

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<sup>11</sup> George Lindbeck, *University Divinity Schools: A Report on Ecclesiastically Independent Theological Education*, Working Papers (The Rockefeller Foundation, March, 1976), p. 14.

<sup>12</sup> H. Richard Niebuhr, *The Purpose of the Church and Its Ministry* (New York: Harper and Row, 1956), chapter 3.

<sup>13</sup> Op.cit., p.19.

<sup>14</sup> The Hebrew word for “knowing” is the same word which is used for sexual union between husband and wife. cf., Gen.4:1.

<sup>15</sup> See: Gutierrez, Gustavo, *A Theology of Liberation* (Orbis Books, 1971).

<sup>16</sup> The World Evangelical Fellowship has published a series of documents on Evangelical Theological Education Today., cf. Paul Bowers, (ed.), *Evangelical Theological Education Today, An International Perspective*, Nairobi: Evangel Publishing House, 1982; and *Evangelical Theological Education Today, Agenda for Renewal*, Nairobi: Evangel Publishing House, 1982. But I am not sure how much dialogue happens between these and the various documents published by the World Council of Churches on Theological Education.

<sup>17</sup> *Asian Journal of Theology*, Vol. 2., No. 1., April, 1988, p. 122.

## **FEET PARTLY OF IRON AND PARTLY OF CLAY: PEDAGOGY AND THE CURRICULUM OF THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION**

**Ronald H. Cram and Stanley P. Saunders**

“Why hasn’t anyone ever told us this before?” —A layperson to a seminary professor after hearing a basic introduction to the Apostle Paul.

“No one takes my experience seriously in this Seminary. Do faculty think I come to this place without a past?” --A female Seminarian, age 34, former attorney, with two children.

“Students in my day were much different than they are today. We didn’t have all these issues and questions about community, or pluralism, and gender. Sometimes I grow weary of the whole enterprise.” —A seminary professor, male, age 49.

Something is wrong in mainline theological institutions. We can feel it, we can hear it, we can see it. It’s not just a question of the curricular limitations of the traditional theological encyclopedia. The issues cut across traditional disciplinary lines and touch people at every vocational level, in seminaries and in congregations. Despite decades of awareness of the growing rift between Church and guild, for example, laypeople in local congregations remain disconnected from contemporary biblical and theological research. Despite widespread awareness that students are no longer fitting the stereotypes of generations of American seminary students, curricular changes designed to meet the changing realities, have been modest at best. Faculty burnout is the quiet secret, and a new generation of seminary professors is arising that despairs of finding “meaningful” worship settings in mainline congregations.

While we set out to explore the topics of pedagogy and curriculum, this is in fact a paper about boundaries that have already shifted, about future shock and confusion, and about the socio-economic captivity of theological seminaries. It is a paper about role expectations, institutional rigidity, patriarchal hierarchies, and social replication. It is a paper about the crises facing the mainline theological seminary today and an attempt, as well as an invitation, to put some constructive proposals on the table.

It is the working thesis of this paper that extant resources from the disciplinary areas of biblical studies and Christian religious education may

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provide ways of understanding more clearly the current crises facing theological education. In addition, as these disciplinary areas are in rigorous conversation, possible alternatives for action and reflection may arise in constructive ways. We begin with basic reflections on education, move to a discussion of current pedagogical concerns, and then step back to rethink the whole enterprise. This is a paper about memory and hope.

### Definitions and Frameworks

In its broadest historical sense, education in the Western tradition may be understood as a meeting place for conversation by community leaders regarding the practical function of teaching. The conversation, informed by the basic cultural, philosophical, religious, and political assumptions has focused traditionally on such questions as: Who are we as a community? What does it mean to be human within this community? Who are the teachers and learners, and what are their roles? What knowledge is of most worth?

If education is understood as a meeting place for conversation by community leaders regarding teaching, then aims and teaching may be understood as integrally related. Said another way, teaching is presumed to embody the aims of the conversation of education. Generically, to teach is to show how.<sup>1</sup> Because the conversation itself is always contextual, always in transition, and always looking for new language, effective teaching will also manifest these same characteristics. In showing how to engage in critical enquiry and action, the teacher demonstrates how students are to remember and to forget. How and why students remember and forget are at the core of all theories of learning, from Socrates to Kolb.<sup>2</sup> The teacher seeks to show students how and what to remember, and how and what to forget in ways that are congruent with the aims of teaching developed in the conversation of education.

The relation of education, teaching, and aims requires that the area of curriculum theory be considered. Many in the area of curriculum analysis would define curriculum in terms of those vehicles of meaning through which the values and behaviors of a community are communicated. Within the general context of Christian traditions, these vehicles of meaning have included koinonia, leiturgia, paideia/didache, kerygma, and diakonia.<sup>3</sup> In more recent times, vehicles of meaning such as gossip, common sense, and



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informal rituals associated with everyday administrative life have been included in the discussion of curriculum as well. Curriculum, then, may be viewed as a way of describing the dynamic interaction of content (socially plausible knowledge), process (social interaction of students and teachers), and action (social behavior congruent with content and process)—expressed through the multiple vehicles of meaning within the institution.

Curriculum analysis necessarily examines both the society/culture and its values, and the devices conducive to the cultivation of behavior and thinking appropriate to it. It is, in other words, a study both of the messages and the media of becoming human within a particular social setting. In the case of theological education, the community for which learners are being prepared is the Church. Beyond the Church are both larger, generalized contexts (e.g., city, neighborhood, home) within which, and sometimes against which, the Church stands.

Viewed within this larger frame of curriculum, teaching may be understood as a political activity. Thomas Groome has defined “political” as “any deliberate and structured intervention in people’s lives which attempts to influence how they live their lives.”<sup>4</sup> Teaching, then, takes very seriously bodily action, as well as critical thinking. It is held widely in the Western tradition that learning has not taken place by a person until both cognition and action become congruent with one another. In the world of the early Christians, also, the congruence of word and deed was considered the crucial element in the perception of a philosopher’s or teacher’s character. Without such integrity, the teacher was regarded as unworthy of emulation.

The political aims for teaching that arise from the conversation of education may vary from reactionary to revolutionary. Teaching may seek to preserve the status quo against all outside threats, or, on the other hand, to rebel against and transform the status quo, becoming itself the outside threat. More often than not, however, teaching focuses neither on preservation nor on transformation, but fluctuates between the poles.

The aims of teaching resulting from the conversation of education shape the relational ways in which teachers and students are to interact. The teacher may find it necessary, based on the given aims, to become a hostile adversary of the student, and attempt to crush and convert the student from his or her incorrect beliefs and actions. The teacher may find the need to become a rhetorical competitor with the student, engaging in a test of wills that will result over time in the survival of the fittest. Within another set of aims, the teacher may seek to become a dialogical partner, one who is open

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to change, just as the student is open to change. In such varied situations, the student/teacher relationship may be of necessity hierarchical and ruthless, or inclusive and democratic. In all cases, the role of the teacher in relation to the student is defined by the aims of teaching, articulated within the framework of larger cultural agendas and the conversation of education.

Teaching, even when it occurs behind the closed doors of a traditional classroom, then, involves not only the relation of student and teacher, but the entire organizational life of an institution of learning, which overtly and covertly shapes patterns of behavior between persons, and between itself and the rest of the world. Said another way, the curriculum of a theological institution, and its pedagogical patterns within, describe the style of life necessary to retain the institution's cultural identity. The "teachers" within the curriculum include not only the faculty who formally lead classroom instruction and impart the content of courses, but also the administrative practices of the institution; not only the audio-visual resources, but also the life together in the dorms; not only the techniques of teaching in the classroom, but also the definition of "proper" chapel services; not only gender and racial diversity, but also the ways in which human relations are conceived within a given economic framework.<sup>5</sup> A theological institution teaches far more than it is aware, and often most powerfully in ways of which it is scarcely aware.

This may imply that it is not possible to separate the discussion of teaching in theological education from larger discussions of curriculum, and more fundamentally from conversation about institutional aims and character—and about the aims, or mission, and nature of the Church. For the aims that arise from the conversation of theological education do not appear *ex-nihilo*, but within a value-laden communal context.

Each faith community, in the words of George Lindbeck, has "the habits or virtues distinctively emphasized by the encompassing vision which is theirs."<sup>6</sup> The conversation of Islamic religious education may focus on the question of Westernization, while Jewish religious education may choose to focus on the matter of secularization. The conversation in Christian religious education may center on the questions of religious pluralism and soteriology. In all cases, the resulting aims for teaching arise not in a decontextualized,

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ahistorical manner, but in ways that are congruent with the assumptions and situations of the respective faith communities. The ministry of teaching within many of the Christian traditions has as its primary task “publicly articulating, defending, and assessing normative descriptions of how the religious communities and individuals should believe and practice in various circumstances.”<sup>7</sup> Understanding that the conversation of education, the determination of aims, and teaching are communal activities on behalf of the whole religious community necessarily requires that we think of teaching not as a private or idiosyncratic matter, but as a public activity open to criticism and/or affirmation by the whole community.

While precise definitions of the character of theological education can be worked out only within the frameworks of particular institutional settings and faith traditions, at a minimal level it is possible to affirm that teaching in theological education may be characterized as a communal, formative, and critical activity.<sup>8</sup> Teaching is **communal** because theological reflection is by nature an activity of religious communities, and because Christianity in particular focuses its faith activity on the formation and maintenance of human/divine and human/human relationship, articulated in the light of the story of God and humankind and expressed most clearly in the story of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Story centered Christian learning presumes the ongoing narrative of the Church, and seeks to shape and discipline communal memory and hope. The teaching of ministers and leaders for the Church ideally is the preparation not merely of religious professionals, religious elites, but of people who will be able to facilitate the kind of remembering and envisioning that shapes and directs anew the Church’s vision and mission amidst the world’s many local and global cultures.

The communal dimension of Christian learning means also that theological education can continue to operate primarily as an Euro-American, male dominated enterprise only at the increasing peril of self-imposed exile. “Theological discourse has become the language of elites, having little relevance either for the congregations of practicing religious people or for the broader secularized society.”<sup>9</sup> It will be necessary to develop curricular and pedagogical paradigms that invite those who have had little or no voice in shaping the discourse of the theological community to become full partners in the conversation. Diversity and disagreement should be regarded as signs of vitality. The affirmation of the communal dimension of Christian learning accepts the temporality, liminality, and culturally

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conditioned character of all human knowing, and recognizes that faith is a living, developing human phenomenon.<sup>10</sup>

A communally oriented approach to teaching seeks to facilitate ongoing conversation among learners that recognizes and exploits the diverse experiences and gifts they bring (particularly among a student population that is older and “second career”). The classroom may become a laboratory for enabling learners to find and express their voices in increasingly articulate ways and to discern amidst their many voices a transcending communal identity. In this way, theological learning is a **formative** activity that facilitates both personal and communal identification and expression. In the course of ongoing conversation, theological communities give expression to their distinctive character, mediated through text, tradition, and experience.

Theological learning is a **critical** exercise in that the voice and experience of the community must submit to critical scrutiny according to the canons that make it possible for meaningful dialogue among Christians, and between Christians and non-Christians, to take place. If these conversations are to move beyond the mere expression of diverse voices, the standards according to which theologians make their critical judgments must be articulated and scrutinized.<sup>11</sup> This critical exercise begins already in the conversation among Christians, which should be characterized not only by respectful and attentive listening, but by constructively critical and engaged response. This is one of the most important things theological educators must model and facilitate.

An understanding of theological education as a critical exercise also requires that we take theological learning back into the public sphere, into the marketplace of ideas and experience where the viability of Christian proclamation can be heard and evaluated. Learning was once construed, for Christians and pagans alike, as something that best took place in the rhetor’s “classroom” amid the noise, energy, and competitive culture at the edge of the forum. To be educated, even for Christians, was to be a person of culture who could compete successfully in the marketplace.<sup>12</sup> Not until the advent of monastic patterns of education (in about the fifth century) was the notion that the public places of the city provided the primary setting for the socialization of young males seriously challenged. The monastery was the first community to offer fully Christian training—the absorption of a literary culture based on liturgy and Bible—producing a new class of religious elites trained in asceticism.<sup>13</sup>

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Theological education today still operates within the tension described by these competing models. Teacher and student alike struggle to find loci and media for theological learning that enables responsible participation in the shaping of cultures, both Church and the larger community, informed by a vision of the world to come. In a culture that is post-Christian, when mission is again crucial to the Church's survival, theological education might best be localized once again primarily in the public sphere. Theological teaching and learning should once again take to the streets in order to shape the proclamation, action, and character of the Christian community in meaningful discourse with non-Christian culture and societies.

### **Research Related to Classroom Teaching**

Research related to the issue of styles of teaching, styles of learning, and cognitive styles of information processing tends to indicate that while a majority of teachers in traditional classroom settings assume that students learn best by means of abstract conceptualization and analytic reasoning, the opposite is true.<sup>14</sup> A recent study of preferred styles of information processing by students in a theological institution concluded that styles of teaching were directly correlated to disciplinary areas. For example, those teaching in the areas of theology, history, and educational theory preferred a teaching style that was highly abstract, logical, and conceptual. Those teaching in administrative areas preferred a style of teaching that viewed concrete situations from many points of view, but tended to be detached from direct action. Those teaching in the area of biblical studies preferred an approach to teaching that emphasized finding practical uses for ideas, yet in a way that tended to avoid interpersonal issues. Those engaged in such areas as human development, group process, teaching and learning, and field education were consistently found to prefer a "hands on" approach to teaching, often at the expense of conceptual clarity or analysis.<sup>15</sup>

While such findings are suggestive and not definitive, they do pose interesting questions for the teacher. For example, if the teaching style of the teacher is not congruent with the learning style of the learner, how may the process of teaching be shaped in a way that provides opportunities for using the learning strengths of students? Since it is assumed that teachers desire students to learn the content and method of their particular areas, how may

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the teacher engage students in ways that are in harmony with strengths the student possesses?

In addition to the teacher, the other significant variable in the teaching/learning process is, of course, the student. Students bring with them many gifts that current patterns of theological education require them to leave at the door. Pedagogy for the Christian community models more effective ways of enabling students to channel their gifts into expressions that build up the learning community, so that the same patterns of learning and empowerment can be replicated at the level of the local congregation. In a communal, formative, and critical theological paradigm, teachers and students alike search for patterns of engagement that affirm and exploit with critical honesty the gifts that all members of the learning community bring to the mix.<sup>16</sup>

Resources available on the topic of theories of learning and teaching method are numerous.<sup>17</sup> Many point to ways in which the teacher, regardless of preferred style of teaching and learning, might take more seriously the diversity of learning patterns among students. Such alternatives in teaching method not only increase the possible effectiveness of learning, but also attend to the self-concept and self-esteem issues related to adult learners.

A major study of student ratings of instruction conducted by faculty at Virginia Commonwealth University, for example, concludes that students consistently rate discussion classes higher than lecture classes.<sup>18</sup> Research conducted by the Ministry of Education, Ontario, on adult learning emphasizes the need for teaching processes that allow the integration of past experience and present learning. The research concludes that "when past experience can be applied directly to current experience, learning is facilitated. When past experience can be applied only indirectly, the adult learner may have some difficulty perceiving connections and making transfers."<sup>19</sup> Further, the report continues by stating

Adults learn best in environments which reduce any potential threat to their self-concept and self-esteem, and which provide support for change. . . . The earlier these feelings of satisfaction and success come in the learning program, the more likely it is that they will motivate further learning for that program.<sup>20</sup>

There is also widespread evidence that learning potential is maximized when it is self-motivated, when learners make conscious

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decisions about what and how they will learn. Young children placed in a room full of toys will seek out ways of playing that fit their particular interests. Self-directed play tends to be more joyful, spontaneous, energetic, and constructive. When researchers introduce external stimuli designed to induce children to play with particular toys or to play in particular ways, children will cooperate, but their behavior quickly takes on depressed, anti-social, and even violent characteristics. Adult learners are little different. Students who are encouraged to follow their own interests, to establish their own, mutually agreed upon criteria of evaluation, and to risk giving expression to their ideas in creative, playful, interactive ways, more effectively integrate the varied content and disciplines they are required to master.<sup>21</sup>

Before continuing, it is important to say something about the relation of students' expectations and educational institutions in general. One book that provides fascinating reading, especially for seminary faculty members is *Teaching College Freshmen* by Bette LaSere Erickson and Diane Weltner Strommer. Our reading of this book would tend to indicate that what the authors have to say about first-year college students applies in large part to students of all ages who are attending seminary today. Most seminary faculty graduated from college or university at least twenty years ago. Students have changed since that time, although it is hard for many faculty to recognize this.

For example, Erickson and Strommer have found on the basis of their extensive research that high school students today are less academically oriented as a whole than they were twenty years ago. Rather than homework, high school students are typically engaged in outside employment or watching television. Taking notes in a class is a major freshman challenge; most are unable to do so. Relationship between student and teacher, rather than academic rigor, characterizes much of high school teaching today, and the pattern is often perpetuated on through the college or university experience. Erikson and Strommer quote one freshman to say, "I expect that college will be similar to high school in that one has the ability to have a close rapport with one's faculty; I expect it to be different in every other way."<sup>22</sup> Another freshman notes, "The toughest challenge for me in college is juggling. I mean having a full class schedule and its exams, problems, homework, and class work. A long week with its problems and conflicts. Family conflicts from the home front and long distance. Social life withering into nonexistence, and the loss of some good friends."<sup>23</sup> Preparing for

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economic security appears to be the most important goal of college students today.

The average age of a college freshman today is twenty-six. Rising lack of civility, rising racism, rising alcohol and drug abuse, sexual harassment and acquaintance rape are well-documented.<sup>24</sup> Majors are selected with virtually no knowledge of the field.<sup>25</sup> In addition to content, teachers are confronted with the need to teach students how to learn.<sup>26</sup> Experiences in teaching at theological institutions would indicate that these characteristics of the majority of current college freshmen remain constant for the majority of seminary students. It is an indication of a changing cultural context, with evolving student assumptions and values. To ignore such trends by concentrating on the “top ten percent” of academically inclined students will not solve the problem. Teaching students how to learn is now as important as the content of the disciplinary areas. To ignore this is to demonstrate public professional incompetence.

At the conclusion of their book, Erikson and Strommer write,

As we near the end, the voices of faculty with whom we work echo. Often, they reminisce about a time when their jobs were easier, when they knew less about their students, when research on teaching and learning was safely hidden in journals they did not read, when preparing for class was simply a matter of bringing their lecture notes up to date, and when the only pedagogical issue was whether they should teach to the middle or to the top of a class. That kind of teaching is indeed easier than the practices we propose. . . . Good teaching is far more complex, difficult, and demanding than is usually acknowledged by the public or within higher education.<sup>27</sup>

As long as the focus of a theological seminary continues to include as a dominant part of its identity and purpose the teaching of learners in traditional classroom settings with traditional curricular patterns (regardless of the innovative nature of the content or intent), and if learning is, in fact, the intended goal of teaching, the process as well as the content of teaching will need to be taken seriously by faculty in all academic areas of teaching.

Teachers are regarded, in some teaching paradigms, as pipeline managers who control the flow of information to the consumer, the learner. In this model, the teacher may gauge her or his effectiveness by the amount of raw data that is delivered, with little or no regard for how the information



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is put to use, or even whether it is still a consumable commodity. While most teachers in theological education might deride such conceptions, most of us in fact begin to feel some level of insecurity whenever the flow of information is interrupted for any significant length of time. In a communal, formative, and critical theological learning environment, however, teachers might more readily view themselves as facilitators, co-learners, models, or coaches. Rather than concerning themselves primarily with controlling the flow of information, teachers would regard themselves as a major element in the commodity exchange, in that they show students what elements of the theological enterprise are important. If students are to learn how to do theology, then it is important that teachers allow students to engage directly in the processes of theological expression and community formation, subject to subsequent critical reflection and further attempts.

Within such a framework, empowerment becomes a crucial element in the concept of theological learning as a formative activity. Much of current education, and theological education in particular, works in ways that create unhealthy dependencies. When students regard the teacher, rather than their own giftedness, as the primary medium of learning, inevitably they will become passive and distrust their own abilities to think and act in theologically responsible ways. The same pattern is replicated in congregations where the pastor is regarded as the only religious expert. If congregations are to be empowered to take responsibility for shaping a distinctly Christian ethos in their local communities, then pastors-in-training must be invited also to function as responsible, adult learners. Teaching and learning habits that infantilize students will lead inevitably to pastoral leadership that infantilizes parishioners. Empowerment is not only an approach to teaching, but also a part of the content of a leadership style that churches today desperately need. This approach is in many ways congruent with current thinking in missions. Whereas in the past the foreign missionary was often a permanent and authoritarian fixture in a community, current approaches to mission stress short term processes for empowerment of local ministry—intentionally working themselves out of a job.

In addition, research coming from the Harvard Assessment Seminars suggests several other factors that have ramifications for the teaching/learning context.<sup>28</sup> First, the most effective learning takes place in small, peer-oriented groups. In these groups students feel less restricted and more responsible for what they learn. Students who study in small groups

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consistently do better than students who study alone. Small groups enable students to risk finding and expressing their voices in circumstances that are less stressful than the typical classroom. Peer feedback is often taken more seriously than evaluations offered by faculty. Studies of “mentored clusters” (small groups led by students) suggest that small groups of students make big progress even when, sometimes especially when, faculty are not present.

Second, students generally concur on three characteristics that stand out in successful courses: (a) Immediate and detailed feedback on both written and oral work; (b) High demands and standards placed upon them, but with plentiful opportunities to revise and improve their work before it receives a grade, thereby enabling students to learn from their mistakes; and (c) Frequent checkpoints in the evaluation process. The key is that students learn best when they receive frequent, timely, and effective evaluation, combined with the opportunity to revise their work and improve on it over time.

Third, the Harvard studies indicate that learning is tied closely to factors outside the classroom. Student patterns in seeking advice, engaging in work, and participating in other “extra-curricular” activities, as well as their sense of the general “ethos” of the learning environment affect what courses they choose, their level of interest, the intensity of their involvement, their willingness to take risks, and their grades.

Fourth, although it is clear that students generally have diverse styles of learning, there are striking differences in the ways women and men learn. These differences come to expression in terms of what they want from their educational experiences, how they spend their time, whom they talk to for advice (men tend to seek advisors who “know the facts” or can tell them where to go to get the information they need; women want advisors who will take the time to get to know them personally, who are good listeners), how they study (women are more likely to study alone), and which teachers are important to them and affect them. Men tend to place responsibility for difficulties in the learning process with factors outside themselves, while women are more likely to be self-critical, citing their own inadequacy as the source of the difficulty.

Men and women also hear conversations differently and arrive in classrooms with significantly different expectations regarding the communication process. Contrary to popular stereotypes, in many social situations, including classroom discussions, men’s voices dominate.

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“Speaking in a classroom is more congenial to boys’ language experience than to girls’, since it entails putting oneself forward in front of a large group of people, many of whom are strangers and at least one of whom is sure to judge the speakers’ knowledge and intelligence by their verbal display.”<sup>29</sup> Men are generally more comfortable than women with learning formats that involve “ritual opposition: public display followed by argument and challenge.” “Women are more likely to resist discussion they perceive as hostile. . . ,” and prefer discussions characterized by relatively open-ended questions and the sense that comments will go unchallenged.<sup>30</sup>

Faculty in the Harvard studies overwhelmingly affirmed two innovations that would improve the teaching/learning process. One was the importance of enhancing students’ awareness of “the big picture,” the “big point of it all,” rather than just the details of a particular topic. The second was the importance of regular, effective feedback from students for the sake of mid-course corrections. One of the most effective devices for realizing both of these goals is the “one-minute paper.” A minute or two before the end of the class, students are asked write brief answers to two questions: (1) what is the big point you learned from class today? and (2) what is the main, unanswered question you leave class with today? The papers are written anonymously for the teacher to read after class. Starting subsequent class sessions with a quick overview of the responses allows the teacher to clear up misunderstandings or address areas that needed further work. This process also invites students to take more responsibility for what they are learning, and to engage the material presented in class critically. It requires active listening and engagement on the part of students, and helps to document for students that they are in fact learning something in the course.

Yet another factor that significantly shapes the teaching/learning ethos is the mode of evaluation. Students in the American educational system are customarily taught to evaluate their performance according to externally imposed and sometimes arbitrary, abstract standards, usually known as grades. This means of evaluation shapes the culture of learning in powerful ways. Students learn that to succeed, they need to figure out what the professor wants and supply it, even at the cost of sacrificing their own learning goals. Education can frequently devolve into a matter of mastering this system. Students arriving at Seminary with this paradigm in place will look for ways to jump successfully “through the hoops” in order to reach the goal of ordination. But this paradigm significantly imperils the level of self-

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conscious choice that should guide student learning and facilitate the processes of integration. Theological educators, perhaps even more than colleagues in “secular” disciplines, need to be aware of how modes of evaluation shape the learning environment. Some aspects of the current system of evaluation may be inimical to the proclamation and experience of “grace” and “freedom,” leading rather to the reimposition of the arbitrary, external standard of the “Law.” Extensive research into the relation of motivation and grading has indicated that grades do, indeed, motivate. But, serious questions are raised in this literature regarding the appropriateness of external rewards and punishments in the development of individual or communal motivation and action.<sup>31</sup>

Finally, it is worth giving some attention to the matter of the learning environment, in particular the classroom. Most people learn most effectively in interactive, experiential, multi-media environments; in general, the more senses one can involve in the learning process the better. Educational approaches to the use and evaluation of media resources, such as film and video, are being investigated in many theological settings. The classroom itself, however, is usually a rectangular, blank-walled, colorless room that functions as a container for the learning process. Learning is heavily influenced by environmental factors—light, color, temperature, comfort, even the shape of the tables, affect learners in subtle but powerful ways. This suggests that some careful and creative thinking needs to be directed to the design and furnishing of classroom spaces, with an eye to facilitating both critical reflection and creative expression. We need more books, more maps, more pictures, more artist’s canvasses, more toys, and generally more flexible furnishings in theological learning spaces.

More generally, however, we need to regard whole campuses, even whole cities, as learning environments that can be exploited for the sake of theological learning. Theological education could profitably be conducted in settings outside the traditional classroom. As noted earlier, the forum needs once again to become a place of learning for Christians. Were we to begin to move outside of traditional spaces we might plant the seed of the idea that the Church is people in the world, rather than a place we “go to,” the “God-building.”

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### **But Research Also Shows . .**

Method alone does not solve the question of the relation of theory and practice. Significant learning, based on sound teaching process, may occur within the context of the traditional classroom. Yet this learning may have seemingly no connection with practice. In his book, *The Uses of Schooling*, philosopher of education Harry S. Broudy<sup>32</sup> correctly notes that those teaching situations in which replicative criteria are the bases of teaching and learning, success in retention is often small because of the lack of consistent reinforcement. The memorization of lists for the purposes of a particular examination, for example, more often than not will serve only the purposes of the exam. Such lists tend to escape the memory over time because of the lack of daily reinforcement. Floods of information, listed or not, rarely have direct application to the solution of concrete problems. In fact, as the public schools began to realize this, a significant part of the curriculum was refocused in order to help students apply the facts learned. It was discovered in time that while students were able to apply what they had learned to the application processes introduced in school, they were unable to apply them to novel situations outside the classroom.

In a recent conversation with a seminary graduate, a faculty member was informed that the seminary education received was a miserable failure. This graduate left seminary with academic honors, and was generally considered one of the most promising future leaders of the church. The person had encountered a very complex and confusing situation in the local church, and concluded, "The seminary did not tell me what to do in this kind of situation. Why not?"

The question posed by the seminary graduate is a good one, for it points to the perception on the part of many students that there should be a direct relation between what is taught and the solution of practical problems. The assumption that there is a direct relation between what is learned in the classroom and precise guidelines regarding the solution of problems has been found in educational research to be false. Replication or application within the context of the seminary program clearly did not serve in the solution of concrete problems in the church. Anger that there was not an outside authoritative source with all the answers to professional life was to be expected in such a situation. What was the value of three years of seminary education if tough questions in practice could not be solved?

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Educational research indicates that all formal educational programs have a particular learning press.<sup>33</sup> Educational researcher David Kolb has concluded on the basis of his research into the area of experiential learning that

Pedagogical strategies and teaching styles can be congruent or incongruent not only with the subject matter, but also with the adaptive competencies required for success in the field. Initial socialization into a career field occurs perhaps most forcefully through these processes.<sup>34</sup>

When these role expectations are communicated, through word or action, they become role pressures. They are most apt to be expressed, of course, when one's behavior violates expectations or when other conditions call for a change in behavior. It is through these sometimes distinct, but often subtle and indirect pressures that one learns, day by day, how to be in his/her career.<sup>35</sup>

Skills needed for the successful completion of a classroom course are more often than not different than those required in one's daily employment setting. Does this mean that a teacher may develop a learner-centered approach to teaching, use the most current educational research related to teaching, have excellent student evaluations of the course, and not have a direct or even indirect effect on the ways in which the practitioner engages in her or his work? The answer is simply, "Yes."

Innovative teaching methods, clarity of material presentation, teacher flexibility, timely evaluative feedback to students, and student feelings of increased self-worth are hallmarks of good classroom teaching.<sup>36</sup> Small group discussion, role play, "writing to learn" exercises, when used to achieve teaching aims, are appreciated and needed by most students. But such a classroom environment may not address the more basic issue at hand, the relation of theory and practice. Such an effective and efficient classroom environment simply reinforces the importance of traditional approaches of teaching and learning at the point of praxis.

This is a matter of considerable importance to those community representatives engaged in and responsible for the conversation of education. If the aims for teaching cannot be embodied by the learner in meaningful and lasting ways, the effects on the community may become profound. In fact,

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the community may cease to exist should learning not result in a public character congruent with the aims articulated in the conversation of education.

The possible implications for traditional theological institutions are many. To change patterns of teaching within the classroom, let alone in regard to basic institutional reorganization, is to invite the most rigorous forms of reactionary social maintenance. Witness the limited structural effects of field education or Clinical Pastoral Education on the curriculum patterns of most theological schools—let alone such consciousness raising and societal reconstruction models as proposed by Paulo Freire or Myles Horton.<sup>37</sup> In particular, mainline Protestant theological seminaries tend to be conservative in their approaches to educational innovation, and for good pragmatic and economic reasons. Funding patterns, perceived relation to the local congregation, faculty conservatism in relation to new educational proposals, the meaning of academic freedom, denominational expectations, to mention only a few factors, all enter into proposals regarding educational change. Yet, if it is true that students learn differently in praxis situations than in formal classrooms, and if the aims of the conversation of education may be accomplished more effectively outside the traditional classroom, the theological seminary may need to change in order to accomplish in praxis what its aims are in theory.

One alternative model would look something like the following description. Imagine a theological seminary whose primary task was to engage in critical theological reflection on those timely issues confronting the church and the scholarship related to the church. The primary task of the faculty would be the ongoing investigation of such issues in an interdisciplinary manner. Position papers, curriculum resources, books, and the like, would be generated not as secondary activities by the faculty, but as primary responsibilities. Faculty from the various disciplines, church leaders (both lay and ordained), civic leaders, professionals, and others who would have something at stake in the particular discussion would gather regularly for “round table” discussions of concrete issues—theological, social, economic, environmental, and political—facing the Church and the larger community.

This “round table” becomes a primary context for the conversation of education as issues of aims and teaching are considered.<sup>38</sup> Faculty would be assigned a group of students, and serve as the mentor to those students. A student would be required to be on the staff of a local congregation or Church related ministry from the very beginning of her or his time of preparation. A learning plan would be devised by the student and faculty member at the

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beginning of the time of preparation. Basic areas of required competence would be outlined. Graduation could occur any time between the signing of the learning plan and the seventh year of study. The student would not need to be a resident of the seminary campus, nor of the state in which the seminary was located. Connected by means of computer technology, phone, video, FAX, and other appropriate technology, the student would be in contact with the mentor as needed. Groups of students would meet regionally on a monthly basis in peer settings. All students would spend a month in the winter and a month in the summer on the seminary's own campus, or in a retreat center conveniently located for all persons. During that time, the faculty would discuss research in progress. Students would be invited to observe and to participate in work in progress among inter-disciplinary teams. Since the student could determine how to meet graduation requirements (with the prior approval of the faculty mentor and dean of faculty), few traditional courses would need to be offered on a seminary campus. Students could choose to take course work from other traditional and nontraditional academic settings as needed. Regional courses would be offered by the seminary's faculty as needed. Careful communication between congregation and mentor would be maintained primarily through technological means.

All of this might sound far-fetched, irresponsible, or just wonderful, depending on one's understanding of the curriculum of theological education. As student age continues to climb, as second-career and second-degree students become more common, as household responsibilities growingly shape academic patterns, as theory and practice issues continue to be discussed, the task of showing ministerial candidates how to embody the Christian faith and life will become more and more problematic. There are indications that the sort of educational model described above will become more and more commonplace in the years ahead. The Fielding Institute of Santa Barbara, California, is an example of a leading graduate institution that has embodied several of the elements of teaching outlined above. For those disinterested in the relation of theory and practice, this matter is inconsequential. Many valid educational approaches, such as St. John's College in Annapolis, Maryland, would presume that "education's task is to adjust human beings to the truth, which is eternal, rather than to the contemporary world, which is not."<sup>39</sup> It all depends on the aims of teaching.



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### **Plus Change, Plus C'est La Meme Chose**

This French proverb—the more things change, the more they remain the same—is a concise and sobering expression of the reality of much institutional “change”: enormous expenditure of energy may result in changes that are more apparent than real. Students of the art of change note a difference between “first-order” and “second-order” change.

There are two different types of change: one that occurs within a given system which itself remains unchanged, and one whose occurrence changes the system itself. To exemplify this distinction in more behavioral terms: a person having a nightmare can do many things in his dream—run, hide, fight, scream, jump off a cliff, etc.—but no change from any one of these behaviors to another would ever terminate the nightmare. . . (this is first-order change) The one way out of a dream involves a change from dreaming to waking. Waking, obviously, is no longer a part of the dream, but a change to an altogether different state (this is second-order change).<sup>40</sup>

Many attempts to find solutions to problems among individuals and within communities consist of first-order solutions, which in fact turn out not to be solutions at all, but variations, repetitions, and intensifications of the problem. The existing system, which produced the problem, is merely given a new (dis)guise. This suggests that unless we find ways to ascertain the true reality of our plight, step outside of it, and reshape the system in second-order fashion, the attempt to reform pedagogy, or even curriculum, in theological education may become a game without end. It may in fact be the case that much of the cynicism typically found among faculties in the midst of curricular revision is a natural response to the perception that life will go on pretty much as usual regardless of the sweeping changes revisionists may propose. Curriculum revision may often be, as the President of one theological seminary is reported to have said recently, a matter of “a fly trying to move an elephant.”

More dangerous still may be the perception that revision within an existing paradigm (first-order change) has in fact been successful. Let us presume, for example, that a theological institution is concerned about the relation of theory and practice. Let us presume further that an innovative educational model is adopted by an institution, and that it is efficient and

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effective. Moreover, let us presume students, faculty, and churches are delighted by the ways in which students move between the tradition and action—glorious embodiments of the kind of reflective practitioner that can be found on only the rarest of occasions.<sup>41</sup> What more could be desired?

We can begin to answer this question only by stepping outside of our current dream, by being willing to look again critically at the paradigms and institutions we usually presuppose. Sociologists have found that, over time, institutions held dear by societies take on a “greater than human creation” identity. Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann once addressed this matter by exploring the idea of reification. They defined reification as

the apprehension of human phenomena as if they were things, that is, in non-human or possibly supra human terms. Another way of saying this is that reification is the apprehension of the products of human society as if they were something else than human products—such as facts of nature, results of cosmic laws, or manifestations of divine will.<sup>42</sup>

When human creations take on the aura of the divine, and when such creations cannot be criticized, one may be reminded of a more disturbing theological concern, that of idolatry. Feet partly of iron (suggesting permanence) and partly of clay (suggesting impermanence) give foundation to huge and brilliant appearances, manifested as paradigms and institutions that embody fragility (Daniel 2:31-35). Social and theological analysis that is counter to the dominant culture is considered often to be irrelevant, impossible, or insane. The religious authorities of the First Century considered the teaching and activity of Jesus to be evidence of witchcraft.<sup>43</sup>

An illustration may be found in John E. Farley’s recent analysis of family. Farley has noted that family is a “sacred” institution in the minds of most persons in the United States. Most Americans would still (1990) hold dear the understanding of family as having a wage-earning male, a female who stays at home, and two or three children. Yet, he points to research that would indicate only seven percent of families in the United States still fit that image.<sup>44</sup> The image has an irrational, nonempirical basis that is highly internalized, resulting often in highly emotional responses by persons who believe the family should be preserved. Farley also notes that while child abuse within families is well-documented, few persons ever criticize the

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perceived and valued institution of family. Janet Fishburn has drawn similar conclusions about the relation of family and the Church.<sup>45</sup> One cannot easily criticize the institution of family, nor suggest radical revision of it and be taken seriously. Instead, child abusers are given direct criticism for the roles they play, not the institution (with its inherent perceptions regarding what counts as family) itself.<sup>46</sup>

Virtually all recent discussion regarding theological education suffers from the effects of institutional reification. Rarely does any fundamental question regarding the existence of a theological seminary arise. Rather, the players and their roles (in most cases faculty and disciplinary division areas) are pointed to as those variables that have failed. The institution of theological seminary is rarely if ever questioned. A distinction between theological education as process and theological seminary as institution needs to be drawn at this point. We do not advocate the abandonment of educating communities of faith. Theological education as process is mandatory for the life of the Church. We would contend, however, that the current institution of theological seminary has serious educational and theological problems that may prevent the theological education of the Church in ways that are biblically, educationally, and theologically appropriate.

Let us describe briefly some basic concerns that would encourage serious questions regarding the institution called theological education, and then suggest possible areas for needed discussion in the future. We begin with one the most widely held and fundamental perceptions among religious professionals today, namely, the sense that the laity have become docile, lacking the tools, motivation, or inclination to undertake serious study of the Bible, to engage in competent theological reflection, or to take their “faith” into daily life. Current proposals for reform in theological education focus on improved education of the pastors who will lead congregations, with the hope that improved pastors will produce improved laity and congregations. Apart from the questions one might have about the viability of the “trickle-down” theory as applied to theological formation, it is evident that attempts to bolster the education of the clergy may amount only to the “more of the same” approach characteristic of first-order change. In fact, a “better educated” clergy may intensify the sense of distance, and attendant mutual distrust, between ordained clergy and lay people. Moreover, as long as pastors are trained in settings in which the fundamental paradigm of church leadership requires teaching approaches that seek to maintain institutional

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stasis and status, there is little reason to hope that anything but the same paradigm, including relational patterns and power dynamics, will be replicated at the congregational level, regardless of the content of the pastor's theological learning.

Put in other words, there is reason to suspect that the docility of laity is not so much a consequence of inadequate pastoral training and leadership, but rather the necessary condition of the current "economy" of seminary and Church, clergy and laity. If the laity were to become theologically literate and capable, the identity, not to mention the jobs, of many pastors might be threatened seriously. The days of an uneducated, docile laity have disappeared. It is no longer possible to presume that a compelling vision offered by an ordained pastor will be accepted without rigorous questioning. More and more, laypersons will not accept authoritative stances about "life in the real world." Laity are there, and they want competent conversation. Historian Donald L. Wasson has taught at the Pontiac Correctional Center in Illinois for more than ten years. Of his teaching experience in a correctional institution, he has written,

Aside from an occasional traffic ticket, most traditional students only encounter courts on television or in books. My students, on the other hand, have been brought into court and have had a judge look them in the eye and say, "Guilty." . . . The judicial system is very real to them, and they will not simply accept a teacher's speaking of the "virtues" of the system.<sup>47</sup>

It is not overstatement to conclude that many laypersons have attitudes toward teaching authorities that are not unlike those of the prisoners who are no longer at the point of blindly accepting a pastor's understanding of the relation of faith and life.

The idea of a socially pristine proletariat that could be molded in such a way that a new society could be built once dominated the thinking of educators in the West.<sup>48</sup> As that possibility began to fade functionally, educators turned their sights to the child. Certainly the child could be formed for the good of society before status quo contamination takes place, many believed. When that strategy proved to be naive, attention was focused on the family. The rise of the American Sunday school may be read as the history of progressive disillusionment about the loci of the change agent—from adult to child to adult to family to utter confusion. In fact, it is not

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inappropriate to conclude that the seeming permanence of the Sunday school in local congregations may be the result of a basic assumption that families are miserable failures at Christian religious education—that the Sunday school must act as surrogate mother and father. One is tempted to wonder if the current understanding of theological education presumes the incompetence and failure of local church laity to teach itself in responsible ways.

If the Church no longer required the ministrations of professional elites, the *raison d'être* of seminaries might also be called into question. Historically, Reformation as well as Catholic traditions have found it mandatory to keep the laity in their places in order to preserve “necessary” control over the direction of the Church as institution. Thus, some interpreters of the Reformation value a teachable spirit in the laity,<sup>49</sup> overtly a well meant prescription, but one that covertly effected the preservation of then and still current power relationships. The Catholic Church struggles today to hold lay movements, such as the Base Communities,<sup>50</sup> in check. The Christian education movement of the nineteenth century, which began as a lay movement, was progressively taken over during the twentieth century by the denominations, which were threatened by the ecumenical and lay/non-orthodox tendencies of the movement. Even the New Testament itself testifies to the presence among the early Christians of forces that sought and often succeeded in imposing on local congregations the patterns of stasis and status that characterized Greco-Roman culture as a whole. In short, there are reasons to suspect that the current paradigm of theological education is a function of an economy of domination and docility. The language of frustration, distrust, and disdain among all the players masks the complicity of seminary, clergy, and laity alike in the preservation of the current paradigm. We need again and again to ask ourselves whether our institutional structures, at the level of both Church and Seminary, empower God’s people or create dependencies.

What may we propose as alternatives? Before beginning the task in earnest it is important to note that the Church is necessarily an always changing, always imperfect, ever old and ever new entity. *Ecclesia Reformata, Sed Semper Reformanda* is our plea, a plea that is both invitation and mandate. It is a healthy reminder that the institutional church is fundamentally deformed, always to be deformed.

How might we reconsider the culture and economy of theological education and the Church? When the streams of the tradition become

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stagnant, we must return to the fountainhead. Thus, we propose to look again to the scriptures for models; this time, however, for images that might help us reenvision the contexts and categories of theological education. The scriptures provide us with ideal constructs for cultures not our own, and it is necessary to translate these images and ideals carefully; nevertheless, the most significant movements of reform and revitalization in the history of the Church have always been rooted in fresh, contextual readings of the Scripture. Three aspects of the early Christian experience warrant consideration.

First, the education of the earliest Christians took place in the context of mission. The theology of the early Church was formulated virtually from scratch in the creative tension between (1) the believers' experience and recollection of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, (2) their perception and experience of "eschatological realities" (Spirit) in their personal and especially their corporate lives, (3) their appropriation of the traditions they regarded as formative and authoritative (Scripture), and (4) their encounter with the realia of the larger culture. Their theologies were thoroughly contextual, and worked out in the public sphere. For the early Christians there was no fundamental distinction between learning (especially theological learning) and everyday life.

Second, worship provided not only a setting for education, but was itself the expression of educational praxis in concrete actions. The community gathered for fellowship, a normative expression of their peculiar self-understanding, for prayer, the ongoing communion with God, for instruction in the tradition, and for re-membering of their essential character and mission, articulated most clearly in the events of baptism and Lord's supper, which allowed them to participate anew in the foundational, descriptive, and prescriptive events of their common life. It was this common life together, oriented around worship (broadly construed) and directed toward mission, that constituted both the setting and the essential content of their theological education. It was a primitive model, yet profoundly creative, effective, integrative, and powerful.

Finally, the life together of the early Christians also effected the marking out of peculiar understandings and experiences of space and time, the kind of markings that establish the distinctive character of cultures.<sup>51</sup> The Church provided the early Christians with the opportunity to recover communal time and space; i.e., their peculiar culture, or economy, which was defined and determined by the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Their distinctive "economy" enabled the realization of face to face relationships

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and patterns of sharing that were not possible in the larger culture. Their house, or household, was marked by expectations and experiences quite different from those of the Greco-Roman society. Likewise, their self-understanding as a people living between and within two times, and their definition of time according to events (new creation and eschaton) rather than abstract and culturally mediated markings of reality, had crucial consequences for their perceptions of what constituted necessary knowledge.

A society's perception of space and time shapes in fundamental ways its evaluation of what kind of knowledge is of most worth. So long as the Church and its educational institutions operate by the American clock (dominated by media time, which suggests that life is a series of disconnected, self-contained episodes) and presume to occupy safe space within the Western economy, the kind of knowing and acting its practitioners express will be more American than Christian. The issue for theological education is how we can shape environments that will enable the rediscovery of a peculiarly Christian experience of time and space, its attendant economy, and the distinctive forms of learning and knowledge appropriate to it.

Paulo Freire has helped teachers understand that before persons may be the empowered ones, it is necessary to help persons see their oppression. As persons become accustomed to their dependencies, it is often painfully difficult for persons to admit the limitations of everyday social life.<sup>52</sup> The same holds true for the good-intentioned teacher who seeks to liberate others from their oppression. It is often the case that such a teacher is unable to live with the changes in herself/himself that he or she seeks to embody in others. This may include those who write study papers for faculty seminars!

Let us suppose that theological institutions as they exist today continued (in the short term) to prepare persons for ordained leadership. But suppose that the curriculum were re-formed in such a way that consciousness raising and empowerment were focused on the communal, Christian religious life. The communal life focus would shape the life and worship of the institution. Careful attention would be given to teaching and relational studies. Narrative, essential to community formation, religious imagination, and public life, would become essential to the process of theological reflection of the community. Service and action would be integral aspects of the faculty/student way of life. A way of being-in-the-world would be modeled to the students, staff, and faculty within a context of rigorous study, action, and reflection. Such a model would aim to stand against culture, while at the same time be involved in culture in meaningful ways.

Over time, graduates would begin to model this sort of life in the local congregation. Small groups would be formed at first to engage in similar ongoing communal experiments. It is not impossible to imagine that in time formal classes would cease altogether. Faculty would become a model of the common life, and would focus together on aspects of theological importance for the life of the congregation. Ordained and lay leaders would return to the seminary campus for ongoing continuing education. Faculty would seek to

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model the process of theological reflection called for in a post-Christian era. Faculty action and involvement in social action and local congregational life would provide a needed connection between faculty and church. The seminary would operate on the time of the community, rather than on the time of lecture units.

While we may not like to admit it, most mainline seminaries are all pretty much the same when it comes to curricula, aims, and teaching models. One often hears that each seminary possesses a “unique ethos,” but from a curricular view, that is practically speaking all the variation there really is—an ethos is extremely difficult to define. Virtually none embody a communal way of being an academic center for teaching and learning. None seek to question in any fundamental way the institution of seminary, and its related assumptions, processes, and values. None are intentionally providing alternative models of life together for their graduates that seek to question economic disparity. Nor are biblical models of theological education taken to be serious alternatives for current institutional identity and organization. New “delivery systems,” streamlined curriculum offerings, globalization rationales, or administrative reorganizational charts will not address the more basic question of institution. Alternatives are needed now. The previous models, which may have served the life of the church in the United States well, are no longer adequate to the demands of a growingly secular culture. Which, if any, of the traditional, mainline theological institutions will be willing to risk a different way?



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### ENDNOTES

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- <sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 19.
- <sup>8</sup> Ronald F. Thiemann, "Toward a Critical Theological Education," *Harvard Theological Review* 80 (1987): 8.
- <sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.
- <sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*
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<sup>15</sup> Ronald H. Cram, "Experiential Learning and the Formation of Character: Implications for Theological Education," (Unpublished Manuscript, Presbyterian School of Christian Education, Richmond, 1987).

<sup>16</sup> Ronald H. Cram, "Removing the Silver: Education that is Religious," *Liberal Religious Education* (October 1988).

<sup>17</sup> See Bruce Joyce and Marsha Weil, *Models of Teaching* (Prentice Hall, 1986).

<sup>18</sup> James McMillan, et.al., "Student Ratings of Instruction: A Summary of Literature," (Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, June 1986).

<sup>19</sup> Donald Brundage and Dorothy MacKeracher, *Adult Learning Principles and their Application to Program Planning* (The Ministry of Education, Ontario, 1980), p. 99.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 100, 106.

<sup>21</sup> J. B. McCandless, "Play," in Iris V. Cully and Kendig Brubaker Cully, eds., *Harper's Encyclopedia of Religious Education* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1990), pp. 489-491.

<sup>22</sup> Bette LeSere Erickson and Diane Weltner Strommer, *Teaching College Freshmen* (Jossey-Bass, 1991), p. 9.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 26.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 32

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 77.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 217.

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<sup>28</sup> Richard Light, *The Harvard Assessment Seminars; Explorations with Students and Faculty about Teaching, Learning, and Student Life* (Harvard University, 1990).

<sup>29</sup> Deborah Tannen, "Teachers' Classroom Strategies Should Recognize that Men and Women Use Language Differently," *The Chronicle of Higher Education* 37 (June 19, 1991): B1.

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<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 139.

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<sup>37</sup> Paulo Friere, *Education for Critical Consciousness* (Continuum, 1973); Bill Moyers, *Bill Moyers' Journal: The Adventures of a Radical Hillbilly, Part I and Part II* (WNET/Thirteen, New York, June 5, 1991). Transcript.

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<sup>39</sup> Lloyd Duck, *Teaching with Charisma* (Allyn and Bacon, 1981), p. 189.

<sup>40</sup> Paul Watzlawick, John Weakland, and Richard Fisch, *Change: Principles of Problem Formation and Problem Resolution* (W.W. Norton, 1974), p. 10.

<sup>41</sup> See Donald Schoen, *Educating the Reflective Practitioner* (Jossey-Bass, 1987).

<sup>42</sup> Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality* (Anchor Books, 1967), p. 89.

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<sup>44</sup> John E. Farley, *Sociology* (Prentice-Hall, 1990), p. 366.

<sup>45</sup> Janet Fishburn, *Confronting the Idolatry of the Family* (Abingdon, 1991).

<sup>46</sup> Farley, *Sociology*, pp. 92ff.

<sup>47</sup> Donald L. Wasson, "Mr. Chips Goes to Jail: Teaching History in a Correctional Environment," *Perspectives* (February, 1992).

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<sup>49</sup> Richard R. Osmer, *A Teachable Spirit: Recovering the Teaching Office in the Church* (Westminster/John Knox Press, 1991).

<sup>50</sup> See Richard Shaull, *The Reformation and Liberation Theology: Insights for the Challenges Today* (Westminster/John Knox Press, 1991).

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## **THE HISTORICITY OF TEACHING THEOLOGY: A CATHOLIC PERSPECTIVE**

**Bevil Bramwell**

Teaching theology is a task which depends on the fundamental way in which we establish meaning. Beneath the diversity of theological disciplines and their various methods, lies a basic unity which has to do with the historical nature of theology itself. It is that unity which I would like to examine using some insights about history found in phenomenology.

The foundations of teaching theology and the profound meaning of the act of teaching theology lie within the historical nature of human reality and the unfolding of salvation and revelation within that history.

### **Teaching Theology “within” History:**

Teaching theology involves a particular kind of relationship to history of which Hans Georg Gadamer noted three. The first treats the past as something to be classified. The categories of the present are imposed on the past and made the absolute standards of understanding the past.

The second mode which is more reflective and interactive, notes that the past has a certain uniqueness and so does not use the categories of the present in the same way as the first mode but still sees history as something “other” without considering the subjective nature of our interpretations of the past.

The third way of recognizing history “lets tradition speak to the present and realizes that this speaking is telling the present something about itself.<sup>1</sup> And it is this third mode which most closely reflects the unique nature of being human.

We find ourselves situated in history in such a way that it is of our very essence that we are historical. We come to ourselves to the degree that we interrogate and grapple with the datum of our history.

Even the simplest reflection reveals that there is a certain “givenness” to our origins, our physical characteristics and intellectual capacities, our families and the Church which we choose to join. And that same quality of “givenness” will be found to characterize theology.

Whether we examine the “givenness” of our family or our theology, we will discover that there are certain common characteristics. It is a non-trivial statement that both the family and the theological community which we join preexist our entry into them. This preexistence is not simply

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temporal but it is communal, historical and theologically meaningful. Such characteristics condition our teaching and our learning in the following sense. Our teaching and learning are occurrences which take place in a history of teaching and learning and this history forms the conditions of the possibility of our teaching and learning theology in a fashion which is faithful to the very nature of theology.

Turning to theology itself: As MacIntyre expresses it, “a central task of theology . . . is that of enabling human beings to understand themselves and their predicaments in terms of God’s ordering of the world, by identifying and removing the obstacles to that understanding.”<sup>2</sup> It would seem that we and our students are both ‘situated’ within world history (as a consequence of our own historicity) and this world history is ‘ordered’ by God - to use MacIntyre’s word.

Rahner argued for a history of salvation and revelation which is coextensive with such a world history.<sup>3</sup> Of particular interest is one of his conclusions about the mediation of this history namely “..the universal history of salvation . . . reaches its complete essence and its full historical objectification in the particular, regional, categorical history of revelation.”<sup>4</sup>

There are enough grounds for arguing that our classes in theology ideally are such particular, regional and categorical experiences. The word ‘ideally’ indicates the problem of evaluating the degree of realization of the full objectification of the universal history of salvation. Evaluation always is a posteriori operation.<sup>5</sup>

Now the nature of this historical objectification must be examined. The graced history of transcendental revelation is always “mediated categorically in the world” And this history forms the foundation of subsequent theological reflection (which can happen in our classes in theology!) which itself is part of the explicit self-interpretation of the individual and the faith community to which that individual belongs. Our teaching of theology functions as part of the self-interpretation in faith of our students and ourselves. And thus is a participation in the history of salvation.

The nature of this self-interpretation has been introduced through comments on the historical situation of the individual. Thus the religious self-interpretations which ground theology do not occur in a solipsistic fashion but rather in a manner which respects the historical ‘situatedness’ of the individual and the discipline of theology.

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An additional characteristic of history is required here i.e., the 'mandate' of history. The very "givenness" of history does in fact contain a "mandatum".<sup>6</sup> History speaks to the present in a directive manner. Thus self-sufficiency and autonomy are too simplistic to describe human nature if they are not referred to the historicity of the human being.<sup>7</sup> So assuming (with Rahner) that an individual's history is also the individual's salvation history, then uncovering this "mandatum" in our history is the route to our own self-interpretation as creatures of God.

Furthermore, in doing theology we need to include the whole range of historical data so that in the struggle with the material through learning and study, potentially at least, both students and faculty will uncover the "trajectory" which such a salvation history has imposed on them.

Such a complete study would disclose some indications of the unity of the ground of the whole faith-filled and grace-filled project of theology. This proposal is circumscribed due to the complexity of the task of what has simply been called "a complete study". Perhaps the adoption of an asymptotic approach would at least highlight some minimum features of theological study and circumvent the problems posed by the concept of a "complete study".

The root of the minimum relationships that we are seeking lies within the structure of human history itself and particularly within the history of salvation and revelation which is co-extensive with it. Quoting Darlap "the beginning provides the totality with its essence and the consequent conditions of its realization."<sup>8</sup> If the Christ-event is the foundation of the history of salvation (and its special categorical mediation in the Church), then the unfolding of the history of salvation in Christ is in fact an unfolding which contains its own preconditions. Then strictly each new class in theology is to be seen as the unfolding of the history of salvation for this body of students and faculty at this moment of history and is subject to the hermeneutical preconditions of the history of salvation.

What exactly are these preconditions? From the material presented so far it is clear that they are part of the history of salvation. The Fathers of the Second Vatican Council stated that "God graciously arranged that the things he had once revealed for the salvation of all peoples should remain in their entirety throughout the ages . . ."<sup>9</sup> And then in the succeeding articles, they defined the particular way in which what was revealed 'remained' in history.

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In doing this they reiterated the sources for the hermeneutic of faith as the Scriptures, Tradition and the Magisterium of the Church.

The Scriptures and Tradition “. . . are like a mirror, in which the Church, during its pilgrim journey here on earth, contemplates God..”<sup>10</sup> With regard to the Magisterium, “. . . the task of giving an authentic interpretation of the Word of God, whether in its written form or in the form of Tradition, has been entrusted to the living teaching office of the Church alone.”<sup>11</sup>

And finally the Constitution concludes its second chapter on Divine Revelation with: “It is clear therefore, that, in the supremely wise arrangement of God, sacred Tradition, sacred Scripture and the Magisterium of the Church are so connected and associated that one of them cannot stand without the others. Working together each in its own way under the action of the Holy Spirit, they all contribute effectively to the salvation of souls.”<sup>12</sup> This is the fundamental unity mentioned in the introduction to this article.

Within the three quotations cited above lies the Catholic understanding of the foundations of theological hermeneutics. And the third quotation presents the self understanding of the Church of the actual categorical historical mediation of the salvation and revelation of God in Christ through the mutual relation of the Scriptures, the Tradition of the Church and the Magisterium. The next question is how they are to be utilized in actual theological reflections?

### **The Hermeneutical Circle:**

There is a sense in which the search for knowledge in theology and its related disciplines can be described using the hermeneutic circle mentioned by Heidegger. Basically, human knowledge is a circular process of ever deepening return. Heidegger noted that there is a valid sense in which something has to be known about that which is to be known so that it may be more deeply understood<sup>13</sup> There is the implicit requirement of having to go “round the circle” a number of times, each time coming to a new grasp of the issue in question. Quoting Hoy “Understanding and with it the hermeneutic circle, becomes a condition of the possibility of human experience and human enquiry.”<sup>14</sup>

The particular nature of the hermeneutic circle for Catholic Theology is only to be found within the teaching of the Catholic Church. The Scriptures, the Tradition and the Magisterium hold the privileged place in the hermeneutic circle of Theology. In them we have the beginnings of the



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hermeneutic circle which also “passes through” the work of theologian and our own experience.

Taking the circle as the metaphor of the theologians enterprise, then all circles which are traced by theologians and those who teach theology must pass through the privileged point of the unity of these three dimensions of the Church. (This is really a re-expression of the teaching of Vatican Two.) These three realities represent a single “point” on the circle because of their close interrelation. And this point is not simply one amongst many but rather the point which defines theology as being theological, ecclesial and Catholic. And only this unity supports a hermeneutic of service to salvation, “it helps them to live their lives in holiness and increase their faith.”<sup>15</sup> Theology is not merely information but becomes part of the whole economy of salvation.

In practice this means that the Scriptures, Tradition and Magisterium of the Church have a non-trivial and also unavoidable role to play in the presentation and discussion of theological material. This conclusion follows simply from the intrinsic nature of human history and the particular data of the historicity of the Catholic Church.

Then for all individuals, all the hermeneutic circles that they follow in the unfolding of their own self-realization will involve their own experiences and individual lives of faith. Yet they only come to their most successful self-interpretation to the degree that they include the privileged point mentioned above.

In historical terms this means, in the Catholic Church at any rate, that we discover Christ and ourselves in the unfolding of our personal and collective histories of transcendence. But this self-realization is not an adjunct to our personal and collective histories but actually occurs within it.

The argument so far requires that we see our theology courses as lying within the hermeneutic and authoritative network of texts and people and ecclesial communities. On the simplest level, by the very nature of the hermeneutic, this precludes any solipsistic claim to the truth, but more subtly and of infinitely more value to us, such a hermeneutic uncovers the sheer breadth of the historical reality which is needed to even begin to respond to the fullness of Christ (the inexhaustible source of truth!) This makes theology and the teaching of theology enormously complex disciplines.

Many different areas of human endeavor and historical record have to be accorded their true weight. Teachers of theology have to present theology with due regard for Scriptures, the Tradition of the Church and the Magisterium of the Church as well as the historical context of the students.

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### The Part-Whole Relationship

An aspect of the hermeneutic circle is the part-whole relationship. And this is particularly apt for the description of the relation between the different parts of theology and the fundamental unity that they are seeking to describe. Quoting Hoy “. . . part and whole are related in a circular way; in order to understand the whole, it is necessary to understand the parts, while to understand the parts it is necessary to have some understanding of the whole.”<sup>16</sup> When the Vatican Council noted that the Scriptures, Tradition and the Magisterium stood in such a relationship that they could not stand apart, they had in fact described the ultimate part-whole relation. The Constitution on Divine Revelation implies that only as such a unity can the Scriptures, the Tradition and the Magisterium fittingly cooperate with the Spirit of God. So behind the theological proposition about the relation of the parts to the whole lies the clue to the most substantial way to teach theology if it is truly to participate in the workings of the Spirit of God in the world.

In teaching theology we need to present both the innate structures of the particular discipline (the “part” above) and their relation to the whole. The whole is the entire economy of salvation with its privileged hermeneutical focus in the Scriptures, the Tradition and the Magisterium. Thus one can argue that each subdivision of systematic theology will be presented within an hermeneutical circle including the above privileged point. Ecclesiology, for example, needs constant reference to and a hermeneutic of Scripture, Tradition and the Magisterium. Likewise with the treatments of the Scriptures, the Tradition of the Church and the Magisterium, the each have to ‘pass’ through’ our privileged point. And so with liturgy and so on.

If the arguments are valid up to this point, then our most authentic mode of reflecting on the economy of salvation is the third one proposed by Gadamer in which we accept that we are “standing within a still operant history”<sup>17</sup> And it is this history which does not stand apart from us at some distance but it rather gives us the means for truly owning the present by coming to a proper relationship with the past and accepting the claim that it lays upon us.

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### **Some Conclusions:**

The primary conclusion about teaching theology is that the Scriptures, Tradition and the Magisterium need to be included, if they are to be “operant”. And the inclusion has to be precisely in Gadamer’s third mode so that they are part of the theologizing which takes place in the classroom. Relegating them to the status of the “mere” past or imposing the criteria of the present as absolute, will render the course as some other academic pursuit and not theology. This apparently very obvious conclusion is the consequence of the peculiar nature of the class in theology. It is an event within the history of salvation.

Secondly, we can say that such a class is a particular historical mediation of revelation in this time and place. In fact according to Rahner: “when Christianity is interpreted exactly according to its own self-understanding it understands itself as the process by which the history of revelation reaches quite a definite and successful level of historical reflection . . . .”<sup>18</sup> From the philosophy of history and the teaching of the Vatican Council, our interpretation proposes the hermeneutical circle as defined above is indeed the way to such a self-understanding. Utilizing this hermeneutic in a class of theology, we can reach a successful uncovering of the history of revelation at least potentially. This is a high goal indeed for a class in theology.

A third conclusion is that the Scriptures, Tradition and the Magisterium are not simply other sources of information to be put on the same level with the reflections of a particular theologian. As good as the work of individual theologians may be, and the Church cannot do without them, their work does not define the “privileged point” and consequently someone could follow a completely different hermeneutic circle and “miss” a particular theologian completely. However there are many ways in which the work of theologians does become part of the privileged point due to its being used in the teaching of a council and so on.

A further conclusion suggests itself. The criterion of the hermeneutic circle as defined above is an extremely demanding criterion to apply to the teaching of theology.

And finally, classes of theology do not start *ex nihilo*. When the classes begin, they already have nascent within them in the individual and collective faith-histories of their students and professors the conditions of the possibility of doing theology and not science of religions. Thus at the very

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beginning of the class, both students and professors are situated within an historical context which is more than a stage on which to present a play. It is an historical datum which in the most optimum conditions offers and indeed imposes a trajectory of hermeneutical endeavor and discovery onto the class in which they can unfold their true future as sons and daughters of God.

**ENDNOTES**

<sup>1</sup> See David Couzens Hoy, *The Critical Circle*, (University of California Press, 1982), p. 63.

<sup>2</sup> See Alasdair McIntyre, "The Mission of a Dominican House of Studies in Contemporary North America." An address delivered at the Dominican House of Studies, Washington, D.C., November 14, 1991, p. 2.

<sup>3</sup> See Karl Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith*, (Darton, Longman and Todd, 1978), p. 142 .

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*, p. 161.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid*, p. 622.

<sup>6</sup> See Adolf Darlap and Jorg Splett, "History", *Encyclopedia of Theology*, Karl Rahner (ed) (Burns and Oats, 1975), p. 622.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid*, p. 622.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid*, p. 321.

<sup>9</sup> See Constitution on Divine Revelation, Vatican Council II, *Austin Flannery* (ed.) (Liturgical Press, 1979), Article 7.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid*, Article 7

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid*, Article 10.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid*, Article 10.

<sup>13</sup> See Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, (Harper and Row, 1962), p. 194.

<sup>14</sup> See Hoy, p. vii.

<sup>15</sup> See Constitution on Divine Revelation, Article 8.

<sup>16</sup> See Hoy, p. vii.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid*, p. 63.

<sup>18</sup> See Rahner, p. 146.

**THE REVOLUTION IN JEWISH-CHRISTIAN RELATIONS:  
IS IT TO BE FOUND IN CHRISTIAN THEOLOGICAL  
SEMINARIES?  
A PRELIMINARY STUDY**

**B. A. Asbury**

**The Goals and Purposes of the Survey**

The past quarter century has seen some rather remarkable changes in relations between Christians and Jews. Vatican II and *Nostra Aetate* (1965) made significant contributions to opening a new dialogue between Jews and Christians of many traditions, including in recent years some evangelical Protestant denominations. Equally significant contributions have been made by developments in Biblical scholarship. In addition, in the past two decades Holocaust Studies have emerged as a discipline or several sub-disciplines in academic institutions, and they have frequently focused on the relation of the churches to the murder of European Jewry by the Nazi Third Reich.

A consensus seems to have emerged among Christian churches in the West that Jews are no longer to be considered objects of conversion but are now to be viewed as partners in dialogue. Jews and Christians have responded by engaging in that dialogue, and the partners to it have agreed that there is much to overcome. There have been centuries of hostility and suffering inflicted on Jews by Christians. There are accumulated grievances, misunderstandings, and suspicions. Both sides have had abundant rationales for being unwilling to engage in changing the relationships. Indeed, change would not have been possible had there not been a Christian reexamination of basic theological assumptions of supersession and conversion. Such a reexamination became necessary as the Holocaust forced an awareness that Christian churches had contributed to and abetted the evil set loose upon the Jews in Europe.

Dialogue in the 1990's, therefore, takes place in the context of a willingness in some Christian churches to change attitudes, theology, and institutional practices. A parallel context for dialogue has been the Jewish will and determination to survive as a people and the establishment of the State of Israel as a homeland for Jews. Figuring in the background of both is the reality of the Holocaust, which poses problems, however different, to the historical self-understandings of both the Jewish and Christian traditions.

What has emerged from the dialogue so far is a deep seriousness on the part of many Christians to understand and affirm Judaism and the survival of

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the Jewish community. That many Christians have affirmed the integrity of Judaism as a mandate of Christian doctrine gives evidence that a new state of relationships has become possible. That many Christians have come to see as a tenet of their ethical systems that Jews must survive and have the right to a homeland bears witness to a sea-change in thinking.

However, these changes have taken place at a professional level of religious leadership, among scholars, and among those who have participated in the widespread inter-faith dialogue groups in a great many of our cities. The positive developments in scholarship and dialogue have not yet produced widespread changes of consciousness or belief in much of the clergy and the laity in a number of ecclesiastical traditions.

When the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. and the United Church of Christ proposed new position papers and policies on Jewish and Christian relations, there were “firestorms” of protest within both denominations. Doctrines of supersessionism, triumphalism, and exclusivism were not to be easily overcome. The proposals revealed that the disputes and hostilities that have characterized Christian attitudes toward Jews remain deeply imbedded in the life and thought of Christian people. Both denominations are engaging in further study and have issued additional documents to try to gain greater acceptance for the theological changes advocated.

Clearly, a new day has not yet dawned in Jewish and Christian relations in the lives of many Christians. The theological revisions and the developments in Biblical studies have not easily or widely produced changes in the liturgical language of Holy Week services or of widely-attended Passion Plays or even in the weekly use of assigned biblical texts. While no one should expect drastic changes in so short a time, it seems fair to measure the churches’ progress in this matter against that made in other areas such as sexism, racism, homosexuality, etc. Those areas have also created storms of controversy, but the churches have dealt forthrightly with the needed changes in consciousness, beliefs, language, and institutional practices. It would be difficult to imagine a major Christian body where those interests were not near the top of the agenda. Several of them have expressed a determination to make changes and to educate laity and clergy alike for a new day in regard to women, ethnic minorities, oppressive movements, and destructive stereotypes. Controversy does not seem to have qualified that determination.

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Frequently, these latter issues have arisen first in the communities of theological education. Sexism, racism, oppression, abortion, and homosexuality have been widely debated among seminary faculties and student bodies. Have these same communities also been in the forefront of considering the relationship of Christianity and Judaism? Have theological schools shown an equal willingness to lead in regard to Judaism and to place the matter on the educational and doctrinal agenda? I think not, based on my experiences as a university chaplain and director of religious affairs in a non-sectarian university.

Over the past twenty-five years, my position has placed me in a direct relationship with eight ecclesiastical agencies, one Jewish, one Roman Catholic, six Protestant (of which two are "evangelical"), and with three para-church agencies. All appoint chaplains or professional staff to the University and seek either university "affiliation" or "recognition," respectively. Such a status entails demonstrating to the University that the proposed persons have the training and ability to accept and work within the University's pluralistic framework and to respect the religious traditions represented within the community.

Many of those who are interviewed in the appointment process are recent graduates of theological seminaries, and they have given impetus to my concern. Only rarely does one find a candidate who is educated or personally prepared to work on a non-sectarian campus. Most candidates seem never to have questioned assumptions of exclusivity, supersessionism, and triumphalism. When the interview broaches the subject of the Christian relationship to Judaism, I am struck mostly by abysmal ignorance of Judaism.

Wondering if this were an isolated experience, a Southern phenomenon if you will, I have inquired of colleagues in the Association for College and University Religious Affairs (ACURA) and have found that the experience is widespread. Finding prospective campus ministers who understand and respect Judaism and other faith traditions is no easy matter. Based on this admittedly limited evidence, several of us in ACURA have concluded that today's seminarians learn virtually nothing about post-biblical Judaism or about revisions in Christian theology being undertaken in the light of the dialogue and the Holocaust.

To test the validity of this conclusion, which indicates a serious lacuna in Christian theological education, I decided to conduct a survey of selected theological schools and professors. A number of colleagues at Vanderbilt Divinity School gave me guidance in developing the nature and scope of my inquiry. I also consulted with other leaders in theological education and with



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scholars whose works I had studied. Among them were Father John Pawlikowski of Chicago's Catholic Theological Union and Professor John Roth of Claremont's McKenna College. Advice was also sought from agencies and persons involved in the Jewish/Christian dialogue, including The Jewish Chautauqua Society and Baltimore's Institute on Christian-Jewish Studies.

Everyone I consulted gave encouragement and helped me to compile a list of persons to contact in a preliminary inquiry. The suggestions I received were used to design the survey form and to insure that it would be sent to Catholics and Protestants of various positions along the spectrum of theological education. I also chose to include several scholars who are not involved directly in theological education, but who are, however, prominent in Jewish/Christian dialogue and Holocaust Studies and have a wide acquaintance with the survey's area of concern. These scholars include Professors Mary Boys of Boston College, Maria Harris of Fordham University, Harry James Cargas of Webster College, and Dr. Gabriel Moran of New York University.

In February 1991, survey forms were mailed to those selected. Of 32 forms sent out, 26 were returned.

## **Findings**

### *I. Instruction in Judaism*

The survey presupposed that what theological students preparing for Christian ministry learn of Judaism should be reflected in course offerings.

The survey disclosed a positive and negative side in regard to courses in Judaism in early Christian times, the intertestamental period, and modern times. The negative side is that most theological schools do not offer such courses. However, most of the schools are connected to universities, institutes, or programs to do. There were only a few respondents who simply said that no such courses were available to the students in their program of studies.

Cross-registration and academic credit arrangements are readily available in all but two of the schools surveyed. However, such courses, whether in a seminary's program itself or available in other academic departments or schools, are not required of students in ministerial programs. There were three qualifications to this latter finding. At Wesley Theological

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Seminary, until 1989, there was a world religion's requirement which included Judaism. The course was suspended because there was no permanent faculty appointment in that area of study. At the Catholic Theological Union in Chicago, a course in Second Temple Judaism is required. At Vanderbilt Divinity School courses in Judaism are part of a cluster requirement entitled "World Religions and Interreligious Dialogue." This cluster lists nine courses on Judaism and one course in Holocaust studies among the twenty-two listings. However, students could satisfy the requirement with only three hours credit and without taking a course on Judaism. Moreover, in 1990-91, only the course on the Holocaust was offered, and it was cross-listed from the College's Department of Religious Studies. At Vanderbilt's Divinity School, the offerings are currently more "on paper" than actually taught.

Courses in Judaism are available from related departments or centers at such places as Yale and the G.T.U.<sup>1</sup> In such cases, it is possible for a school to "encourage" ministerial students to take the courses as electives. The correspondence in the consultative process found language of "encouragement" to be used frequently by administrators and in catalogue statements. The survey revealed that such "encouragement" is an empty language. Where one dean emphasized it as policy, a faculty member of the school indicated that it did not happen. "Encouragement" for ministerial students to take courses in Judaism is for the most part a formality. Individual faculty advisors may give informal encouragement, but that is seen by most respondents as sporadic at best. A respondent at one seminary holds that most of her/his faculty don't see Judaism as an important subject while a respondent elsewhere says her/his school holds as a general aim that all its students should have a knowledge of Judaism and that the faculty knows to encourage them to enroll in available offerings. Overall, courses in Judaic studies are not emphasized as important to education for Christian ministry.

Indeed, those who use the language of "encouragement" do not attempt to evaluate its effectiveness. Records of enrollment and cross-registration are not kept by most schools and where they are, they have not yet been used to evaluate the policy.

In theological schools, in fact there is no Jewish "bloc" or "lobby." There is virtually no Jewish presence. Rabbis and other teachers of Judaic studies are likely to be adjunct, part-time appointments without voting rights in faculty decisions and without any significant advisory role. The respondents also indicated that most theological faculties have no members

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who have received a substantial part of their education in Jewish academic institutions. (In universities and theological consortia, those who are Jewish or “Jewish-educated” are affiliated with departments and centers separate from the theological faculty.) Nevertheless, a significant number of the schools have one or more faculty members who have a publishing record in the areas under discussion here, and given their personal and professional interests, they are likely to be the advisors who encourage students to study Judaism. Unfortunately, such encouragement may lead to their being labeled by some of their peers as “Judaizers” or “house Christians of the Zionists.”

Most ministerial students, according to the respondents, learn about Judaism from “Old Testament” courses and, therefore, learn little, if anything, of post-biblical Judaism. It is worth noting here that Christian theological schools continue to use the terminology of “Old Testament” and “New Testament.” Even professors who personally use “Hebrew Bible,” “Christian Scriptures,” etc. are assigned the rank of “Professor of Old Testament.” Such usage does not indicate the content of the courses, but it may provide a clue about theological education’s *m ntalit * regarding the developments in the Jewish/ Christian dialogue.

On the other hand, there is little doubt that many courses in both “Old” and “New” Testament are taught now by professors who are sensitive to the questions addressed in this paper. They report that they make an attempt to alert students to the anti-Judaic biases in Christian Scripture and in Christian interpretations of Jewish Scripture. However, those professors themselves are aware that enlightened instruction cannot by itself educate their students about Judaism or the Jewish people.

Some respondents indicate that students may also learn about Judaism in courses on church history, theology, ethics, and pastoral care, but the emphasis is on “may.” Others say that their students gain no “formal knowledge” of Judaism, and that may well be consistent with those who replied that their students learned most “unfortunately, from the culture and from their churches.” One scholar replied, “who knows?”, but another pointed to his or her seminary’s “annual Sabbath weekend experience.” In any case, all the respondents seem to agree that whatever theological students learn of Judaism is unpredictable, minimal, and the result of “haphazard” processes.

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Some of those processes, however, have proved to be quite encouraging. With the assistance of the Hillel Foundation or the Jewish Chatauqua Society, several schools present annual lectures or courses on Judaism. Some do so on an *ad hoc* basis while others such as The School of Theology at the University of the South and Vanderbilt Divinity School do so on a regular basis. Berkeley's Graduate Theological Union Center for Jewish Studies sponsors such lectures without the stimulus of outside financial assistance, but it is unique. The very fact of the assistance may be taken to emphasize its importance in getting students exposed to Judaism, or it may be taken to question theological education's own internal sense of priority regarding the study of Judaism. Only Chicago's Catholic Theological Union and Union Theological Seminary in New York indicated current active fund-raising programs in order to have or expand such offerings. Vanderbilt Divinity School has been active in building its library holdings in Judaic Studies and is seeking an endowment for a chair in Judaic Studies.

Most schools continue to approach Christian/Jewish concerns without clear goals. Many faculty members participate in dialogue groups in their communities, but participation seems to be primarily a matter of personal predilection. Some of the schools have continuing education programs that focus on the dialogue between Jews and Christians. New York University has an annual lecture. Vanderbilt is well into its second decade of annual lectures on the Holocaust, and for some years offered a course on Judaism and Christianity taught by Professor Walter Harrelson and Rabbi Randall Falk.<sup>2</sup> Gordon College considers itself a "leader in this area" with rabbis and inter-faith conferences often on campus. At Yale Divinity School some students participate in a dialogue program under N.C.C.J.'s auspices. The Catholic Theological Union encourages faculty participation in the dialogue program of the archdiocese. The activity in this area would seem to indicate possibilities of getting a wider student involvement and an avenue of education in Judaism outside the classroom. It may be that an active policy of "encouragement" could build on substantial faculty interests in Jewish/Christian dialogue outside the seminaries themselves.

Left as matters now stand, students in America's Protestant theological schools are unlikely to be aware of *Nostre Aetate* or of positions taken by their own denominations. Roman Catholic seminarians seem to stand a far better chance of learning about *Nostre Aetate*, but they are not

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likely to learn of parallel changes in other Christian churches. Those who do learn about changing Christian doctrine and teachings about Judaism and the Jewish people will probably do so through extra-curricula lectures and participation in Jewish-Christian dialogue groups.

### II. *The Problem of Terminology*

It has been indicated earlier that most theological schools continue to refer to the Jewish Scriptures as the “Old Testament.” The respondents overwhelmingly themselves expressed their view that this is “unfortunate.” In some schools, there is a bifurcation between official terminology of Old Testament and the individual instructors’ preferred terminology of Hebrew Bible. One professor in a liberal seminary indicated that he or she primarily used “Old Testament”, adding “I am opposed to terminology which seeks to erase

particularity as well as language which excludes, or which presupposes a commonness which doesn’t exist.” On the other hand, one evangelical respondent uses “Te Nak or Jewish Bible or Hebrew Scriptures or First or Older Testament”, suggesting imaginative variations but not revealing whether they arise from personal preference or school policy. It is most likely the former, because very few schools have examined the questions formally. Vanderbilt Divinity School seems to be an exception where “Hebrew Bible” has been adopted as its terminology.

Gordon College alone of the responding schools does not have a stated policy about the use of language pertaining to race, sexuality, etc. Some statements, such as the one at Wesley Theological Seminary, have referred only to gender, but a new statement at Wesley will include race and handicapped conditions. The statement of the School of Theology at the University of the South contains the following clause:

*“Attention is particularly drawn to the dangers of unwitting anti-semitism that arise from misuse of certain parts of the Scriptures and the Christian tradition.”* (emphasis added)

Its significance is heightened by the responses which indicate that most ministerial students learn what they know about Judaism from their

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biblical courses. Indeed, all but one of the seminary respondents indicated that they would like to see such a clause added at their schools. The one exception was the scholar who expressed the concern about erasing "particularity", and he or she would favor the clause "if my other concerns were met."

Vanderbilt Divinity School has no such clause in its statement about the use of language. Its catalogue, however, acknowledges "the close and special relationship between Judaism and Christianity" and expresses its desire for students to gain "an appropriate and sympathetic understanding of the Jewish tradition." Catalogue statements, of course, receive far less attention than the statement on language policy which each professor is expected to articulate each semester in each class.

The University of the South's School of Theology would seem, then, to have offered a potentially valuable contribution to getting the issue of anti-Judaic bias into student consciousness. The survey did not explore the means by which such an inclusion would be made. Presumably, it would take the interest and commitment of a faculty member who saw its importance and pressed for its adoption. The inclusion is not as likely to result from a student initiative parallel to initiatives related to gender, race, and sexual orientation unless some members of the student body have already been influenced by the Jewish/Christian dialogue.

### III. *The Holocaust and Revision of Christian Thought*

This proved to be a considerably more difficult area to assess. The respondents gave briefer and less revealing answers. There may be less to disclose, but there was a general consensus: recent seminary students were likely to have little familiarity with revisions in Christian theology undertaken in the light of the Holocaust. In some instances, such as GTU's Center for Jewish Studies and Boston College, it was thought that graduate students would know more than theological students. At Claremont's McKenna College and Vanderbilt University, undergraduates were more likely to be informed. At Vanderbilt, where the course in Holocaust studies is offered by the College's Department of Religious Studies and cross-listed in the Divinity School, fewer than ten percent of those enrolled are Divinity students. While neither Divinity students nor faculty attend the Annual Holocaust Lectures in large numbers, the Divinity School has been a sponsor and contributor to the series since its inception in 1978-79. Both faculty and students regularly represent the school on the Holocaust Lectures Committee.

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Vanderbilt's program relating to the Holocaust is more extensive than any other school covered by the survey. Even so, the five Vanderbilt respondents agreed that few ministerial students either knew recent scholarship in this area or would recognize the names of the scholars themselves. The names most likely to be recognized "to some extent" included Paul van Buren, Emil Fackenheim, Johannes-Baptist Metz, and Rosemary Ruether. A "few" would also recognize the names of A. Roy and Alice Eckardt, Irving Greenberg, and Richard Rubenstein.

Only a few ministerial students in Berkeley's GTU enroll in the classes on the Holocaust or attend Holocaust symposia, and the respondents from Berkeley differ as to whether a small number of students gain some knowledge of revisions being undertaken in Christian thought. At Yale Divinity School, "the Holocaust is not a regular feature although it is a major concern for some students." Gordon College has an annual lecture on the Holocaust, and its extensive courses on Judaism address the relevance of the Holocaust for Christian thought. Yet, revisions undertaken in theology are unlikely to be known by most students.

Several other respondents, including those from Berkeley, indicate that the Holocaust is "mentioned" or "touched upon" in classes in theology, ethics, pastoral care, Christology, and biblical studies. Unlike the case at Gordon, these respondents do not indicate that this takes place on a regular or continuing basis or that it translates into student familiarity with this area of scholarship. Nevertheless, if such inclusion is widespread, it may indicate a promising area of development. That is, the inclusion of the Holocaust in regular seminary courses may be a far more effective and efficient way of introducing ministerial students to it and its challenges than specialized courses, lectures, and symposia. While this approach has its drawbacks, it might well be argued that this is the most germane way to include important material in an already crowded curriculum. At the present time, however, even this approach is "haphazard."

Until the Holocaust's influence on Christian theology and ethics becomes a part of seminary life, liturgies and sermons on such themes in a school's worshipping community are unlikely to be a regular feature. The University Chapel at Sewanee has an annual Yom Ha Shoah service. Gordon College participates in a community Yom Ha Shoah service. The Claremont Colleges have such services. However, the worshipping communities within seminaries only rarely incorporate the Days of Remembrance of the Holocaust into their liturgical life. When such a liturgy does take place, it

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seems to be at the instigation of an aware and committed professor. That is the case with Dr. Denise Hopkins at Wesley Theological Seminary where she conducts a Yom Ha Shoah service every other year.

The survey indicates quite clearly that the Holocaust has not become a major intellectual concern in these schools and has not (yet) provided an impetus, as it has for a number of scholars, to place Christianity's relationship with Judaism at a priority level. There is one major exception--Union Theological Seminary in New York.

At Union, a totally new program has been proposed by Dr. Donald W. Shriver, Jr. together with Chancellor Ismar Schorsch of The Jewish Theological Seminary. Its title reads, "For the New Day in Jewish Christian Relations," and it arose directly out of the concerns covered in this survey. Its introductory remarks begin with addressing the issues raised by the Holocaust and the urgent need "for forging a new set of relations in which Jews and Christians do not merely tolerate, but instead knowingly affirm each other."

This pioneering effort has been proposed as "A Program of Joint Doctoral Studies, Teaching, and Public Education." Its professed goals are germane to the education of clergy, and the introduction states "that our teaching of future professional leaders--rabbis, ministers, teachers, scholars--will play only a partial role in shaping the future history of our two communities. But we believe that academic study, cooperation and professional formation are required for identifying and initiating such change, and we think it necessary to undertake this study on all levels of our curricula, to undertake it jointly, and to commit ourselves to undertaking it for an indefinitely extended future."

This proposed program "intends to prepare leaders of today and tomorrow for the new day in Jewish Christian relations." It has "three parts: a joint doctoral studies program, jointly taught courses for rabbinical and ministerial students, and public education." Professor Shriver provided a copy of this proposal as his reply to the survey. While it may not reveal current practices, it does reveal a vision of why there needs to be a "new day", and how achieving it might be approached in one fortunate location. It may end up offering clues to others in theological education about steps that may be taken toward that "new day", even where fewer resources exist.



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### **Suggestions and Recommendations**

Respondents were asked for suggestions both in regard to means of determining the sensitivity of those entering Christian ministry to contemporary Judaism and as to how theological education might best take seriously the questions addressed to Christianity by a vital Judaism and by the legacy of the Holocaust. This section of the survey evoked greater and more lengthy responses than the more factual sections. The concerns of the respondents were focused in their replies. The following is a summary of their suggestions and observations.

--There should be a survey of students preparing for ministry in the churches. A survey taken upon entry to theological education and at the conclusion of studies would provide valuable insight into what future Christian clergy knew, thought, or felt about Judaism and the Jewish people and whether and how they had been affected in their studies. This would provide a basis for higher awareness and recommended changes.

--A survey of entering and graduating seminarians might well include other issues such as racism, sexism, and globalization.

--Seminaries should move beyond a passive policy of “encouragement”, moving courses in these areas from the margins to the center of the curricula. A course on the Holocaust should, at least, be available to students.

--Encouraging faculty members to incorporate these concerns into existing courses may be more productive than straining resources to add new courses and new requirements.

--Educate the faculties of seminaries on the issues by using faculty retreats and/or annual speakers or seminars. Without greater awareness or a change in attitude, change is not likely.

--Where resources do not exist in seminaries, lecturers and resources available through such agencies as the Jewish Chautauqua Society should be utilized in instructing students in Judaism and in Jewish/Christian relations.

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--The Association of Theological Schools should widely circulate to its members at least two model syllabi--one on "Judaism Today," the other on "The Holocaust in Theological Perspective." Alternatively or additionally, distribute models or suggestions on incorporating these areas into existing courses in various disciplines. The ATS might also distribute the joint Union/J.T.S. proposal, "A New Day in Jewish Christian Relations."

--Seminary liturgical calendars should include an annual memorial service for Jewish victims of the Holocaust.

--Seminaries should find a new terminology that would cease to designate the scriptures as Old Testament and New Testament.

--A clause similar to that adopted at the School of Theology at the University of the South should be added to seminary statements.

--Expand any future survey to include graduate schools of religious education and pastoral ministry, especially those run by Catholic universities."

The enactment of these recommendations would provide initial steps in educating people to ministry in settings where Jews, Muslims, Buddhists, Catholics, Protestants, and others are expected to try to understand and respect one another.

There ought to be a sense of urgency about enacting them if we are truly serious about overcoming a lacuna in theological education and ensuring an education for ministry that addresses the "new day" in Jewish/Christian relations.

**ENDNOTES**

<sup>1</sup> In almost every instance, the critical courses are offered by the university in other departments or at affiliated centers. Students pursuing graduate degrees seem to be the ones who enroll in them.

<sup>2</sup> A book has resulted from their course: *Jews and Christians: A Troubled Family* (Abingdon Press, 1990). The future of the course is in doubt. Both Harrelson and Falk are now retired.

# **POLITICAL CORRECTNESS, THE REFORMED TRADITION, AND PLURALISM: IMPLICATIONS FOR THEOLOGICAL EDU- CATION**

**Glenn R. Bucher**  
**Richard I. Deibert**  
**Patricia Dutcher-Walls**  
**Robert M. Franklin**  
**Beverly R. Gaventa**  
**George W. Stroup**

*Editor's Note: This article is a result of a consultation at Columbia Theological Seminary. The contributions are all separately written and will be presented in the following order. The Introduction by Glenn R. Bucher, Part I by Richard I. Deibert, Part II by Patricia Dutcher-Walls, Part III by Robert M. Franklin, Part IV by Beverly R. Gaventa and Part V by George W. Stroup.*

## **Introduction**

A seminary inauguration is a ritualistic occasion for celebration, remembrance, and anticipation. It is so for the initiate as well as the academic and ecclesiastical communities conducting the initiation. Inaugural times are also in-between times: between one administration and the next, between an institutional past and a future, and between old and new ways of understanding an institution's purpose and mission.

The title of my October 1, 1991 inaugural address as Vice President for Academic Affairs/Dean of Faculty at Columbia Theological Seminary was "Sabbath of Transition: The Education of a Practical Theologian." The biblical texts which provided a focus for the address were Numbers 12:17-20, 25-33 and Luke 10:23, two texts which portray the condition of God's faithful people as marginal and in-between. The theme of the address was that marginal or liminal times of in-betweenness - theologically, sociologically, and chronologically - are the rule, not the exception, for those whose identity is defined by the Jewish and Christian traditions. And, therefore, it is by and for the condition of in-betweenness that the education of a practical theologian - those preparing for various ministries - should be shaped.

"Political Correctness, the Reformed Tradition, and Pluralism: Implications for Theological Education" was the theme of a Seminary Forum held in connection with the inaugural events. Though not intended as a response to the inaugural address, the Forum was designed to identify a

current issue in theological education, an issue which itself illustrates the in-betweenness of theological education.

In the five statements published here, political correctness (PC for short!), various understandings of the Reformed tradition (since Columbia Theological Seminary is a denominational seminary of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.), and pluralism are brought into lively conversation with one another. Each of the authors employ a different organizing theme for their remarks: community (Deibert), First Amendment rights (Dutcher-Walls), the stranger (Franklin), inclusive language (Gaventa), and ideology (Stroup).

I commend these statements to you, the reader. All of them advance an understanding of the theme of the Inaugural Forum and, indirectly, the inaugural address. And all of them contribute to our understanding of how the education of a practical theologian can be informed by the conversation between “Political Correctness, the Reformed Tradition, and Pluralism.”

## **Part I**

I deeply appreciate the invitation to participate in this Forum and I am heartened that a pastor’s perspective is valued in such a conversation. Perhaps I was asked because of my context, where language sensitivity, the Reformed tradition, and pluralism are all unusually valued.

Seventeen months ago, Elizabeth - my wife - and I were called as a “clergy couple” to help organize a new Presbyterian congregation, which would (they said yearningly in the interview) be characterized by its spirit of inclusivity and openness in a city not well known for either, Montgomery, Alabama. The immediate challenge to put all our seminary-induced ideals to the test was irresistible.

Seventeen months later, Immanuel Presbyterian Church has a little more than one hundred persons, virtually all of whom are educated, none of whom live below the poverty level, fifteen of whom are African-American, six of whom are inter-racially married, one of whom has a history of psychotic illness, and one of whom suffers from quadriplegia.

Now these are a few things one, young, “marinating” Presbyterian pastor, in that context, is learning about the question at hand:

Number one: God is bigger than I thought. Or, the university would prefer, truth is more complex than I thought. My hunch is that this is the whole problem in a nutshell. Genuine multiculturalism complicates the

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pursuit of truth almost infinitely; it means I really do have to listen more carefully; it means there really are more points of view than I thought.

Number two, and a direct corollary of number one: I am smaller than I thought. This seems to me to be the great contribution of modernity, but it is so damn frightening, especially to those of us who enjoy being the center of attention at the party rather than just one voice among many. The role that fear and insecurity are playing in this jargon-laden talk about “correctness” cannot be overestimated.

Number three, and a comfort in light of numbers one and two: this bigger-than-I-thought God, or more-complex-than-I-thought truth, is more responsibly pursued in a community than it is by individuals. George Will doesn’t like the word “community.” That’s too bad, because it’s here to stay. Here is the opportunity to stop fearing and fighting one another, or feeling our space cramped by one another, and to begin to depend upon one another as must happen on any journey. While it’s bewildering at times, there really is “safety in numbers” when it comes to seeking God, or pursuing truth.

Number four: a genuine “community” is a collection of human beings with distinct points of view who agree to share some “reason for being.” The more points of view there are in a particular community, the more difficult it will be to share a “reason for being” together. But if (a big “if”) a “reason for being” can be shared, the community will be more richly textured, and if I might add from my experience, there will be more occasions for grace.

Number five, and this will be somewhat hard to swallow, I suspect: if it is true that God is more responsibly sought in a community, and that community is more richly textured when it contains as many points of view as it can hold, then the age of denominationalism may finally be over. In fact, this Forum might have been better titled, “The Shaking of the Foundations.” We truly may have arrived at the day when it will be largely a historical reference to say Columbia Theological Seminary was given birth in 1823 by the Presbyterian Church. But then we have to go on to explain that Columbia’s much broader student/faculty constituency and curriculum simply cohere in Reformed tradition and worship. Likewise, the day may already have come when we say Immanuel Presbyterian Church in Montgomery, Alabama, was organized on the 23rd day of June by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), but at best, that simply means its prevailing character is Reformed. And in the long run, shouldn’t we even be looking toward the day when “Reformed” is itself more difficult to distinguish? Isn’t

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there something transcendent in our most regular confession, “I believe in the holy catholic church?”

Number six, until that day in number five comes when it is difficult to distinguish the Reformed tradition because of the holy catholic church, let us hope that the following “essentials” survive, because they really will make this challenging journey of multiculturalism easier:

a. The first essential to ease our journey into multiculturalism is that we continue to share a common text - the Bible - which we regard as “authoritative,” which simply means that it’s always a part of our conversation about faith and life;

b. The second essential to ease our journey is that we retain (or learn all over again in many cases) the regular centrality of Word and Sacrament in our worship. Whatever else our worship looks or feels like, let it cohere around an encounter with Jesus Christ in the unified proclamation from the pulpit and the table. And don’t miss the word “regular.” I am convinced from experience that Christian worship which relentlessly (that means weekly) holds word and sacrament together is more epistemologically satisfying today and more capable of uniting multiple cultures or points of view. And ironically, it is perfectly consistent with the Reformed tradition!

c. The third essential to ease our journey is that we preserve our inclination to confess the faith. Of course confessing the faith is more difficult in a multicultural community! But we must not stop trying to articulate our common theological convictions; the effort not only sensitizes us toward one another, but provides room for God to reform us and keep us true to our deeper identity, “the church reformed and always being reformed.”

d. The fourth essential to ease our journey is that we continue to practice our conviction that God alone is Lord of the conscience. This may be the only point at which I am sympathetic to those who wantonly label people “political correctionists.” I disagree with them that it is possible for human beings to be “too sensitive” to one another, but I do agree that it is generally not helpful to legislate the conscience. Why not save legislation for those instances which are demonstrably harmful to the community (a perilous

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judgement indeed!) and let the far more effective behavior-modifier work its wonder - personal examples of God actually lording over one's conscience?

I do pray that these essential tenets of the Reformed tradition will hang around a long, long while. They have been enormously helpful to two young pastors struggling to hold a modestly multicultural Christian community together in an immodestly conservative Montgomery, Alabama. And I suspect they will also work wonders for the multicultural theological education that, by God's good grace, is now our golden opportunity.

### Part II

With such loaded terminology in the title of this Forum, it's hard to know where to begin. But I find it helpful to start with the middle term, the Reformed Tradition, as that is where I, and perhaps we, consciously claim to stand. What is it about the Reformed tradition that I see as helpful in approaching the other two terms, political correctness and pluralism?

In the preparations for and discussions of the new Brief Statement of Faith of the Presbyterian Church, among the historic doctrines of Reformed faith mentioned, two aspects were highlighted that have bearing here. First, the Reformed tradition has always included a willingness to address the present moment, to give fresh expression to what we believe in each time and place. This willingness includes an awareness of and response to current concerns in the life and ministry of the church. Secondly, the Reformed tradition contains an ongoing insistence that the renewal of the church must become visible in the transformation of human lives and societies. This means, as I take it, that our faith in the saving power of Christ is not an intellectual or disembodied belief but a lived reality that is meant to be visible and make a difference in our and other's lives.

Taking these two elements seriously, I start with the assumption that those of us in the Reformed tradition are ready to engage our current context. I further assume that our current context has been affected by the related world views expressed in the terms "political correctness" and "pluralism."

Their impact can be briefly described in the phrase that the world has changed—or at least, our awareness of the world has changed. I speak this "our" here self-consciously as a member of the dominant American culture and power, a background I cannot deny and which I find helpful to identify even as I am critical of it. The reigning world view held by the prevailing



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American culture has been that we represent the culmination of an unequalled tradition of Western thought and civilization. And while the world is composed of numerous peoples and cultures, each of them is in some way to be measured against our superior and highly desirable heritage, culture and privileges.

I find myself persuaded, however, as the realities of diversity and pluralism sink in, that our culture neither is monolithic nor has any real a priori superiority other than gained by the simple fact that we, the winners have so far written history. In the much more variegated world that has presented itself, we are finding that African-American, Native American, and other Third world peoples have long and rich traditions and histories that have lasted in spite of our efforts to degrade, deny, ignore or suppress them; that other religions contain truth claims and world views and religious practices that provide meaning and purpose for their followers quite well, thank you; that people of other cultural and religious heritages don't need or want our world view imposed on them but in fact, that we may have a lot to learn from them.

So the Reformed tradition urges me to address the present moment and insists that renewal in the church must become visible in the transformation of human lives. And I find myself persuaded that to the extent that our cultural worldview is self-centered and self-righteous, it is fast becoming absurd, if not immoral. So what then are the implications of the realities behind "political correctness" and "pluralism" for theological education within the Reformed tradition?

First, I think we do well to remember that the issues and questions that surround the terms "political correctness" and "pluralism" have much to do with power relations—who has power and who doesn't. For example, the term "political correctness" can be and has been used by some within the dominant culture to belittle or to deny legitimacy to the voices of those who have relatively less power in the system. Or, in the pluralism issue, the power question becomes, who sets the terms of the interaction? How can we talk with someone who has a very different language so that our language and terms do not hold unwitting power over the dialogue?

Secondly, as we pay attention to the changes wrought by a new awareness of diversity and pluralism with an understanding of power relations, I hold that the Biblical tradition, and the Reformed tradition as it acknowledges the authority of Scripture, contain an obligation to take seriously the voices of the less powerful. In the context of seminary education, taking seriously the

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voices and lives of the less powerful means to provide a forum for spokespersons for diverse groups and representatives of other religions and cultural traditions. It means being good listeners, learning to listen with delight to the other.

But to stop there only opens the door while not really changing the power structures behind the door. So taking diversity and pluralism seriously also means a clear and consistent policy of inclusiveness, of recruiting, hiring, admitting, promoting, and supporting people from the diverse cultural, ethnic, and religious backgrounds that make up the wider seminary community. For all the groups involved, it means becoming an ally with groups other than one's own—taking their agenda to heart, asking how people can work together and being willing to do the work. It means, finally, being willing to be changed by the inclusiveness one believes in. The terms of the dialogue may change, the goals of the institution may be transformed, one's power base may disappear.

But as challenging as that agenda is, in seminary education several other demands are made on us in this attention to diversity and pluralism. These increase the complexity of the commitment. I assume that one cannot listen and be an ally and be open to change in an uncritical fashion. The point cannot be to ignore or lose the best of one's own identity, or to lose the richness of cultural and religious heritages in some kind of lowest common denominator. Thus, as a Christian of the Presbyterian persuasion, I enter a dialogue with the world's religions not to give up the confession of Christ but to become somehow more aware of what my Christianity means as I learn about the other. Likewise as a student and scholar in the American academic context, I find that there may well be a need for participants on all sides of the conversations to be reminded of First Amendment rights and the demands and responsibilities of academic freedom. The processes of free debate in classrooms, academic journals and forums, as well as in the demonstrations on the seminary lawn and in administration buildings, are all an intrinsic part of the educational milieu today.

Further, my own experience tells me that all participants need to be reminded of the truth that Martin Luther King Jr. expressed from the Birmingham jail—that our means must be in harmony with the ends we seek. Such a commitment means it is as wrong to deny another the freedom to speak in the pursuit of diversity as it is in the pursuit of preserving the status quo. It signifies that the process and means of coming to value and be

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changed by diversity and pluralism must be expressive of the diversity and pluralism we seek.

In closing, I would add a footnote. Having stated these opinions and commitments that I feel so strongly, I have found my way to a paradox in my own position. For if I hold so dearly to the assumptions and commitments given me by my experience and background, am I really open to the diversity and pluralism of our world—a diversity that may, by my own admission, challenge and change who I am? If I wish to keep what I see as the best of my culture—an insistence on First Amendment rights, the consciousness of means and ends—am I also unwittingly imposing the power of the dominant culture?

I am optimistic or foolish enough to believe that this paradox can be lived with, that true dialogue and a valuing of diversity and pluralism are possible and desirable for all of us, no matter what our background. And I think the way through the paradox at least starts in the approach I have tried to use in this talk, in knowing and self-consciously stating who we are, what we value and what our commitments and assumptions are. In this way we can meet another with clarity and honesty and begin a process of listening and learning.

### **Part III**

I wish to advance four claims in the context of this Forum.

1. Those who make a big deal out of political correctness reveal a myopic understanding of our emerging, global reality and the type of education necessary for thriving therein. To the extent that conservative citizens are pleading for civility in academic and public dialogue about cultural difference and commonness, I support the ideal. We cannot learn much from one another unless we are willing to suspend our ever-ready counter arguments long enough to know what we're arguing about.

But to the extent that conservative educators and citizens seek to subvert the struggle for racial and gender justice by anxiously suppressing new perspectives and nonconformism, I see that project as a pathetic spasm of nostalgia for the old order. Most backward looking conservatives fail to understand the nature of our emerging world, and America's place in it. The modern project of extending the presence of Western science and technology to the entire world has succeeded. You can have a McDonalds' burger and

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coke on every continent of the global community. But, those who sponsored this exercise in Western Christian imperialism did not understand the kind of education necessary for guiding the global community into a more peaceful, cooperative future.

It seems to me that since the departure of Jimmy Carter from the White House, this nation (middle America) has not had a national moral leader, a person whose virtues and commitments were such that his or her mere presence represented a symbolic appeal for responsible citizenship. Consequently, as Peter Berger, Alisdair MacIntyre, Stanley Hauerwas, Parker Palmer and any number of other cultural interpreters observed, Americans turned away from the wider world of diversity and injustice, and turned inward to find meaning in local communities, communities which tended to be homogeneous, suspicious of strangers. In that milieu, influential thinkers such as Allan Bloom and E.D. Hirsch began to recall the halcyon days of the 1950s, America at peace, a growth economy, Negroes and women quietly pursuing their place in the American dream. The world which gave rise to our theological curricula no longer exists. What does this say about the adequacy of our entire enterprise?

2. The fact that we're having a society-wide debate about standards and identity suggests that we are in the middle of a difficult but healthy process. It is intellectual warfare. Competing visions are in conflict, choices have to be made, and everyone has to pay for, and live with, the result. No wonder this is the defining issue of higher education. But, if the force of the better argument does prevail, as liberal faith would contend, I think that we will survive this process.

Blacks, women, Latinos, Native Americans and Asians are now seeking to contribute to a more adequate education for a pluralistic, global future. By supplementing, not replacing, established classic texts, themes and hermeneutical perspectives, hopefully, we are crafting an educational process which will usher a better informed, honest and compassionate global citizen. Who knows, once we have political leaders with greater awareness of, and sensitivity to, religious and cultural differences and commonalities, we may be able to avoid unnecessary provocations, hostilities and even, some wars.

In the realm of theological education, this debate may create space for evangelicals and Pentecostals to join theological conversations from which they have been excluded by self-righteous liberals. It may prompt the seminary to examine the truth claims and cultic practices of Jehovah

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Witnesses and Black Muslims with the same degree of curiosity we have brought to Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism.

3. The philosophical issues which underlie the political correctness debate are fundamentally moral and theological, requiring a more profound analysis than is available in modern secular discourse where the religious imagination has been eroded. Issues such as power, vision and value, the sort which cause social ethicists to salivate, are insinuated in all of these debates. The debate has to do with power: who will control the canon of sacred knowledge? who will decide who gets hired, who gets tenure, who defines what counts as an adequate theological education? The debate has to do with leadership and vision: who seems to have an understanding of God which is nonparochial and inclusive? who seems to use language which is inclusive and empowering? who seems to be capable of winning our confidence and loyalty for leading movements of liberation and social justice? Who understands the nature of the world in which the church is called to serve Jesus Christ? And, it has to do with values: why do we (Western Christians) believe that pluralism, diversity, dialogue, and equality are good things? Just how deeply do we believe in these and other values? For instance, in 1957, Eisenhower deployed the national guard in Arkansas to force the desegregation of the public schools of Little Rock. American citizens had to be coerced to do the right thing. Are citizens, are Christians willing to support and justify coercion in order to establish a moral order?

The Christian community brings valuable perspectives on power, vision and value which might offer greater analytic clarity, and the moral will to act in accord with professed moral ideals.

4. The Reformed tradition has at least three specific treasures which bear upon this debate. First, through our worship and religious education, the tradition sustains the evocative power of the biblical concept of sin. Whether we choose to listen to Luther or Calvin, Barth or Niebuhr, Cone or Gaventa, we need to keep before ourselves this powerful, leveling notion which reminds us that before the only wise and loving God, we are all equally sinners. African slaves were drawn to its explanatory power as they sought to make sense of slavery. Many women have found it to be essential for understanding the deep structure of sexism and patriarchalism. But, such language is missing from the wider societal debate on political correctness.

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That debate needs the notion of sin, at least, to keep in check the flourishing of the new righteousness which abounds. This righteousness authorizes a small segment of the black community to assert its moral superiority over all white people and all Western classics. A similar righteousness pervades segments of the feminist movement. And, it has invigorated citizens who believe that the American mind is closing and culturally illiterate.

In the end, we will probably not argue one another into a new, harmonious perspective. Something more may be required. This brings me to the second treasure of the Reformed tradition: grace. As we seek to embody the values and virtues of Jesus Christ within this messy plural society (not world), we may experience the mystery that we name, grace. It may not produce dramatic conversions, although recalling the life of Malcolm X reminds us that even those do still happen. But, we remain open to being surprised by the unexpected grace that may descend or appear or fall or whatever it does when well intentioned human beings are in conflict over ultimate concerns. We believe that God is not indifferent to our deepest yearnings for community and truth. And, now and then, those yearnings are fulfilled.

The third resource which strikes me as vitally significant for our predicament is the cross, and the courage and sacrifice it encompasses. In the midst of this societal debate over realigning our cultural loyalties and identity, the church ought to be a reliable source of courageous truth telling. Recent Census bureau statistics report that there are thirty-three million African Americans in the United States, eighteen million Latinos, but two-hundred eight million whites. One is inclined to ask, what role are the churches of the majority population playing in preparing those people to live in a multicultural society? If the churches are as segregated and exclusive as the society, how can they offer a vision of something better?

The church must teach and enable people to do the right thing in regards to relating to strangers. White seminarians must develop the virtue of bi-culturality which black seminarians have always had to have in order to succeed in the majority culture. Seminary curricula must be expanded to reflect the diversity of Christ's church and world. The old wineskins have served their purpose. They will not contain the new wine being made by nonwhite and non-Western Christians.

Let us never forget that this is a religion with a cross in the middle of it. Suffering brings forth truth and redemption. There are no cheap solutions or salvations. Victories cost. Sacrifice and, sometimes, even blood in the

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streets is the currency which purchases justice and opportunity. But, in the end we trust that God will deliver victory out of defeat, and hope out of despair.

### **Part IV**

In a casual conversation with several colleagues who teach at other theological schools, someone posed the question: “Is ‘political correctness’ a problem on your campus?” The answer to that question, of course, depends on the answer to another question: What is “political correctness?” I generally hear the term used to refer to unreasonable restraints or constraints imposed, explicitly or implicitly, to protect or advance the cause of previously excluded persons.

While I might be able to gain some degree of consent to that rather benign description, difficulties arise when we attempt to define what is “unreasonable” restraint or constraint. Some regard even the search to identify women or minority candidates for faculty positions as “unreasonable.” For others, the term applies only to the extreme incidents reported in the press, as, for example, when a college professor is charged with being anti-Semitic for assigning readings from the Hebrew Bible.

The issue extends well beyond the semantic debate over what “political correctness” means. The issue is how to proceed in a time when perspectives multiply and conflict, when previously excluded populations struggle to articulate their view in conversation with views long held and cherished, when what was once the majority feels itself embattled.

I have no solutions to the political correctness debate except to suggest that the best response is careful, open, honest and probably painful dialogue regarding the disagreements that divide people at many theological schools. Unfortunately, we seem to be resorting to communication by pronouncement and policy rather than by conversation.

I can best illustrate what I mean by reference to a very specific issues, the use of inclusive language. At Columbia Theological Seminary, as at many other seminaries with which I am acquainted, we have a policy on inclusive language. Several years ago, the faculty formulated the policy, voted it into existence and placed it in the student handbook. The policy culminates in the statement that “all members of the seminary community are expected to use inclusive language” [emphasis added]. Catalogs and

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handbooks at a number of other seminaries contain similar statements, although the wording varies greatly.

Because I know what I am about to say will offend a number of readers, I want to underscore that I myself favor the use of inclusive language. I have done so for some 20 years, and I do not anticipate changing my mind on the topic. At the same time, I regard the Columbia Seminary policy on inclusive language (and most other such policies that I have read) as extremely problematic and, indeed, an example of what I would call “political correctness.” The restraint imposed in this instance is both unreasonable and counterproductive.

My resistance to inclusive language policies in theological seminaries arises primarily from educational concerns. Education required that those who are engaged in teaching and learning have the freedom to speak openly, to try out new ideas, to struggle to understand positions different from their own. Inclusive language policies often short-circuit discussion and thereby restrict education. They indoctrinate rather than encourage the open, honest, risk-taking give and take that is the sine qua non of education (all education, but especially theological education). In consideration of similar issues, Yale University adopted a policy that insists on “the right to think the unthinkable, discuss the unmentionable and challenge the unchallengeable.”

Before we genuinely address the pluralism within our theological schools and the need for more of it, we will have to reclaim the fundamental principle that any view may be voiced and heard with respect. That does not mean that all views are equally valid or that all views are right or that all views are Christian. It does mean that nothing that any one of our fellow-learners thinks needs to be withheld for fear of reprisals.

Numerous counter-objections will be lodged against my objections to inclusive language. Perhaps the most obvious concerns is that without an inclusive language policy women will continue to feel the pain of exclusion in discussions, in lectures and in worship. I concede that risk, but I am also aware of the students (male and female) who enter our seminaries every year unaware of the history of the inclusive language debate. Quickly sensing that their questions are beyond the limits of acceptability, these students either fall in line with institutional practice of simply take their attitudes underground. In the long run, those underground attitudes can do a lot of damage to women.



## **Bucher et al.**

After 16 years of teaching in Protestant seminaries, I think my own experience of what is exclusive counts for something. I am quite certain that I have far more often been offended, excluded or simply hurt by people who correct all their pronouns than by those who do not. I often have reason to dwell on Jesus' comments about people who clean the outsides of their pots and leave the insides filthy (a round paraphrase of Matthew 23:25-26). There are a number of people involved in theological education and in the church as a whole who have properly adjusted all their language to include women but have left their internal convictions untouched.

Another objection to my observations is that, without a policy, some students, faculty and administrators will not change their practice. Certainly that risk exists, but change, real change, happens when people process their own thoughts and convictions in dialogue with others. It will not occur simply because a policy exists on paper and is enforced by the rebuke and reprimand that characterize group pressure.

Some will also object to my comments on the principle that inclusive language is simply right. Thus, it should be used. As I noted earlier, I agree with this in principle. But those of us who are convinced that inclusive language is right also must be willing to use it ourselves, to argue for it, to listen to the judgments of others and to respect their integrity when they disagree.

My aim here is not to state the definitive case for or against the use of inclusive language, or even for or against inclusive language policies. What I want to recommend instead is careful criticism, especially self-criticism, in the face of ever-growing efforts to fractionalize and polarize theological education. In seminaries of my acquaintance there is a tendency to issue "politically correct" pronouncements on a wide variety of concerns. Too often those pronouncements emerge because those of us who inhabit these schools find it more congenial to write grandiose statements than to talk and to listen with respect and charity. If we are not able to "speak the truth in love," we at least need to speak the truth as we understand it in the love that the gospel promises is already ours.

## **Part V**

The current discussion of political correctness is an important, perhaps even urgent, topic for the church and its seminaries. That is especially true for those of us in the Reformed tradition, a tradition which believes the

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Gospel to be opposed to any human program or system of thought which demands blind, uncritical and absolute loyalty.

If by “political correctness” we mean a set of social, political, and intellectual commitments which will not tolerate critical inquiry and debate because they have become ends in themselves, then “pc” is deeply at odds with some of the most precious convictions of Reformed theology. In their better moments Reformed theologians have been keenly aware of the power and persistence of sin in individuals, communities, and social structures. One of the most important manifestations of human sinfulness in our time are those oppressive ideologies which make “reform” all but impossible. These ideologies are oppressive because they reject any form of criticism and by insisting on blind loyalty function as contemporary idolatries.

Not all ideologies, however, are necessarily oppressive. In his Lectures on Ideology and Utopia, Paul Ricoeur has taught us that while ideologies sometimes function to mask, distort, and deceive, on some occasions ideologies also function positively to construct personal and communal identity. There is no such thing as a “pure Gospel” untainted by ideology. Ideology infects everything we say and do, including our personal and communal interpretations of the Gospel, and, consequently, there can be no such thing as a Christian theology that is “ideologically free.” The proper theological question, therefore, is not whether any particular theological statement is tainted by ideology, but to what extent theologians are aware of their ideologies, whether those ideologies are open to criticism and debate, and whether they function positively and constructively or whether they function as golden calves.

Admittedly, the distinction between those ideologies which function negatively and idolotrously by masking, deceiving, and distorting and those which function positively by integrating a social world and providing a sense of individual identity is a fine one. So too is the distinction between faithfulness and idolatry. Ideologies that serve to mask and to deceive should be exposed and dismantled. On the other hand, those ideologies that are incomplete, fragile, provisional attempts at Christian identity, which try to integrate experience and faith, but are open to criticism and revision are a positive contribution to the churches’ ongoing life. The issue before us is how we understand political correctness. As I have suggested, more often than not it seems to me that political correctness functions negatively.

## **Bucher et al.**

Perhaps it would be more helpful to examine political correctness in the context of a specific issue that is very much alive at Columbia Seminary—namely, the statement about inclusive language in the seminary’s student handbook. The statement reads:

All members of the seminary community are expected to use inclusive language in classroom lectures and discussions, in written work, in seminary publications and official statements, and in seminary worship. While this policy expresses the expectations of the seminary, the use of inclusive language will not be a factor in the grading of students or in any person’s acceptance by the community.

What kind of ideology is reflected by this statement? As far as many people in this seminary are concerned this is an excellent example of an oppressive communal statement which makes and conceals an attack on Christian tradition and Western culture and deceives those who affirm it by suggesting that the God of Christian scripture includes everything and excludes nothing. For other people at Columbia the statement neither masks nor deceives but, on the contrary, gives shape and identity to a Christian community which believes in a God who makes all things new. So, which is it? Is this CTS statement on inclusive language an example of the political correctness some of us fear pervades the life of this seminary, or is it an example of a Reformed community in the process of allowing itself to be transformed and renewed in its understanding of God?

Regardless of one’s “point of view” on political correctness, words still matter, and in this statement two words suggest on balance that this is not an exercise in political correctness. It matters a great deal to me that the statement says that the CTS community “expects” but does not “require” the use of inclusive language. By means of that language, I think the statement is saying that CTS has a particular shape and identity about it as a community, but that identity is large enough to include those who do not agree with or practice the use of inclusive language about God. In other words, this statement says “Here is how we understand ourselves as a theological community, but if this is contrary to your convictions it is not a requirement that determines whether or not you can participate in the life of this

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community.” Rather, CTS is a community that expects and anticipates the use of inclusive language.

Also significant, I think, is the “not” in the claim that “the use of inclusive language will not be a factor in the grading of students or in any person’s acceptance by the community.” Although the use of inclusive language for human beings and for God is one of the things that gives CTS its particular identity, it does not have a gate-keeping function which allows some people to be full members of the community and excludes others. That, of course, would be the final, bitter irony for any community’s statement on inclusivity—that it serves as a basis for exclusion! When that happens it is difficult not to suspect that inclusivity has become politically correct and as such an oppressive ideology that deceives its practitioners.

By no means is it easy to determine whether a particular community lives by means of an ideology that is constructive of an identity faithful to the Gospel or whether its ideology has degenerated into the intellectual fascism so prevalent in educational circles today which we refer to as “pc.” The line between them is fine indeed. But God’s call to those of us who live in communities such as this one may be to struggle to discern the difference.

## A SELECT, ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR D.MIN. EDUCATION

**George Brown, Jr.**

Malcolm Knowles has argued that teaching adults calls for a different approach than the one used to teach children. Those teaching in D.Min. programs recognize a similar difference between teaching M.Div. and D.Min. students. The lecture format can be strained by the requirements of an action-reflection model of education. Self-directed learning challenges more traditional educational methodologies and models. The current emphasis on critical thinking skills demands new teaching strategies.

Common wisdom holds that most of us teach the way we were taught. Telling and listening are the primary methods used, even though educational research shows promising alternatives.

What are appropriate alternative teaching strategies for learners in a D.Min. program? Adult education and learning style literature offer clues and resources for teachers in D.Min. programs who seek new ways to teach creatively.

The following resources are drawn from the adult and religious education literature and the literature on teaching and learning styles. This select, annotated bibliography is a revised version of a listing circulated informally to participants in the second annual D.Min. Consultation held in Atlanta in the spring of 1990.

### **Adult Education**

Argyris, Chris, and Schon, Donald A., *Theory in Practice: Increasing Professional Effectiveness*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, Publishers, 1974.

Argyris, known for his scholarly work in organizational theory, teams up with Donald Schon in this book on theory and practice in the field of professional education. The authors' distinction between "theories-in-use" and "espoused theories" is useful in thinking about theory and action. The third part of the book focuses on strategies and environments for learning that address questions like, "How do we learn new theories of action?" or "What are the conditions under which we are most likely to learn to apply the patterns and theories of action that enable us to be effective at intervention?"

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Belenky, Mary Field, Clinchy, Blythe McVicker, Goldberger, Nancy Rule, Tarule, Jill Mattock, *Women's Ways of Knowing: The Development of Self, Voice, and Mind*. New York: Basic Books, Inc., Publishers, 1986.

The concept of "connected teaching" and the descriptions of received, subjective, procedural, and constructed knowledge are among the contributions the authors make to thinking about women and teaching.

Brady, E. Michael, "Redeemed From Time: Learning Through Autobiography," *Adult Education Quarterly*, Vol. 41, No. 1 (Fall, 1990), 43-52.

The use of autobiographies or life histories in helping learners become more critically reflective of their life and work is suggested by a number of adult educators. Western Theological Seminary is one school where autobiography is used as an integral part of the D.Min. program. Brady introduces autobiography as an important resource for adult learning and development.

Brookfield, Stephen D., *Developing Critical Thinkers: Challenging Adults to Explore Alternative Ways of Thinking and Acting*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1987.

After defining critical thinking and its role in the everyday life of adults in the first part of the book, Brookfield offers practical approaches for helping develop critical thinking in adults in Part Two. The concluding part of the book focuses on critical thinking in various arenas of adult life such as the workplace, politics, television, and personal relationships.

## Brown

\_\_\_\_\_, *The Skillful Teacher: On Technique, Trust, and Responsiveness in the Classroom*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, Publishers, 1990.

“Teaching is the educational equivalent of white-water rafting,” writes Brookfield. His latest book serves as a guide for traversing turbulent rivers. Chapter titles include: “Teaching Responsively,” “Adjusting to the Rhythms of Learning,” “Lecturing Creatively,” “Giving Helpful Evaluations,” and “Overcoming Resistance to Learning.”

\_\_\_\_\_, *Understanding and Facilitating Adult Learning*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, Publishers, 1986.

Stephen Brookfield is one of the leading theorists in adult education and this is one of the more important books in the field. Chapters include “Facilitating Self-Directed Learning,” “The Facilitator’s Role in Adult Learning,” “Learning in Informal Settings,” “Learning in Formal Settings,” and “Structuring Programs Around Learner’s Needs and Abilities.” Brookfield has also written a book on teaching critical thinking which was recently published by Jossey-Bass.

Daloz, Laurent A. *Effective Teaching and Mentoring; Realizing the Transformational Power of Adult Learning Experiences*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, Inc., 1986.

Daloz helped establish Vermont’s non-traditional community college system. This book offers a helpful perspective on mentoring and practical guidelines for teachers who want to be more effective in the mentoring role.

Del Prete, Thomas, *Thomas Merton and the Education of the Whole Person*. Birmingham, Alabama: Religious Education Press, 1990.

Thomas Merton’s life and work, become the reference point for thinking about the education

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of the whole person. There are some suggestive approaches that might be of relevance to those engaged in D.Min. education.

Eble, Kenneth E., *The Craft of Teaching*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1976.

Lecture, discussion, seminar, tutorial, and advising are among the skills covered in Part II. Part III attends to topics such as texts, grades, assignments, and tests. Eble directed a project to improve college teaching and wrote *Professors as Teachers* (Jossey-Bass, 1972).

Elbow, Peter. *Embracing Contraries: Explorations in Learning and Teaching*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1986.

This book is “thrown in,” as it were, because the author is a rather stimulating and provocative writer and thinker. Chapters that might be of special interest include: “Nondisciplinary Courses and the Two Roots of Real Learning,” “Teaching Two Kinds of Thinking by Teaching Writing,” and “Evaluating Students More Accurately.”

*Experiential and Simulation Techniques for Teaching Adults*, No. 30, *New Directions for Continuing Education*, edited by Linda H. Lewis. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1986.

Contributors to this issue of *New Directions for Continuing Education* describe educational video, computer simulation, case study, instructional simulation, educational travel, and theater.

Flournoy, Don M. and Associates, *The New Teachers*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1972.

Essays by Hugh T. Kerr, Peter Elbow, and Bambi Abelson focus on the teacher as a person, the student, experiential learning. Robert Sparks writes about “Inventive Reasoning” and James Kelly, Joseph DiMento, and Benjamin Gottlieb look at the “Community as Teacher.”



## Brown

Freire, Paulo, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, translated by Myra Bergman Ramos. New York: Herder and Herder, 1970.

A critique of the “banking” approach to teaching, in which the teacher “deposits” knowledge in learners’ minds. Learners are viewed as subjects, acting on their world, rather than objects.

Groome, Thomas H., *Christian Religious Education: Sharing Our Story and Vision*. San Francisco: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1980.

Groome’s shared-praxis approach to Christian religious education is presented in this book. The five movements of this approach are: Naming present action, Participants’ stories and visions, Christian community Story and Vision, Dialectical Hermeneutic: Story/stories, and Dialectical Hermeneutic: Vision/visions. (See also Groome’s “Theology on Our Feet: A Revisionist Pedagogy for Healing the Gap Between Academia and Ecclesia” in *Formation and Reflection: The Promise of Practical Theology*, edited by Lewis S. Mudge and James N. Poling. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987.)

Harris, Maria, *Dance of the Spirit: The Seven Steps of Women’s Spirituality*. New York: Bantam Books, 1989.

The seven steps (as in dance steps) could be understood as basic steps in teaching/learning. The book includes exercises for each step. The exercises are suggestive of teaching strategies for both men and women.

\_\_\_\_\_, *Teaching and Religious Imagination*. San Francisco: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1987.

Attention is given to the aesthetic dimension of teaching in this “essay.”

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\_\_\_\_\_, *Women and Teaching: Themes for a Spirituality of Pedagogy*. Mahwah, N.J.: Paulist Press, 1988.

Apart from the five dance steps around which this slender volume is organized, the book is a rich guide to the literature on teaching women.

*Helping Adults Learn How to Learn*, No. 19, *New Directions for Continuing Education*, edited by Robert M. Smith. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1983.

Among the articles in this issue of *New Directions for Continuing Education* of special interest to D.Min. educators are: Kay Haverkamp's "The Orientation Experience for the Adult Learner," John McKinley's "Training for Effective Collaborative Learning," Mark Charen's "Helping Learners Achieve Greater Self-Direction," and Phyllis Cunningham's "Helping Students Extract Meaning from Experience."

Illich, Ivan, *Deschooling Society*. New York: Harper and Row, 1970, 1971.

Chapter 6, "Learning Webs," may stimulate thinking about methods and the various educational resources available to learners apart from formal instruction.

Joyce, Bruce, and Weil, Marsha, *Models of Teaching*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1972.

The authors contend that content and method need to be matched. They offer a catalogue of models of teaching, each appropriate to a particular educational content.

Knowles, Malcolm S., *The Modern Practice of Adult Education: Andragogy Versus Pedagogy*. Chicago: Association Press/Follett Publishing Company, 1970.

The classic statement of the andragogical approach to adult education by one of the early leaders of the adult education movement.

## Brown

Knox, Alan B., *Helping Adults Learn*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1986.

Knox offers suggestions for how instructors can enhance learning (Chapter 3), choose and implement effective learning activities (Chapter 5) provide challenging teaching and learning interactions (chapter 8). Along with Brookfield, Knox is considered one of the leading figures in the field of adult and continuing education.

Little, Sara, *To Set One's Heart: Belief and Teaching in the Church*. Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1983.

Building on *Models of Teaching*, Sara Little explores information-processing, group interaction, indirect communication, personal development, and action/reflection models in the context of church education.

Lowman, Joseph, *Mastering the Techniques of Teaching*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1984.

Associate professor of psychology at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill, Lowman explores what constitutes "masterful teaching" and presents a two-dimensional model of effective teaching. Readers will find help with developing interpersonal skills, analyzing classroom performance, selecting material, and maximizing interest.

Mezirow, Jack, "A Critical Theory of Adult Learning and Education," *Adult Education*, Vol. 32, No. 1 (Fall, 1981), 3-24.

Mezirow's work can make a significant contribution to theological education in general and D.Min. education in particular. Mezirow is best known for the concept of "meaning perspective" and the process of perspective transformation. A meaning perspective is defined as "the structure of psycho-cultural assumptions within which new experience is assimilated and transformed by one's past experience" (p. 6). Building on Jurgen Habermas' critical theory, Mezirow presents an emancipatory theory for adult education.

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\_\_\_\_\_, et al., *Fostering Critical Reflection in Adulthood: A Guide to Transformative and Emancipatory Learning*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1990.

The focus of Part One is precipitating critical self-reflection. Victoria Marsick, William Bean Kennedy, and Roger L. Gould are among the contributors to this section. In Part Two, Maxine Greene and Joseph Lukinsky are among the authors who describe six approaches to helping learners become critically reflective, ranging from critical incidents to life histories. In Part Three, repertory grids, metaphor analysis, action-reason-thematic technique, and conceptual mapping are presented as ways of uncovering and mapping learner perspectives. Jack Mezirow's work in perspective transformation and emancipatory learning provides the organizing theme of the book.

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\_\_\_\_\_, "Perspective Transformation," *Adult Education*, Vol. XXVIII, No. 2 (1978), 100-110.

Mezirow's work with "meaning perspectives" was first outlined in this article. Mezirow is a partner in a growing conversation taking place among adult education theorists and practitioners. There is a conversation worth listening in on in light of the increasing use of terms like "transformational learning" and "emancipatory education."

Schipani, Daniel S., *Religious Education Encounters Liberation Theology*. Birmingham, Alabama: Religious Education Press, 1988.

Schipani offers a survey of implications of liberation theology for religious education. Chapter 1, "Conscientization, Liberation, and Creativity," and Chapter 3, "Praxis Way of Knowing," could be especially insightful for those who teach in D.Min. programs.

## Brown

Schniedewind, Nancy, "Feminist Values: Guidelines for Teaching Methodology in Women's Studies," *Learning Our Way: Essays in Feminist Education*, edited by Charlotte Bunch and Sandra Pollack. Trumansburg, New York: The Crossing Press, 1983.

This essay describes development of an atmosphere of mutual respect, trust, and community; shared leadership; cooperative structures; integration of cognitive and affective learning; and action. Schniedewind offers thoughtful advice for D.Min. educators.

Schon, Donald A., *Educating the Reflective Practitioner; Toward a New Design for Teaching and Learning in the Professions*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, Inc., Publishers, 1987.

Schon offers some intriguing thoughts about educating professionals, such as architects and therapists. The notion of "indeterminate zones of practice" which lie outside technical rationality and academic research is one such thought of special relevance to those who train ministers in D.Min. programs. The book is a sequel to *The Reflective Practitioner* (1983), also published by Jossey-Bass.

*Self-Directed Learning: From Theory to Practice*, No. 25, Directions for Continuing Education, edited by Stephen Brookfield. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1985.

To the extent that self-directed learning is a central component of a D.Min. program, the articles in this volume of *New Directions for Continuing Education* offer an introduction to the literature, concepts, and theorists in the field. Barbara Bauer describes the AEGIS program at Teachers College where self-directed learning principles are used in doctoral level study. Stephen Brookfield offers a review of research and Jack Mezirow presents "A Critical Theory of Self-Directed Learning."

Stewart, David W., *Adult Learning in America: Eduard Lindeman and His Agenda for Lifelong Education*. Malabar, FL: Robert E. Krieger Publishing Company, 1987.

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An excellent introduction to the life and thought of the founder of the adult education movement in North America. Of special interest is the attention given to Lindeman's extension of Mary Parker Follett's "circular response" discussion method and "conferencing."

Tough, Allen, "The Adult's Learning Projects: A Fresh Approach to Theory and Practice in Adult Learning," No. 1, *Research in Education*. Toronto: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, 1971.

Adult educator Allen Tough looks beyond formal educational settings in examining the variety of ways adults learn.

Weathersby, Rita Preszler and Tarule, Jill Mattock, *Adult Development: Implications for Higher Education*. AAHE-ERIC/Higher Education Research Report No. 4, 1980. Washington, D.C.: American Association for Higher Education, 1980.

The authors offer a helpful survey of adult development issues and their implications for higher education.

Wlodkowski, Raymond J., *Enhancing Adult Motivation to Learn*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1985.

Practical advice for educators about overcoming resistance to learning.

### Learning Styles Resources

Claxton, Charles S., and Murrell, Patricia H., *Learning Styles: Implications for Improving Educational Practices*. ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Report, No. 4, 1987.

One of the few resources which presents implications of learning style research for higher education. Pages 7-55 focus on teaching in terms of four types of models: personality models, information-processing models, social-interaction models, and instructional-preference models.

## Brown

Gregorc, Anthony, *An Adult's Guide to Style*. Columbia, Connecticut: Gregorc Associates, Inc., 1982.

This booklet contains the Gregorc Style Delineator which readers can use to discover and interpret their own style, a set of self-study exercises, and general information about the four dominant styles.

Guild, Pat Burke, and Garger, Stephen, *Marching to Different Drummers*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1985.

A basic introduction to learning style theory and application.

Kolb, David A., "Learning Styles and Disciplinary Differences," *The Modern American College: Responding to the New Realities of Diverse Students and a Changing Society*, edited by Arthur W. Chickering and Associates. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1981, 232-255.

Experiential learning theory; individual learning styles; inquiry norms of academic disciplines; knowledge structures and inquiry processes; impact of disciplinary norms on student learning; learning styles, academic performance, and adaptation; experiential learning model of personal growth are among the topics discussed by Kolb.

Kolbe, Kathy, *The Conative Connection: Uncovering the Link Between Who You Are and How You Perform*. Reading, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley Publishing Co., Inc., 1990.

Not to be confused with David Kolb, who has worked with learning styles. The conative connection is similar to the familiar Jungian typology of Myers-Briggs and learning styles. But curiously the author does not acknowledge the work done in learning styles.

McCarthy, Bernice, *The 4MAT System: Teaching to Learning Styles with Right/Left Mode Techniques*. Oak Brook, Illinois: EXCEL, Inc., 1980.

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Although written for the elementary and secondary school teacher, *The 4MAT System* offers those who teach in higher education an approach which attends to the learning styles of all four kinds of learners: the Innovative Learner, the Analytic Learner, the Common Sense Learner, and the Dynamic Learner. McCarthy relates the 4MAT system to models developed by David Kolb, Anthony Gregorc and other learning style researchers.

Myers, Isabel Briggs, *Gifts Differing*. Palo Alto, California: Consulting Psychologists Press, Inc., 1980.

Related to learning style theory is the extension of the Jungian typology developed by Isabel Myers and Katharine Briggs. This book presents information about the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator.

Price, Gary E., "Diagnosing Learning Styles," *New Directions for Continuing Education*, No. 19, *Helping Adults Learn How to Learn*, edited by Robert M. Smith. (September, 1983) San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1983.

Eight different learning style instruments are described and source information given. Among those included are instruments by Dunn, Dunn, and Price; Gregorc; Hunt; and Kolb.

*Student Learning Styles and Brain Behavior: Programs*. Instrumentation, Research. Reston, VA: Association of Secondary School Principals, 1982.

A book, on learning styles primarily for secondary school teachers. *Student Learning Styles and Brain Behavior* is comprised of selected papers from a national conference sponsored by the Learning Styles Network.

*Student Learning Styles: Diagnosing and Prescribing Programs*. Reston, Virginia: National Association of Secondary School Principals, 1979.



## Brown

Anthony Gregorc, David Hunt, and Rita and Kenneth Dunn are among the contributors to this collection of essays on learning styles.

### Addresses:

Gregorc Associates, Inc.  
P. O. Box 351  
Columbia, CT 06237

Gregorc Transaction  
Ability Inventory

Price Systems, Inc.  
Box 3067  
Lawrence, KS 66044

Learning Style Inventory  
Productivity Environmental  
Preference Survey

Training Aids Division  
McBer and Company  
137 Newbury Street  
Boston, Massachusetts 02116

Personal Learning Guide  
David Kolb, et al.

## Teaching Styles

*Effective Teaching Styles*, No. 43, *New Directions for Continuing Education*, edited by Elisabeth Hayes. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, Inc., 1989.

Barbara Florini offers an update of new educational technology and Elisabeth Hayes discusses elements of feminist pedagogy. Gordon Darkenwald explores classroom environment.

*Improving Teaching Styles*, No. 1, *New Directions for Teaching and Learning*, edited by Kenneth E. Eble. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, Inc., 1980.

F. L. Lucas wrote that style is “a means by which one personality moves others.” This understanding informs the lead article by Kenneth Eble. In another article, Joseph Axelrod traces the teaching career of Stephen Abbot over a quarter of a century, noting how teaching style shifted in response to learner and institutional change. “Working with Faculty Teaching Behaviors” draws on Bette and Glenn Erickson’s work in the University of Rhode Island’s Instructional Development Program.