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# Theological Education

Ecumenical Formation:  
A Methodology for a Pluralistic Age  
The Case of the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey

Volume 34  
Supplement  
Autumn 1997

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# Contents

<b>Acknowledgments</b>	v
<b>The U.S. Bossey Assessment Project: An Introduction</b> <i>John B. Lindner and Linda-Marie Delloff</i>	1
<b>Ecumenical Formation: A Methodology for a Pluralistic Age</b> <i>John B. Lindner</i>	7
<b>Embracing Estrangement</b> <i>Linda-Marie Delloff</i>	15
<b>Worship and Prayer in Ecumenical Formation</b> <i>John H. Erickson and Eileen W. Lindner</i>	23
<b>Learning a Religious Tradition: Identity by Contrast</b> <i>Bertice Y. Wood</i>	31
<b>Does What Is Taught at Bossey Equal What Is Learned?</b> <i>Michael Gilligan</i>	39
<b>Two Agendas for Ecumenical Formation</b> <i>Heidi Hadsell</i>	47
<b>Appendix</b> <b>Ecumenical Formation:</b> <b>Ecumenical Reflections and Suggestions</b> <i>Alan C. Clark and Metropolitan Elias Audi</i>	55
<b>Supplementary Reading</b>	63

*Theological Education*, the journal of The Association of Theological Schools, is devoted solely to issues and ideas in graduate theological education. The journal supports the mission of the Association by: (1) providing a forum for scholarly discourse on current issues and trends in graduate theological education in the United States and Canada; (2) addressing the contemporary issues facing the community of theological schools; (3) sharing models of critical analysis and effective practice in theological education; and (4) recording the changes and advances in theological education.

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# Acknowledgments

As the fiftieth anniversary of the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey was approaching, the director at the time, Jacques Nicole, suggested that the most appropriate way to observe this Jubilee event would be to encourage a global reflection on the fifty years of ecumenical formation. Though perhaps the most systematic and organized, our U.S. effort at assessment was just one of more than twenty national efforts to reflect on ecumenical formation. Even in Myanmar where life for the Christian community is not so easy, approximately a dozen Bossey graduates—some reportedly traveling on foot for several days—gathered for reflection.

In many respects, Bossey has become more than a place; it is a global community of ecumenically formed Christians who serve in parishes, schools, and ministries of the church on every continent. It was in this context of Bossey community that we began our work.

The research team for the project was designed to reflect the inclusive community that is a Bossey trademark, with a mix of communions, generations, and skills, but bound by a common commitment to understand better the elements of ecumenical formation at Bossey and their implications for a new generation in the life of the church.

Our research team was chaired by Heidi Hadsell, then dean of McCormick Theological Seminary. Other members of the team were : Robert Reber, dean, Auburn Theological Seminary; Joan Delaney, researcher and lecturer, Maryknoll Sisters; Charles West, emeritus dean and professor, Princeton Theological Seminary; Eileen Lindner, associate general secretary, National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA; Bertrice Wood, Mt. Zion Congregational Church, United Church of Christ; John Erickson, St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary; and Michael Gilligan, director of accreditation and leadership education, The Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada. Together we not only designed and conducted the study; we also continued in our own ecumenical formation and learning. As a result of this effort, related initiatives have been stimulated, including a network of nearly 600 U.S. Bossey friends.

During the course of our research, Jacques Nicole completed his service as director of the Ecumenical Institute; our research team celebrates the election of the chair of our project, Heidi Hadsell, as the new director of the Ecumenical Institute and the first woman to hold the post.

A special word of gratitude to the participants in the study, colleagues on the staff of the World Council of Churches and the Ecumenical Institute who offered encouragement and to veteran ecumenist Hans-Ruedi Weber, whose book narrating Bossey's institutional history came out just as we were finishing our research. It served to clarify and confirm many of our findings. Thanks,

## Acknowledgments

also, to Regina Garvey who has assisted us with energy and commitment in every phase of the project.

As staff to the project we are most appreciative for the support of Lilly Endowment Inc., especially for the advice, counsel, and encouragement of Craig Dykstra and, recently joining him, Christopher Coble.

Finally, we are most thankful to the staff of ATS, especially Michael Gilligan and Nancy Merrill for the invitation to edit this special issue of *Theological Education*. We hope that these thoughtful articles will serve to extend the conversation and reflections on the formation of church leadership in a pluralistic age.

John B. Lindner,  
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# The U.S. Bossey Assessment Project: An Introduction

*John B. Lindner and Linda-Marie Delloff*  
*Issue Editors*

Theological education takes place in a surprising variety of settings. Near the end of a Swiss country road overlooking Lake Geneva is a unique institution committed to the development of church leaders for today's world. The Ecumenical Institute at Chateau de Bossey was founded in 1946 by the World Council of Churches to bring together people from the churches of war-torn nations across lines of enmity and grief to pray and work together for reconciliation and forgiveness. In the intervening years, Bossey has become a center for ecumenical learning and a training ground for leadership in the worldwide ecumenical movement.

As the fiftieth anniversary of Bossey approached, a group of former North American participants began discussing the profound impact their Ecumenical Institute experience had exerted on their lives and ministries. The group realized that no formal study of the Institute had been undertaken, leaving a significant gap in understanding the role of ecumenism and ecumenical formation generally, and, more specifically, the particular influence the Ecumenical Institute has had on shaping church leadership and understandings of ecumenism in the U.S.

While Bossey's fiftieth anniversary provided an occasion around which to focus inquiry, such an investigation seemed particularly appropriate in the U.S. at this time. In recent years, U.S. churches have faced increasing challenges for raising new generations of young people in the Christian faith and adequately equipping them for participation and leadership in the life of the church. Among those challenges is the ever-increasing diversity of the nation: the percentage of the population that is foreign-born has increased by seventy-five percent in the past twenty-five years. Embracing diversity is probably the biggest, and most exciting, challenge the American churches face today.

Because the Ecumenical Institute is, by its very nature, a laboratory for experiments with diversity, our research group surmised that familiarity with its successful procedures and methodologies might be useful not just to those working specifically with ecumenism but to churches working in general to deal creatively with diversity. With a grant from Lilly Endowment Inc., this project set out to examine the experience of U.S. participants in various programs at the Ecumenical Institute, to determine why it had been so dramatically formative, and to attempt communication of those results to a wider group of people involved with theological education in the U.S.

## Introduction

A ten-member research advisory team, chaired by Heidi Hadsell, then dean of McCormick Theological Seminary in Chicago, worked with two staff members, initially preparing a thirteen-page questionnaire querying U.S. alumni/ae on virtually all aspects of their Bossey experience, particularly its aftermath upon return to the U.S. The survey instrument was sent to approximately 600 U.S. participants, of whom one-third responded. The questionnaire followed standard research methodology in including multiple-choice questions receptive to statistical analysis, as well as a number of questions requesting narrative response. A second phase of the project involved holding several meetings in different parts of the U.S. The purpose of these was to gather some of the former Bossey participants to look more deeply at issues and questions raised in the surveys. The participants included people from a wide variety of vocations: pastors, laypeople, seminary professors, college teachers, college and hospital chaplains, denominational executives, and others. They were of Protestant, Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox faiths.

The results of the questionnaires and the regional gatherings were subjected to in-depth analysis by the research team and a statistician. Findings break down into six main areas: (1) The types of people who have gone to the Ecumenical Institute from the U.S.; (2) The types of work and ministry they have undertaken as a result of their Bossey experience; (3) What U.S. alumni/ae consider to be unique about Bossey; (4) What participants consider the most valuable aspects of their Bossey experience; (5) What aspects of the experience might be incorporated into programs in the U.S.; and (6) The ecumenical issues and challenges in U.S. Bossey graduates' current ministries. Following is a brief summary of findings from each of the six areas.

### **Who Goes to Bossey from the U.S.?**

The project looked at participants in both the graduate school and in shorter program seminars. U.S. Bossey graduates have been mostly male (67% of respondents), highly educated (graduate degrees), and almost entirely white (91% of respondents). They work today primarily in the ordained ministry (47% in parish ministry), other church-related vocations, or academia. More than half were students when they attended the Ecumenical Institute. Approximately 33% of our respondents were women. More women have attended in recent years, but the overall numbers are still small.

Presbyterians are more heavily represented among respondents (26%) than any other denomination or communion, with United Methodists and Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) coming next in order of numbers. (These three denominations have also been most consistent in promoting Bossey and in providing scholarships to participants in Bossey programs.)

More than 75% of the respondents attended Bossey only once, and in some cases this was for a relatively brief program seminar. Based on the importance

respondents assigned to Bossey in their overall educational development, this figure suggests that the one experience was highly influential, even when lasting only a short time.

More than one-third of respondents said that they made concrete, major changes in their career or professional life as a result of their Bossey experience (37% of those attending the graduate school, and 30% of those attending program seminars cited such changes).

Nearly two-thirds (64%) of respondents received some funding to attend and probably could not have attended without such aid. (In most cases, funding came from the participant's denomination.)

## **Creative Initiatives**

Not surprisingly, a number of Bossey graduates have become ecumenical officers or leaders in their communions (including Roman Catholic and Orthodox). Such persons reported the importance of the Bossey experience in providing models for the sorts of programs they later dealt with professionally. In addition, a number of these people have been instrumental in helping to send new participants to Bossey, as well as fostering their communion's general ecumenical involvement. Some of them have been leaders in official ecumenical dialogues between and among denominations and faith groups. Others have served entire careers in an ecumenical setting such as a local, regional, or national organization, or the World Council of Churches.

Other individuals have made creative use of the Bossey experience in a variety of more local ways—especially in parishes, educational, and academic settings. In the field of college education, for instance, initiatives attributed to Bossey include a sociology professor's successful campaign to introduce religion courses into a curriculum that previously had none. Another example is a denominational college's ongoing program of regular undergraduate student visits to Bossey. The students come as a group between their regular college terms. Their work focuses on a specific theme, and in addition to completing other assignments, they keep journals about their experiences (some of which have later appeared as published articles). Hundreds of students from this rather small U.S. college have thus had a challenging and rewarding experience of a unique sort.

Bossey alumni/ae who teach cite the influence of their Ecumenical Institute experience in determining what and how they teach—especially in dealing with diversity and differences on their campuses. Others who have become administrators have self-consciously worked to make diversity a larger part of their schools' reality. A former professor—now administrator—wrote in his narrative that after Bossey, he chose his Ph.D. dissertation topic based on the experience—and has continued much later to write about that and related topics. "What a rich and rewarding setting for starting out! What a gift of God!"

## Introduction

he concludes in his narrative. Years later this administrator still looks to Bossey as his professional model—not only for the educational institution he serves but also “for the service agencies on whose boards I’ve served . . .,” of which he lists a large number.

Other educational innovations have benefited from Bossey’s influence. For example, organizers of the International Feminist D.Min. program at San Francisco Theological Seminary note the importance of Bossey models in their planning. This program also includes a regular unit of study held at Bossey. The dean of another seminary wrote that the graduate program at Bossey “proved to be the most formative educational experience of my life.” Attending the Ecumenical Institute as a student during the 1960s, he views the experience as continuing to inform his work.

One of the Institute’s significant characteristics is to assure that its programs—in either the graduate school or the shorter seminars—look equally at texts and other resources on the one hand, and at “the world’s agenda” on the other hand. Bossey often draws its program themes from current issues or events that help to contextualize theological thinking. Sometimes the intrusion or influence of the world’s agenda is more accidental, resulting from the experiences of the particular persons attending at any given time. It is clear from survey respondents’ comments that this opportunity to combine formal theological thinking with the exigencies of pressing world events has often resulted in strong commitments to social ministry on the part of U.S. Bossey alumni/ae. In this regard, innovative types of parish ministry and religious activism in the civic arena characterize participants’ uses of their Institute experience.

Some graduates are working in areas (for example, rural settings) where there is often relatively little awareness of people from other cultures; they have brought perspectives on international and ecumenical understanding to those environments. Some working as campus chaplains have used their Bossey experience to help them deal with the increasing diversity on campus—not only in terms of origin or ethnic group, but also in terms of lifestyle, sexual orientation, or other elements of diversity.

On a personal level, too, questionnaire respondents and seminar attendees reported dramatic, life-changing experiences as a result of attendance at the Ecumenical Institute. For example, during earlier years when fewer women enrolled as official participants, many accompanied an enrolled husband. Some of these women became intensely involved in the program, experiencing life changes that led to increased activism or to their own ordination. People who took their children along to Bossey described how dramatically the experience shaped the entire family, with results continuing into the children’s adult lives. “All of us [a family of seven],” wrote one participant, “became globally aware Americans! And we rejoice.”

## Is Bossey Unique?

Is attendance at Bossey similar to other ecumenical experiences, including those that also contain a residential element? For the most part, No, according to survey respondents, who identified a number of particulars defining its singularity. Perhaps seemingly obvious but noted repeatedly is the location of the Ecumenical Institute in a neutral country, in proximity to the World Council of Churches (WCC) and other international organizations such as the United Nations, the International Red Cross, and the world headquarters of several families of churches. Respondents noted that WCC staff, library, archival resources, and program materials particularly enhanced stays at Bossey. For the graduate school, an official link with the University of Geneva is also important, both in terms of providing resources and of placing the Ecumenical Institute experience in a larger context.

Equally compelling to participants in describing Bossey's uniqueness is the Institute's very particular history—especially its beginnings as a place to resolve tensions resulting from the Second World War. Respondents said that the history in itself contributes to a certain aura and atmosphere that tend to dramatize and contextualize current Bossey programs.

Another aspect of Bossey's uniqueness is the considerable degree to which Eastern Orthodox communions have been involved. U.S. Protestant participants reported that their intense exposure to Orthodox worship practices and theological ideas significantly altered and expanded their own thinking—not only in appreciation of another tradition, but in terms of rethinking and enriching their understanding of their own tradition. In the U.S., even ecumenical programs that include Roman Catholics often do not include Orthodox participation to such a degree. One participant wrote that the methodology of the Orthodoxy seminar (utilizing worship immersion) is “unique”; another that it “allows empowerment of individuals and communities such as I felt empowered by the Greek Orthodox experience.” Participants had similar responses to opportunities for Roman Catholic worship and theological discussions, even though they had had somewhat more experience in that regard.

Respondents also emphasized the chateau's quiet setting, as a place apart from the bustle of ordinary life where people can withdraw to contemplate basic issues. In pondering this finding, in juxtaposition with other results, we've concluded that part of Bossey's genius may be a creative balance between the global presence, diversity of participants, and easy access to Geneva on the one hand, and its contemplative, pastoral setting on the other.

Of primary importance in participants' views of Bossey is the fact that everyone arriving there is a stranger, is vulnerable. This is particularly true for the graduate program, whose participants remain in close encounter for approximately four months, during which it is difficult to avoid dealing seriously with differences. When people share sleeping space, working space, meals, entertainment, and bathrooms, it becomes imperative to confront differ-

## Introduction

ences and difficulties head-on. There is no way of avoiding them. The types of differences respondents talked about—in addition to those of theology or religious practice—include economic status, cultural references, social interaction, varieties of expression and communication (verbal, musical, in dress and manner), political views, and tastes in food.

U.S. participants have felt particularly estranged when (often alone or with one other North American) they have received criticism from students of other nations who view them as representing some objectionable attitude or action on the part of the U.S. government—or church. Survey respondents report initial shock at such accusations, followed later (in most but not all cases) by a major breakthrough in understanding.

At the same time as there is a feeling of being a stranger, respondents also report a sense of underlying safety and security. It is understood that differences and tensions can exist openly, yet within an ultimate environment of safety and acceptance. This security does not promise that all differences will necessarily be resolved, but that they will be enfolded into the larger reality of being Christians together.

Participants also praised Bossey's focus on encouraging people to shape their own religious identity more carefully by learning about the contrasting religious identities of others. For most participants, this was their first such experience, having been previously taught religious identity through identification with those of similar orientation. For Protestants, the exposure to Roman Catholic and Orthodox practices is central to their experience of increased self-awareness and identity.

It is not the case that all of the above experiences are available only at the Ecumenical Institute, but our findings suggest that nowhere else are they available all together in such intensity and conscious juxtaposition. Participants and members of our research team point also to "the undeniable reality that Bossey is more than the sum of its parts." In other words, it is not just the specifics of the varied experiences available together in a kind of hothouse atmosphere. It is the influence those experiences have on each other and the dynamics they create, which seem to take on a life of their own. And yet, remarkably, that vibrant dynamic sense of life repeats itself year after year with the same overall characteristics, even with different content or mix of persons.

The words "life-changing," even "magical," appeared in our surveys more frequently than might be expected from a group of highly educated respondents with graduate degrees. There were also numerous references to the Holy Spirit. In many cases, former Bossey participants seem ultimately at a loss to explain the profundity of their experience and the deep influence it has had on their lives, without attributing the ultimate alchemy to the workings of the Holy Spirit. Needless to say, this was not an optional response in our multiple choice questions, but respondents took it upon themselves to add it.

The essays that follow address in more detail the implications of our project's most important findings.

# Ecumenical Formation: A Methodology for a Pluralistic Age

*John B. Lindner*

*Ecumenical Development Initiative  
World Council of Churches*

*"Bossey focused on 'community' as its theme and opened my heart to the potentials of congregational community and nurture. When I started Bossey, I was not yet ready to pursue a congregational pastorate, after Bossey I was."*

*A respondent to the U.S. Bossey Assessment*

## Project Survey

What does it mean to prepare leadership for the church in the twenty-first century? Whether in committees of a local parish or in the regional and national meetings of denominations, speculation about the future is a frequent topic usually characterized by a confusing mix of hope and despair. Church leaders in the mid-1990s appear to be very uncertain about the future. At least three themes underlie the uncertainty:

- the growing pluralism, with its interconfessional and intercultural mix, that is redefining America's religious culture;
- a breakdown in the formal and informal connectional systems of the church that determine both the effective authority and the mission of the churches; and
- the growing experience of spiritual isolation felt by congregations that contributes to increased experimentation with non-traditional spiritual practices and parachurch movements.

In four regional gatherings, U.S. Bossey participants discussed such religious trends, which are cited also in other studies. However, a distinguishing feature of the conversation appeared to be the Bossey graduates' ability to innovate and continue to engage the shifts in the changing religious culture. The seeds for such perspective and skills for ministry were time and again attributed to the ecumenical formation or, perhaps a more accurate term, the "transformation" that had occurred for them at Bossey. As another survey respondent wrote: "Bossey was life-changing. It was a very clear turning point of maturation for me in many respects. I came up against cultural, theological, spiritual, and personal assumptions I never knew I had."

## Ecumenical Formation: A Methodology for a Pluralistic Age

In a sermon on the account of the Transfiguration in the gospel of Mark, one pastor recently recalled his Bossey experience.

During the past year, with the help of a grant from Lilly Endowment, the impact of the experience upon North Americans who have been part of that graduate school in Switzerland has been studied. They lived in close confinement with rich and poor, from every sector of the world in proportion to the human population, and in that retreat setting, unable to get away from one another for a full semester, eating, sleeping, worshipping, studying, and living as one community in spite of all the lines that separate and alienate people from one another. Fifty to sixty people from all over the world have participated each year since 1946 . . . I have learned that all who have shared this experience have come home with transfigured perspectives . . . We are transfigured by the vital witness of Christians from the Third World, or from across town. Our views are transfigured by our empathy as brothers and sisters to those unlike us but beloved of God.

### **In Historical Context**

Amid the shifting sands of the current religious/cultural moment in the U.S., we are, I suspect, mid-point in what may be a 100-year period of religious/cultural transition. The period is bracketed by the end-time of the Protestant epoch, on the one hand, and a time mid-twenty-first century when people of color will make up the majority of the U.S. population. Symbolically marked by the election of John F. Kennedy, the cultural dominance of Protestant churches waned as an age of pluralism began to blossom in the 1960s.

The 1950s, the last decade of the Protestant epoch, was a time when Protestant church growth, power, and influence were great. That era saw massive building of churches and church-related institutions. In bricks and mortar, as well as institutional program bureaucracies, Protestant churches grew in strength and prestige.

As the new pluralism emerged, this religious/cultural hegemony was broken and a rampant secularism rushed into the breach. Despite idealistic attempts by movements in the churches to build new models of inclusive Christian community (especially the ecumenical University Christian Movement, which subsequently voted to disband out of a perceived failure of inclusive community), goals were perhaps too lofty and experience too limited. By the end of the 1960s, the first fruits of the Protestant epoch—the student Christian movement and the missionary movement (the most intercultural and interconfessional expressions of the church) were, ironically, two of the first victims of the change. With this collapse, two of the key feeder systems for



ecumenical church leadership disappeared, and seminaries were left in relative isolation from what had been a rich context of programs that prepared new generations of young people for both lay and ordained leadership.

The '70s, '80s, and '90s have been a period of transition during which churches and church leaders (of all churches: Orthodox, Catholic, Evangelical, and Pentecostal as well as mainline Protestant) have reorganized, postured, and attempted to claim their place in the culture. These attempts have in many cases furthered their marginalization and only increased the frustration felt by the adherents as the "fix" they were seeking has been met by continually changing conditions.

By the 1990s in a post-Soviet world, shifts in religious/cultural realities had taken place in every region of the globe. In many cases interreligious tensions and old ethnic religious conflicts have reemerged. It is therefore particularly significant that in this context, a study document was issued in 1993 by the Joint Working Group between the Roman Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches, called *Ecumenical Formation: Ecumenical Reflections and Suggestions*. Though it received limited attention at the time, this brief statement (included at the end of this volume) is one of only a few published on the topic and was intended to encourage further work on ecumenical formation.

Though there has been growing interest among U.S. churches in both multicultural and interfaith activities, little attention has been given to the actual integrative methods of formation that might best prepare persons for service in the church of the early twenty-first century.

Even the terminology used to describe the mission and methods of such formation is imprecise. The terms "ecumenical," "formation," "ecumenical education," "ecumenical learning," "ecumenics," and "ecumenical formation" are used loosely in a variety of settings. This moment that so desperately calls for strong strategies of formation—especially ecumenical formation—lacks published resources. New interconfessional, intercultural disciplines and practices of formation need to be developed.

This essay suggests a working definition to describe the methods and practices of ecumenical formation as practiced at the Ecumenical Institute of the World Council of Churches. This is not to suggest that the program at Bossey can be replicated, for it includes an extraordinary combination of features—not the least of which is the support and active presence of most of the major world communions. There is, however, much to be learned from the practices and methods at Bossey that suggests application in other settings.

In 1996 The Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada adopted new standards of accreditation that urge schools to be more purposeful about their mission. The standards expand from a focus on knowledge per se to a broader notion of educational quality that is inclusive of spiritual formation. The new standards attempt to "balance a series of tensions . . . mission with societal realities; confessional commitments with diversity;

## Ecumenical Formation: A Methodology for a Pluralistic Age

minimum standards with maximum goals; and a notion of community with new modes of educational delivery.”<sup>1</sup> Such a balancing act of “living into tensions” is one of the qualities required for “the good theological school” in the next century. The Ecumenical Institute has for five decades attempted to live into the tensions of the world, especially those arising out of conflicts of confessions and cultures.

Despite those five decades of practice, it is not until the end of the second decade in 1965 that the term “ecumenical formation” is found in World Council of Churches documents and not until more recent years that conscious efforts have been made to elaborate the actual process that has evolved, especially in the annual Graduate School of Ecumenical Studies, at Bossey. Formation in an ecumenical context “is not limited to programs of instruction; it is more than training or even education. It refers to the whole process of equipping, enabling, raising awareness, shaping or transforming attitudes and values.”<sup>2</sup>

The WCC has also sponsored consultations and studies on related topics: ministerial formation, spiritual formation, and moral formation—each important aspects of the more inclusive term “ecumenical formation.”

Why should ecumenical formation be considered when addressing general issues of formation in U.S. theological schools? Though the word “ecumenical” is used frequently to refer to such a spectrum of relationships and programs that it risks losing its potency, we still embrace the term because of its missional quality and biblical imperative for unity among the followers of Jesus Christ as well as embracing the “eschatological vision of the transformation and unity of humankind.”<sup>3</sup> “Ecumenical” in this perspective is an inclusive term and refers to an ecumenism, practiced at Bossey, that has been especially focused on tensions among confessions, cultures, and the ethical issues of the day that require the reconciling ministries of the church. These are the very tensions and challenges for which “the good theological school” is seeking to equip persons to serve the church. With a half-century of practice, Bossey may provide helpful insights for formation in other religious education settings, especially theological schools.

Our research team suggests a concise methodological description of ecumenical formation, based on the Bossey model:

Ecumenical formation is an interconfessional and intercultural process of reconciling and equipping the church for its ministries. It is interdisciplinary in that it brings together in the experience of the participant the various disciplines of biblical study, theology, church history, worship, social ethics, and practical theology. Through shared encounter, participants practice self-critical discipline that allows for a moment of reception of both cognitive and spiritual insights. Ecumenical formation is always grounded in a contemporary issue(s) in the church and society. It is experiential, in the integration of scholarship and praxis.

A program of ecumenical formation requires of the participants an experience of controlled alienation—that is a mutual confrontation that results in learning to live with differences so as both to experience the life and faith of others' traditions and at the same time to gain a clearer understanding of one's own faith tradition and culture. Daily worship as a community is central. In this process, skills for ministry in a culturally and religiously diverse world are formed, and a vision for an ecumenical way of life is articulated. This formation is not an effort to mold a single model of Christian life. It is a process toward a fuller experience of the Christian faith that offers skills and insights for the unity and mission of the whole church.

This attempt to describe the method of ecumenical formation offered at Bossey requires at least three additional notations:

1. At Bossey instruction is offered in at least three simultaneously translated languages, and common-language study groups are used for some aspects of the work. With persons coming from thirty to forty countries, the recognition of the role of language is heightened. Language and cultures are the embodiment of values and assumptions that are often not perceived in a single-language setting. A multilingual milieu provides the opportunity for greater insights, especially for a people bound together in Word and Sacrament.
2. In recent years an explicit core curriculum of ecumenical study has been developed as an overlay to the traditional program of theological studies. Though the history and critical developments of the contemporary ecumenical movement are explicit components of study, other aspects such as the different traditions, doctrines, and exegetical practices are addressed in the appropriate subject areas and serve to enliven and shape the interdisciplinary discoveries of the participants.
3. There is a growing tension especially in U.S. churches between the ecumenical imperative for the visible unity of the church and the possibilities for the reconciliation of the human family through interfaith dialogue and service. In an increasingly interreligious context there is a range of opinion and discourse within the churches as to how the mission and ecumenical life of the churches engage in interfaith relationships. The Bossey model is clearly developed as an ecumenical leadership formation program of the Christian churches while it includes a growing spectrum of interfaith programs in its curriculum.

In the essays that follow, the writers attempt to examine the central components and practices of this working methodological definition and to suggest ways in which theological schools might begin to consider their role and resources for ecumenical formation.

## Defining an Ecumenical Mission

Like other theological institutions, the Ecumenical Institute must periodically review its mission statement and the goals and objectives that flow from it. One might assume that an ecumenical center such as Bossey is “inherently” ecumenical, thus rendering the writing of a mission statement easy, at least in part. In fact, recent discussions by Bossey faculty and board members have mirrored discussions of U.S. participants in our study. Those most involved in the ecumenical movement are very much aware of shifts in ecumenical life and work. As noted, there is an increasingly broad range of activity that receives the label ecumenism. Ecumenist Hans-Ruedi Weber, in a recently published institutional history, *A Laboratory For Ecumenical Life: The Story of Bossey 1946-1996*, asks the question: “What does ‘ecumenical’ mean? Neither the ecumenical movement at large nor the governing bodies of the World Council, neither the headquarters staff nor the Bossey board and teaching team can give a common answer to the question. The Institute must therefore work with an open mind and different understandings of what ‘ecumenical’ means. All talk about ecumenical education or learning becomes frustrating unless this dilemma is recognized and faced.” Weber continues by suggesting four groupings of ecumenical understanding that “must receive serious attention”:<sup>4</sup>

- Activities promoting church unity and interconfessional dialogue.
- Activities that place church unity at the center, expanding the concern for unity to a concern for the unity of humankind. Mission and unity are joined in this ecumenical definition.
- Activities that develop within the converging trends of modern church history but without a single central theme—ecumenical cannot be dogmatically fixed once and for all.
- Activities within a wider concept of ecumenical—the encounter and community of all the world’s cultures and living faiths.

This definitional dilemma provides an additional hurdle for theological school planners; yet the issue cannot be ignored. The twentieth century has been called by some the ecumenical century and has been marked by great advances in all four of Weber’s categories. Yet the ecumenical movement has not been exempt from the tensions and crises experienced by the churches and church agencies. Despite the need for a clearer definition of “ecumenical” for programmatic purposes, the theme of unity has a place of primary importance in church history: in Christ Jesus we “. . . are built together spiritually into a dwelling place for God.” (Eph. 2:22) It is from such a biblical explanation of divine purpose that a new generation of church leaders needs to be prepared to serve the church ecumenically—that is to serve the church beyond the boundaries of any parochial expressions of church. A draft of a new Bossey

mission statement takes this approach: “The witness of Bossey continues as a community reaching beyond boundaries to embrace God’s presence in a divided and contentious world . . . providing innovative and formative ecumenical studies and experiences . . . .”

Like the churches and theological schools that share in our national and global ecumenical life, ecumenical councils and agencies are struggling to frame a new “common understanding and vision” of our ecumenical vocation for the years to come. Beyond the preparation of students, theological communities have a key role to play in these important conversations about Christian life and witness on the planet as the churches transition toward a new era whose dominant religious/cultural features remain yet unclear. The mission of a theological institution in such a transitional period may be augmented by an ecumenical thrust to reach beyond boundaries, making possible the development of skills for living as a foretaste of the inclusive community—*koinonia*—that is promised: “So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God.” (Eph. 2:19)

## Creating a Program

How might a theological school begin to consider the practical steps it could take toward a commitment to active ecumenical formation, or toward including elements of such formation in its overall mission?

1. A first step might be to undertake a careful review or audit of the immediate theological school community—students and faculty. What is the mix? What reservoir of confessional, cultural, ethnic, racial, national resources are already a part of the community? Moving out in concentric circles, what resources exist in nearby theological schools, colleges, churches, and the larger community? What ecumenical resources are in your library? What nearby ecumenical organizations and resources are available?
2. How does this view of the theological school community, and the community of churches and schools that surround it, inform the school mission statement? What aspect of the institution’s mission statement addresses ecumenical formation?
3. How might some of the practices discussed in the essays that follow be adapted or further developed as formative features of the community? What practices could be developed with minimal adaptation? What will require more long-range planning and/or outsourcing to meet community needs?

Finally, it would be important not only to ask how courses, exposure experiences, and community life serve to extend and form the students’ experience, but also how all these learnings become integrated. One of the reasons I became particularly interested in Bossey was my participation during the mid-1980s in a study of participants over a decade of international travel/study seminars offered at McCormick Theological Seminary. Using a retro-

spective inventory, the most significant outcome of that study surprised our research team at the time: the enduring result was not the specific content of the offering. Rather the experience served as the “most integrative” one that students had in bringing together the pieces of life and study in preparation for ministry. Ten years later, the study of U.S. Bossey participants demonstrates that a stay at the Ecumenical Institute, whether a few weeks or four months, served a similarly integrative purpose—though much more so. Indeed, it was the pivotal event in the lives and ministries of most participants. This points encouragingly to the potential of interconfessional and intercultural methods and practices for ministerial formation.

To this end theological schools have an opportunity to assist in shaping the church of the twenty-first century by envisioning and defining the mission of the church for a pluralistic age, and to make possible those transformative experiences that appropriately broaden the range of activities that constitute theological education and parallel the needs of the changing world in which the future church exists. Just as I introduced this article with a quote from a survey respondent, I will give the last word to two others:

*“I want to emphasize how through the years, my Bossey experience has continued to form me personally and professionally. The experience affected me so totally that it has colored how I see the world, how I minister in my parish, how I interact in interfaith settings, and how I work with denominational issues.”*

*“Bossey was the single best educational experience of my life. Bossey was the culmination of my seminary education and provided the final encouragement and inspiration I needed to enter ordained ministry.”*

### ENDNOTES

1. Linda-Marie Delloff, “Crafting a Balancing Act; Answers to the Question: What Makes a Good Theological School,” *In Trust*, 7, 31 (Spring 1996): 18
2. Konrad Raiser, “Fifty Years of Ecumenical Formation: Where Are We? Where Are We Going?” *The Ecumenical Review*, 48, 4 (October 1996): 440.
3. Joint Working Group between the Roman Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches, “Ecumenical Formation: Ecumenical Reflections and Suggestions,” *The Ecumenical Review*, 45, 4 (October 1993): 490.
4. Hans-Ruedi Weber, *A Laboratory For Ecumenical Life: The Story of Bossey 1946-1996* (Geneva: World Council of Churches Publications, 1996), 125.

# Embracing Estrangement

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In the compelling and currently popular collection of essays *Practicing Our Faith*, one of the more poignant chapters is that on “Hospitality,” written by Ana Maria Pineda, director of the Hispanic Ministries Program at the Catholic Theological Union in Chicago. She focuses her exposition of hospitality on the Mission District of San Francisco, where new immigrants—some legal, some illegal—receive welcome by predecessors who have gathered in the community of St. Peter’s Roman Catholic Church. Pineda’s central image is the congregation’s observance of Las Posadas, a nine-night ritual reenactment of Joseph and Mary’s fruitless search for hospitality until they came to the inn at Bethlehem. Another story Pineda tells in the chapter is that of Refugio, a Central American woman who recently fled an abusive marriage and found welcome in the California community centered around the church.<sup>1</sup>

Hospitality is a theme garnering a fair amount of current attention—appropriately so, for, like other traditional faith-based practices, its frequency and intentionality have declined. Of course, there is ample biblical instruction for welcoming strangers like Refugio, or like Joseph and Mary. But there is another story to tell from this material and another set of instructions to seek in the Bible. This other story concerns the importance not of welcoming the stranger—but of *being* the stranger. This second story is equally important in being true to the gospel, but it receives far less attention than the theme of hospitality. Accepting the role of stranger is a greater challenge than is extending hospitality—especially in this era, when hospitality by no means implies much of a sacrifice on the part of the host. While offering hospitality can be inconvenient and uncomfortable—involving fear of the “other” and “invasion” of one’s personal or church home—it is actually relatively safe. We are on our home turf, usually amid a supporting community, and taking little risk by feeding a meal to strangers or inviting them to sleep in our church basement.

One of the Ecumenical Institute’s unique features is its creation of an environment in which every participant is a stranger. Sometimes agreement to accept that role is informed, explicit, and prior; sometimes it is implicit and happens only once someone arrives through the Institute’s doors. On rare occasions, there have been participants who could not accept the challenge and who have left or have spent time in counseling to deal with the experience. But for most Bossey participants who can accept the challenge, this aspect of their stay becomes the most important and profound part of the whole—shaping the rest of their lives. In most cases, the experience has opened people to new depths of human experience and empathy.

### **An Unfamiliar Experience**

For North Americans, who are rarely in the position of being a stranger, the Bossey experience is often more shocking, disorienting—and ultimately, perhaps, more transformative—than it is for participants from other nations, who for various reasons have often found themselves regarded as strangers. Especially in recent years, the number of North Americans at Bossey at any given time is usually—and purposefully—very small. The administration has made conscious efforts to eliminate the dominance of Westerners, especially from the U.S., whose methods and ideas used to hold sway. Now it is Westerners who find themselves in the minority—their language and idiom as well as their ideas no longer the assumed norm. This is a rude awakening for many North Americans, even those well traveled. For North American culture has now so pervasively extended its influence that an arrival in Bratislava or Kuala Lumpur brings many of the same sights, sounds, and tastes as does an arrival in New York or Chicago.

While Bossey is located in an obviously Western country (though the presence of international organizations enriches the mix), that has not become the culture of the place itself. No one arriving for a first stay there, whether for two weeks or four months, is “at home.” This reality might seem ironic. If indeed the “most important role of ecumenism is to connect people,” as one of our survey respondents put it, then why is the key experience here one of disconnection? Therein lies the heart of Bossey’s message. In the words of former Bossey Director Jacques Nicole, in order to learn, it is first necessary to unlearn. In terms of ecumenical formation, in order to learn how to connect deeply, it is first necessary to learn how to disconnect.

Exactly how does Bossey force people to disconnect from their previous identities, associations, and cultural references and become a stranger? Imagine that you are a young seminary student whose denomination is sending you to Bossey—perhaps your first time overseas. You arrive in your assigned room and find that you are the only English-speaker. Even if your roommate does speak English, your cultural references are entirely different, particularly if he or she is from Africa or Asia. Then in the communal dining room you sit between two strangers from different continents. One is Indian and has brought her own set of spices to add to the food. They look strange to you and you are embarrassed when they are offered to you. People have different habits of prayer for Grace. The conversation works its way around to U.S. foreign policy. You find yourself under attack, even though you disagree with much of your own government’s policy and did not vote for the incumbents.

After the noon meal, you proceed with the group to a classroom. You are looking forward to a friendly discussion on the pre-assigned reading. Instead, there is a rather formal and weighty inaugural lecture, expressing a theology with which you disagree. You find that your impatience to respond is not



shared by the other students, who seem to find the lecture entirely appropriate. After the class and another rather uncomfortable dinner, the evening entertainment features folk- dancing (you have no folk dances to share) and a prayer service involving a lot of movement and touching—to which you are unaccustomed. This is just your first day at Bossey.

Bossey graduates have different names for this experience. At one of our project events, Letty Russell of Yale called it “cognitive dissonance”; longtime World Council of Churches ecumenist and former Bossey staff member Hans-Reudi Weber has labeled it “controlled alienation”; in our survey a recent U.S. graduate used the term “growth through sorrow.” Other U.S. respondents have described the experience in more detail. For example:

I was introduced to the world church in a life-changing and perspective-changing manner. The 1972-73 session was filled with much tension and conflict over First and Third World issues and Vietnam. It was very difficult at times to be a white male Westerner—but I learned much and had much to ponder when I returned to the U.S.A.

A more recent participant writes:

Because I am an American, I discovered when I went to Bossey that I had an unconscious hubris/arrogance. Bossey helped me to value the true qualities of different ethnic groups . . . I’m deeply grateful for a true sense of humility, which enables one to learn and profit by a knowledge of . . . peoples and cultures different from one’s own.

Why is this truly uncomfortable experience so cherished by alumni/ae of Bossey? One reason is a discovery of the sense of humility referred to above. Truly opening oneself to others, finding oneself to be vulnerable creates the possibility for deep change—and for a more palpable identification with others who are much more frequently forced into the stranger role: refugees, immigrants, people of other races and religious practices, persons with disabilities. An additional benefit is a sense of excitement at the revelation of new possibilities, other ways of understanding and of living that expand one’s world and worldview.

While most U.S. Bossey graduates give high survey marks to the intellectual stimulation at the Institute, it is to the more “experiential” aspects that they point as determinative: the day-to-day being together, living together, eating together, experiencing each other as whole persons, not just as minds. In the lecture introducing his “unlearning and learning” terminology, Jacques Nicole described the 1994 graduate school at Bossey.

## Embracing Estrangement

[The students] came from all over the world and represented most of the historic churches engaged in the ecumenical movement, including the Roman Catholic church. During a period of about five months they . . . reflected together, read the Bible together, prayed together, entered into dialogue, ate, played, and lived together. They all bear the collective memory of their peoples and their church, memory often wounded by a history of confrontation, oppression and exclusion. Thus all the ingredients are present at Bossey to make of this international gathering a foreshadowing of hell! All the more so as present world conflicts weigh heavily on our community—ex-Yugoslavia, Israel, Palestine, Rwanda.

[And] just as we think we have escaped from the man-woman conflict, we fall into the North-South conflict or into that which sets Blacks against Whites. Because this community does not confine itself to rhetoric. It penetrates our very beings down to that famous subconscious in which our attitudes have their origin and which sometimes seriously contradict our speeches about tolerance and ecumenism . . . Little by little this process leads the participants to unlearn the stereotypes inherited from the past, thanks to this daily existential encounter of the “other.”

Is it possible to unlearn in order to learn? Yes, it is possible, but that presupposes going beyond the erudition of libraries and universities and seizing all the possibilities for honest and existential encounter that the pluralist world in which we live can offer.<sup>2</sup>

Lest the Bossey experience be misunderstood, it is important to explain that this initial (and perhaps extended) period of alienation almost always results in one of reconciliation, understanding, and acceptance. Once participants adjust to the shock of being a stranger and begin to accept that role, they realize that all present are strangers, and that all have equal parts to learn and to teach. Then begins a knitting-together process that has often created fast friendships lasting lifetimes and sometimes influencing the course of world affairs.

Other essays in this group address various aspects of the reconciliation process. A highly structured and regular practice of worship, for example, clearly serves as a “safety net”: the larger context within which the controlled alienation is allowed to develop. Though it may remain unspoken, participants come to realize that the regular and frequent discipline of communal worship (though it, too, contains evidence of brokenness) is a constantly available fount of reassurance and renewal that alternates regularly with the persistent challenges to one’s identity and assumptions.

Whence this model of profound “dis-ease” as the basis for ecumenical formation? As suggested above, the current literature advocating and exegeting

hospitality uses many familiar biblical references. Pineda, for example, cites Lev. 19:33-34: “The alien who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the alien as yourself . . .” and Rom. 12:13: “Extend hospitality to strangers.” There are equally powerful biblical references urging the experience of strangerhood. Perhaps we do not refer to them as often because they are so unsettling. In the Old Testament, of course, Moses is the archetypal stranger. He has lived his life as a stranger in a foreign land, when at the peak of becoming familiar and accepted, he is shocked into recognition of his true identity. He then leads his people to Israel, only to be unable to join them in the promised land—to which he must remain forever a stranger. The prophets were almost by definition strangers and did more than endure their strangeness; they embraced it. As “salt to the world” they were both seasoning and irritant.

Jesus completely accepted the role of stranger, seeking it out, cherishing it. One of the temptations Jesus avoids when he is in the wilderness and, indeed, on a regular basis, is familiarity. Jesus is a stranger even to the disciples and his other followers. And when he utters difficult and challenging statements to others, he is avoiding a temptation to comfort them, to put people at ease. But to do that he must remain forever outside, a stranger to those who most love him and whom he loves. Jesus was constantly itinerant in “the land beyond Jordan”—a permanent stranger. (Ironically, all the literature over the years seeking to “understand” Jesus better may be purposeless. His role was to be a stranger—to be of us and yet not of us—constantly to provide an example of the courage to strike out into the wilderness. If we moderns were ever to feel we were really beginning to know Jesus, we might lose the essence of his being and teaching.)

In Matthew 10, Jesus says to the disciples: “I send you out like sheep among wolves.” Not only does he instruct the ten to live as strangers; they are to go specifically to places where they know they will be attacked for their ideas. In other words, they must accept being completely vulnerable. Hence the true meaning of “turn the other cheek,” which suggest no weakness at all, but its opposite: the ultimate strength of accepting vulnerability. To spread the gospel message, it was necessary for the apostles to embrace the role of stranger. Jesus did not ask them to stay at home and welcome others; he asked them to *become* the other.

We Western Christians are such people of the Word, and in so many different ways. In fact, for North Americans, one of the ultimate vulnerabilities may be giving up control of words, submitting to other kinds of experience: visual, tactile, sensual, non-verbal. The arts of the word in Western culture—particularly “high” culture and intellectual endeavor—are those of theological education as well. For years, theological education strove to achieve its rightful place among the other academic disciplines. To “have the answer” is the key to advancement. For North Americans, not knowing what to say may be the ultimate risk.

## Embracing Estrangement

But at Bossey this is what happens regularly—by design. The atmosphere of “controlled alienation” makes North Americans more likely to be without a ready answer, without the “right words.” Sometimes this is because of language problems, at other times because the speaker may not automatically compel the regard he or she might have expected. Sometimes because someone from another nation yanks away the rug of North American security with a challenge to long-held assumptions. Such an experience can be intensely discomfoting. Yet for one who is willing to accept and to learn from it, the resulting growth and strengths make the discomfort ultimately worthwhile.

Many Bossey graduates report that even after their return to the U.S., they never quite regain the equilibrium they once had. For the homecoming experience can also be one of estrangement. Flush with the excitement of their discoveries and new relationships, returning participants are sometimes shocked to learn that their congregations, friends, or seminary classmates are not similarly impressed—in fact, may seem immune to the life-changing messages they come bearing. Thus can begin a whole life of “holy unrest,” in which one forever accepts the role of being a stranger and bringing unpopular messages to ears that do not long to hear them.

### **Comfortable Discomfort**

This sense of unease—and of being able to live with it and with difference—may be a real gift from Bossey to the churches, particularly in the U.S. In our current U.S. society, difference prevails, pluralism predominates. Bossey alumni/ae engaged in diverse forms of ministry in the U.S. report that the “trial by fire” they experienced at the Ecumenical Institute was invaluable in preparing them to deal with issues of difference and tension within their current and ongoing circumstances. Whether they ever again made another trip overseas, they have found constant opportunities for putting the Bossey experience to use here.

Another aspect of permanent estrangement focuses in more narrowly on ecumenism. While many Bossey participants come much more fully to understand and embrace the tenets of their particular denomination, they also change the nature of their relationship to that denomination. In the words of one participant, “Once you move out no place feels like home. I gained a deeper appreciation for my particular denominational heritage and at the same time see its limits in the larger ecumenical and interreligious arena.” This by no means leads necessarily to decreasing denominational loyalty. In most cases it is quite the opposite: one’s loyalty is strengthened at the same time as one enlarges his or her perspective. Often the most devoted ecumenists have wanted to work within their denominations, trying to bring the experience of larger family to their immediate church family.

## Translating Bossey

Are there ways to incorporate elements of this ultimately productive “cognitive dissonance” or “controlled alienation” into theological education experiences in the U.S.? Put another way, in an atmosphere obviously designed to promote learning, are there time and space for first unlearning? When we queried our survey population on these questions, many of them expressed discouragement at the possibility of creating a Bossey-like experience in circumstances so different from Bossey. Others, however, were much more convinced of the possibilities, and perhaps without much complication. First they asked whether most schools actually take advantage of the opportunities that immediately present themselves. In the increasingly pluralistic environments of most seminaries, how actively and creatively do we use that pluralism? Do we primarily try to offer multicultural students opportunities to “become like us”—or do we take the full risk of allowing them to be themselves in all regards and of exposing us sharply to the differences? Our respondents advocated planning programs and activities that encourage differences to be prominent.

Another Bossey practice they urged was “bringing the world’s agenda into the classroom” far more than happens regularly. One of the ways in which Bossey participants discover each other’s deepest cultural and theological differences is in discussions of current events taking place in their respective home countries. The students themselves are the teachers—receiving regular encouragement to discuss personal experiences in the context of classroom subject-matter. Nothing brings an ethics class quite so sharply to attention as hearing a student from Rwanda describe watching her husband killed in factional warfare. If a school has no foreign students (increasingly unlikely), surely there are those who have experienced estrangement in other ways. It might be helpful to assure that such persons are not “put on the spot” simply to “share their experiences,” but actually given the opportunity to challenge others present to understand those experiences.

Some survey respondents reported that they had Bossey-like experiences during fieldwork in settings where they found themselves to be real strangers—of another race or culture, for example. (Though this can seem artificial if one is the *only* stranger; dialogue easily becomes somewhat contrived or formulaic). But even such events as one’s first exposure to inner-city or to rural realities can include the shock-of-difference experience to some degree. Most beneficial, survey respondents stressed, are efforts that get the student out of the classroom into some “real-life” situation where he or she actually lives another’s experience instead of just hearing about it. Travel seminars, if they offer genuine opportunities for in-depth exposure to other cultural and religious forms, can provide some of the same order of experiences. Even visits to congregations of other denominations, communions, or faiths are not frequent among many who espouse ecumenism.

## Embracing Estrangement

It is interesting to consider the Bossey model in a world of theological education where such practices as distance learning and off-campus classrooms are becoming increasingly common. Do these recent trends de-emphasizing, or at least redefining, community fly in the face of the sort of profoundly experiential transformation available at Bossey? All evidence would seem to suggest so. There is no judgment inherent in that observation, for such creative educational experiments fill another crucial need: to offer theological training to those who otherwise could not participate. But it seems even more important in view of such practices also to offer experiences that teach the sorts of coping skills Bossey graduates have found so useful ministering amidst the diversity and confusion of a North America that will only become more so in the future. Otherwise, we may eventually find ourselves to be strangers in our own land.

### ENDNOTES

1. "Hospitality," *Practicing Our Faith: A Way of Life for a Searching People*, ed. Dorothy C. Bass (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1997), 29-42.
2. Lecture given (in French) at the Faculty of Theology of the University of Lausanne, opening of academic year 1993-94.

# Worship and Prayer in Ecumenical Formation

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Worship is the most universal and at the same time the most particular of the activities in which Christian communities engage. For most Christians, common worship—worship together as a community of faith—is so familiar as to be taken for granted. Throughout their history, Christians have paid reverence and homage to God not as isolated individuals but as members of a community, a community in principle formed not simply by sociological factors but by a common conviction that in Christ Jesus, God has intervened in the time and space of this world in a particularly decisive way. While through the centuries this conviction has been expressed in many diverse ways, its privileged focus has been common worship and prayer. Drawing on the community's gathered spiritual energies, utilizing its diverse cultural resources, tapping the deepest reservoirs of its collective memory, worship has formed, expressed, and celebrated the community's identity in an especially potent way.

But while the experience of common worship may be universal to Christians, the forms which this experience takes are necessarily particular. The very nature of their belief system impels Christians to be concerned about this world of time and space, with all its particularity, and to express this concern in their worship. Even when the word "sacramental" is not employed, indeed even when it has been deliberately avoided, Christian worship "swims in creation as a fish swims in water," as Aidan Kavanagh has put it.<sup>1</sup> It is permeated with the sights and sounds and smells, the tastes and touch of our material world, and in this way it offers not a disembodied message of escape but rather an encompassing experience of a world redeemed and reconciled to God.

In and through its particularity, in myriad cultural settings, Christian worship offers an experience of redemptive reconciliation. In ecumenical or global contexts the particularity of worship can also be a source of tension. Divisions among Christians have expressed themselves not only in doctrinal formulations but also in patterns of worship, and even when confessional differences are minimal or non-existent, cultural differences can make the worship of one community virtually unintelligible to others. Worship unites, but it can also divide.

Courses on the history and theology of Christian worship are part of the curriculum in many seminaries and theological faculties, which may also

## Worship and Prayer in Ecumenical Formation

provide instruction in practical aspects of the conduct of worship. But the actual experience of worship itself is often of only marginal significance, even when chapel services still form part of a daily routine. While many institutions, even small denominational seminaries, have an increasingly ecumenical and global student body, drawn from diverse denominations and cultures, this diversity is seldom reflected in a fully intentional way in worship practices.

Our survey discovered that the experience of communal worship serves as the mortar that holds together the bricks of ecumenical formation. In written anecdotal material accompanying surveys, respondents cited worship more frequently than any other factor as the setting for a synthetic and unifying experience that is truly productive of ecumenical consciousness. As one student put it, Bossey teaches that “God can be praised and worshipped in many different forms and orders and rituals.” According to another student, “I learned to appreciate the liturgical heritage and spiritual integrity of various backgrounds.” If much at Bossey contributes to at least a temporary feeling of estrangement, worship offers an experience of reconciliation and resolution.

The interconfessional and intercultural diversity that has come increasingly to characterize North American seminaries has been present by design at Bossey since its founding in 1946. Students come to Bossey with little in common save the experience of worship—but worship in all its particularity. Bossey tries to build on this experience. It makes the experience of worship, so universal yet so particular, an essential element in a comprehensive program of formation intended to continue theological education outside the classroom. Both in Bossey’s annual graduate school and in its various special programs, worship has been “the glue to the experience,” to use the words of one alumnus. Worship’s power to unite—to divide—is experienced with heightened intensity and explored in depth.

The Bossey tradition of worship has evolved in ways that mark and order the rhythm of the entire day at the Institute. Typically, a service of morning prayer opens the day. That service is multiform, organized and led by students of a given tradition or culture or seminar group. It attempts to convey something of the ethos of that tradition, the particularity of that culture, the implications of that seminar theme. At mid-day the gathered community observes a period of intercessory prayers. The evening worship, in recent years, has benefited from the assistance of two Protestant nuns from the Swiss community of Grand Champ who have shared responsibility for planning and leading it. Unlike the morning services, the evening services follow a common format that is flexible without being chaotic: psalms read responsively or sung, scriptural readings according to a daily lectionary, and prayers of intercession (usually accompanied by a litanic response like *Kyrie, Eleison*), the Lord’s Prayer (with all the participants saying the words of the prayer in their own language), and songs (usually drawn from such solid and beloved ecumenical collections such as “Songs of Taize” or “Cantate Domino”).



Over time, even in the course of a given graduate school session, the service may change somewhat: new ways of singing the psalms may be introduced, more candles may be lit. Seldom does the service correspond precisely to any one tradition. At the same time, the service does not require lengthy explanations. Its repetitive patterns let it “work” without them. In a word, it demonstrates that worship in an interconfessional and intercultural setting can truly be *worship*, and not just an educational experience.

Beyond the planning and conduct of daily worship, spiritual disciplines may include regular community Bible study and frequent prayer. This daily discipline seems to function at Bossey as an ongoing reminder of the Institute’s purpose to prepare students for vocations in church leadership and in fidelity to the vision of Christian unity.

The Bossey experience suggests that even a community of “strangers” can worship together in a meaningful way, that they can express and celebrate their common Christian identity even in the face of manifest and acknowledged Christian divisions and cultural differences. But such worship must be intentional. Among other things, it requires careful planning.

## The Worship Planning Process

In a master’s thesis titled “Bossey Worship: Negotiating Worship Practice in an International Ecumenical Christian Community,” a Bossey graduate from the early 1990s, B. David Rowe, documents the process:

To plan, negotiate and schedule worship at Bossey, the student body appointed a committee. Great care was taken to insure representation on the worship committee from as many continents as possible, from across the spectrum of traditions . . . The committee was responsible for creating a plan for morning prayer services, two Sunday services, the closing worship, and any other worship experiences we deemed appropriate for the community.<sup>2</sup>

- Rowe described additional features of the worship planning assignment:
1. “While Bossey’s history is rich, students had little access to it. If there was any initiation into the symbols and story of Bossey, it was the semester itself . . . .” Students are forced to navigate this complex task of planning worship without benefit of how previous graduate schools have approached the task.<sup>3</sup> “We longed for precedents and models of how students had acted, related, succeeded and failed at Bossey in the past.”<sup>4</sup>
  2. In the first week of the Graduate School, prior to the selection of the worship committee, a worship workshop provided “a starting point for producing our worship life at Bossey. We broke into groups and were told to come up with a worship experience for the whole group based on a particular theme. This raised many theological questions.”<sup>5</sup>

## Worship and Prayer in Ecumenical Formation

Rowe reports that theological and ecclesial differences surfaced frequently, especially over the topic of the Eucharist. Theological discourse that began in the worship committee gained focus and became a community-wide discussion following specific experiences of worship. One such instance occurred when a German Lutheran student approached the worship committee with a proposal to prepare a special service in German. This student was especially eager to perfect a model ecumenical liturgy.<sup>6</sup>

The service was neatly and efficiently laid out into three sections . . . the steps of the service were numbered consecutively to 35. The service closed with the song "Laudate Omnes Gentes," which was a Bossey favorite, but otherwise the service was unfamiliar to those who did not speak German and to those unfamiliar with the Lima liturgy" (upon which the service was based). Following the service there was a spectrum of negative reactions. Not only was the service unfamiliar in language and culture, in his attempt to create a service based on what he thought was an ideal ecumenical theology, the theology was out of context and failed to connect with anyone. This negative experience provided important insights for the whole community.

Rowe goes on to conclude: "[We] depended on all that we had brought with us to share at Bossey. We floundered, realizing that a commonly articulated goal, a theology which described creation and humanity as one and a gut-level desire to bring peace to a broken world were insufficient tools for creating community . . . . We were in a new place with different people with no rules of engagement. The rules we thought we had, namely those relating to a common desire to explore and further the ecumenical movement quickly were recast as sets of rules for different communities rather than rules we had in common.... We were forced to construct our own grammar, syntax and vocabulary. One place we did that was in the chapel and in the worship committee meetings."<sup>7</sup>

### Worship as an Integrative Experience

In reflecting on why worship at Bossey has been so important for North American participants, one likely explanation lies within the landscape of American religious life itself. While American students come from a religiously plural environment, they often have worshipped only in insular contexts, knowing little of the piety and practices of traditions other than their own. Thus their initial response to the Bossey worship life is a great surge of enthusiasm for its rich and varied resources. A participant from nearly thirty years ago still recalls with poignancy the inaugural worship and "the moving sound of all those brothers and sisters intoning the Lord's Prayer each in their mother tongue and cultural cadence."

It appears, however, that worship is more than its affective consequence for the participant. There is evidence that worship is a central integrating mechanism that helps participants to find meaning and purpose in their abrupt

exposure to the disconcerting range of practice and opinion. Worship appears to function as a means of attempting to reconcile competing truth claims as well as personality struggles and cultural differences. More than one respondent identifies worship not only as an opportunity for discernment, prayer, and praise, but also as a powerful means for addressing cognitive dissonance.

The experience of being a stranger presses North American students to seek internal reserves of patience, reflection, and flexibility. In these trying circumstances of confusion, upset, culture shock, fatigue, and challenge without respite, worship appears to offer both solace and resource, promoting, among other results, a greater tolerance of ambiguity among North American participants.

### **Meeting the Stranger at Prayer**

Our survey respondents, most of whom were Protestant, especially noted the impact, individually and collectively, of a deepened appreciation for Eastern Orthodox worship traditions learned from fellow Bossey students and faculty. A number attribute enduring changes in their own patterns and practices of worship to such sharing. There is no reported instance of a participant “converting” from a Protestant tradition to Orthodoxy. Rather, respondents express real gratitude for the ways in which Orthodox piety contributed to and deepened their understanding of their own traditions. To a lesser extent, Protestants responded similarly to Roman Catholic worship at Bossey. Students were somewhat more familiar with Catholic worship practices, and in this setting were able to overcome preconceived and unflattering assumptions deriving from the history of Protestant cultural hegemony in the U.S. and its attendant anti-Catholicism.

### **Implications for North American Theological Education**

Most pastors and priests in North America today are only too familiar with the “consumer” approach to religion. People select churches based on convenience or on comfort levels. Families are increasingly made up of multiple traditions if not faiths. Perspectives and skills for ministry in an age when the very notion of tradition is so confused and conflicted require special efforts on the part of theological schools. For most new pastors only weeks into their first congregations, the challenge will arise of a wedding or baptism involving persons from different faith traditions (or lack thereof) that will test their abilities—especially their pastoral and reflective skills.

The approach to worship at Bossey offers a model for preparing persons for ministry in such a context. One could imagine theological schools using Bossey’s worship committee technique to orient students to the complexities of worship life in a pluralistic age.

## Worship and Prayer in Ecumenical Formation

With a little greater intentionality, seminaries and divinity schools might find it possible to use the worship service as occasion for exposure to widely diverse forms of piety and liturgical life. Rather than the occasional and therefore unusual practice of offering “ecumenical worship,” inclusion of diverse traditions might become a standard practice. Even schools with a distinctive confessional character might develop a regular pattern of worship with neighboring or cluster schools. This arrangement would require each in turn to provide leadership that shares the distinctive nature of the respective traditions.

A special challenge for North Americans who often make judgments and decisions about worship, liturgy, and rituals based on individual preferences and aesthetic considerations is to discern the various issues in any particular worship or ritual including theology, polity, culture, and context, as well as pastoral consideration of and sensitivity to the persons involved. Further, an American tendency to avoid offense of any sort frequently serves to suppress contentious issues at the expense of new insights and growth. The worship committee mechanism offers the possibility that members of a theological community might address openly and honestly their differences and move beyond being strangers toward some semblance of community.

It is especially difficult when close friends, perhaps roommates and colleagues who share in ministry in every other respect, cannot share in the Eucharist together. Navigating through such a painful experience can bring insights moving persons beyond feelings to acknowledge and understand the layers of circumstance, identity, tradition, and belief that constitute community, ritual and worship. In an age when community is not well defined, cultures and confessions mingle, and people are transient in many ways, careful preparation and consideration of liturgy and worship are of heightened importance. In such an age, a central feature of Christian faith—corporate worship—can no longer assume the continuity of a particular people, culture or tradition. Further, the ability to lead and support a community of faith in such an age requires more than pastoral empathy; it requires reflective skills, knowledge of a broad spectrum of liturgical practices, and ability to face such issues honestly even when the recognition of differences may lay open our separations.

The goal for the worship committee is not to find easy answers that suggest homogeneous worship or “best compromise,” (creating a false or superficial unity), but, by struggling, to define a worship ethos that has integrity for all participants. As with the worship committee at Bossey, students would be expected to plan the worship life of the community considering the diversity of cultures, traditions, and so forth. In this process, presentations of particular traditions of worship and liturgy, as well as community discussions of worship and liturgical issues, would be encouraged. Patterns of worship might gradually emerge to bring coherence to the life of the community in formation.

## Foretaste of Unity

Worship as practiced at Bossey is by its nature a function of intimacy. Worship in which one leads or actively participates is an exercise in personal exposure and vulnerability to a greater or lesser extent. The accounts of participants, whether recalling an event twenty-five years distant or a seminar in the post-Cold War era, are nearly unanimous in identifying worship with the onset of their own growing sense of the nature and force of Christian unity as theological and spiritual reality. The anecdotal accounts linked again and again the experience of worship with the gleaming of ecumenical vocation and calling.

The Grace that is mediated through common worship and through truly joining in prayers of intercession, Bible study and song, leads to a glimpse (limited and obstructed to be sure) of a church greater and more faithful than one had dared imagine. It was in their experiences of worship that North American participants were likely to find the greatest measure of common ground with non-Americans. This foretaste of Christian unity offered in Bossey's thrice daily worship holds a power and attraction that permits the frankly unknown to become oddly familiar.

### ENDNOTES

1. Aidan Kavanagh, *On Liturgical Theology* (New York: Pueblo, 1984), 4.
2. B. David Rowe, *Bossey Worship: Negotiating Worship Practices in an International Ecumenical Christian Community*, (unpublished thesis for Master of Divinity honors, Candler School of Theology, 1992), 6.
3. *Ibid.*, 21.
4. *Ibid.*, 22.
5. *Ibid.*, 28.
6. *Ibid.*, 14.
7. *Ibid.*, 70-71.



# Learning a Religious Tradition: Identity by Contrast

*Bertrice Y. Wood*

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Formation of persons for service in a particular denomination or tradition in a multicultural/multiconfessional society can be an exercise in a kind of ecclesial isolationism. One prevalent way in which communions have reacted to this reality in the past two decades has been attempts to reassert communal or denominational identity in urgent bids to reclaim their place in the culture. In some cases this has included various efforts toward tighter regulation of denominationally affiliated seminaries. But approaching the task of preparing future church leadership from the vantage point of inculcating past practice may be to miss opportunities for the future mission of the church, as well as to confuse the health of the denominational organization with the viability of a tradition.

We might generally think that immersion into a global ecumenical setting would break open, broaden, and even negate one's approach to theological reflection, styles of religious expression, aspects of self-understanding. Indeed, much dislocation did happen, for all of us to some degree, in a context of global ecumenical formation. Yet, one major result of the Bossey experience is that participants have been more conscious of and committed to the religious identity and tradition they held prior to Bossey.

Respondents to our survey credit the Ecumenical Institute with helping its participants develop a keener sense of their own religious traditions and identities through learning about the religious traditions and identities of others. Statements by former students of almost every tradition were consistent in this observation. Following are several examples.

"I affirmed what I already believed as a Disciple of Christ, but broadened and enriched my concepts of wider-church."

"It helped me to appreciate my Lutheran heritage but at the same time to respect and understand the identities of others."

"Being a United Methodist is just one way of expressing faith in, and love of, God. I am more aware of both its shortcomings and of the reasons I have chosen to express myself through this particular communion."

## Learning a Religious Tradition: Identity by Contrast

Despite the fact that we are nearing the end of what may well be the most ecumenical century in Christian history, most students of theology, not only in the U.S. but in other countries as well, continue to study in seminaries steeped in the ethos of their confession or, at the very least, are required to take courses in the history and polity of their own tradition. Such training is often followed by an “entry level” assignment as priest or pastor often in a small parochial parish that continues to limit their exposure to ecumenical sensibilities. Seldom is one expected to become familiar with confessions other than one’s own. It is, then, intriguing to consider Bossey’s concept that theology students are well served if their own religious identities are nurtured in the context of exposure to diverse traditions including some quite dissimilar to their own.

There are several ways in which this “identity by contrast” dynamic functions at the Institute: certainly in terms of denominational identity or identity with a particular communion or tradition, but also in terms of the other elements that inevitably contribute to the totality of one’s identity: gender, race, nationality, culture, ethnicity. In fact, it was through the Bossey experience that I realized with considerable force that religious identity is inseparable from one’s total identity. This realization was perhaps the most powerful legacy of my time at the Ecumenical Institute.

### Defining Religious Identity and Tradition

The entry in the *Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement* titled “Tradition and Traditions” describes Tradition as “used in a variety of senses, some wide-ranging and others more restricted.” Throughout Christian history various understandings of Tradition and traditions have been handed down both in Scripture and in the history of the church. “In an inclusive sense it designates the whole of Christian faith and practice—not only doctrinal teaching but worship, norms of behavior, living experience, sanctity—as handed down within the church from Christ and the apostles to the present day.” In contemporary writings on Tradition there is a “strong preference for dynamic rather than static categories. Tradition is not so much a ‘deposit of doctrine’ as a shared style of living; not primarily an accumulation of documents and testimonies but the life of Christ and the Holy Spirit in the church.”<sup>1</sup>

One of the most remarkable features of the formation at Bossey is the multifaceted exploration of the living Tradition and traditions of Christian faith including presentations by the various confessional families, experience and explorations in worship and liturgies, and all the other subtle elements that make for distinctive expressions of the faith wrapped in language, culture, confession, and national history.

I will use my own story to illustrate how religious identity and “total” identity fit together. In my case, the elements making up that identity include, in particular, gender, race, culture, and belonging to a uniting church. For others, those elements will obviously be different. The point is, the *process* for



acknowledging and understanding these elements—a process catalyzed by provocation—will be the same for anyone, and has been the same for the great variety of Bossey participants over the years.

I came to Bossey as a recent seminary graduate, newly ordained; only the second African-American woman to be ordained in the United Church of Christ, a denomination with a history of more than 155 years of ordaining women but with a long way to go in fully receiving the ministerial gifts of both ordained and lay women. Yet I was accustomed to the ministry of women being a “front burner” issue for my denomination. For example, we in the United Church of Christ and other denominations of similar history and membership customarily gave official credence to the emergence of inclusive language. Awareness of that fact was already a strong element in my denominational identity.

Further, given the historical experience, differing cultures, and a vastly smaller degree of influence that African Americans have had in the U.S. context, I assumed that as an African American, I would not be regarded, for good or ill, as “just another American,” like all the rest. I assumed there would be an easy affinity with and acceptance by others who know the experience of being marginalized. I even assumed that I would likely be trusted in a global setting because of who I am. I also thought that there would be a comfortable compatibility with members of other United Churches. I was wrong about all of this.

Truth is, I came to realize that I had not actually thought through my assumptions going into the Bossey experience. This was because I had not yet been provoked! And that is precisely the word to use; I needed to be provoked to see myself from the perspective of the other. Whatever the constitutive elements of one’s total identity, we often take them for granted unless provoked to define them explicitly.

From a North American viewpoint, I had already experienced an “ecumenical” education. At an interdenominational seminary such as Yale Divinity School there was certainly some degree of contrast and conflict, compounded by the dynamics of being among the racial and (in the early 1970s) gender minorities. But at Bossey that American ecumenical theological milieu seemed relatively insubstantial given the added dimensions of nationality, culture, language, class, and socio-political experiences and commitments characterizing my (or any other) class of Bossey students.

Truth is, prior to attending the Ecumenical Institute, participants from the rich and powerful nations of the West generally do not realize how multifaceted and multidimensional our religious identities actually are. Ironically we who come from nations and cultures that have had such an incredible level of influence on the circumstances of those from other nations have the most to gain from an international, ecumenical baptism. Strange as this may sound, I believe this true even for persons like myself who have always known some level of dislocation from a minority American ethos. Even as an African American and

## Learning a Religious Tradition: Identity by Contrast

a Yale Divinity School graduate, my greatest learnings occurred in the rich encounters at Bossey.

I learned most about what was of significant religious value to me at moments when others said, in effect, “Who cares?” about my deeply held concerns and unexamined assumptions. In the shock of such questioning or such apathy, one quickly comes to recognize issues that are important to one’s identity. For me these included:

*Ordination and ministry for women.* For some at Bossey, this conviction was a strange curiosity; it was an irrelevant issue for others struggling against women’s illiteracy and for their basic human rights; for still others it was a heretical proposition.

*Inclusive language.* Either by conviction or convenience, this was for some a problem exclusive to the English language; for others it was of no concern as they struggle to work in a colonial language, most often English, that is not their own and will never be the vehicle for comfortably expressing what matters most to them.

*The struggles of African Americans.* This issue was perhaps a source of insights useful to other groups of marginalized people, but it was certainly no total exoneration from the suspicions and anger about American power held by Bossey students from other nations.

*United Churches.* This was a point of ecclesiastical disagreement. Some said they demonstrate a legacy of seeking to address the multiplicity and divisiveness of churches. Others claim they have become united and remain uniting from varying traditions without addressing the respective and vastly differing theological and ethical perspectives.

A second aspect of self-discovery emerged as an insight on the interplay of my American culture and my religious identity. Certainly, because my seminary education took place during the 1970s at a liberal and diversified institution, I had been formally inducted into a process of theological reflection that took seriously one’s starting place in life. I knew intuitively as well as through study that, as an African American, and as a woman, these identities deeply influenced my reading of scripture and my perception of God’s ongoing revelation. But it was quite a dislocating epiphany to realize that one is seen by others first and foremost as an American, irrespective of race and gender, as a bearer of U.S. culture and power and that others heard in every biblical or theological reflection an American perspective, indeed bias, informing what I said on religious matters. I observed in my non-African-American colleagues from the U.S. an even greater sense of dislocation attack, confusion, and uncertainty about what were allowable and sufficiently truthful beliefs.

As one might assume, students from any one national context will react differently to such intense challenges. For different groupings the challenges were different, and within each group reactions varied. As North Americans,

we each reacted differently to these challenges. A few became quite defensive, unwilling to consider questions about the validity of the cultural lenses we use for reading God's Word. Others were initially ready to cast away any perspectives they had held. Before finishing our term at Bossey, most of the U.S. students came to the point of appreciating and learning from the critiques of our religious assumptions.

My religious identity has for most of my life been nurtured in a tradition that is stridently non-confessional, preferring communal statements of faith over creedal formulations. I would have described the tradition and my own beliefs as liberal, non-parochial, open to embracing within the faith community a diversity of perspectives and beliefs. Yet when I found myself as obstinate about my tradition's perspectives about emerging ideas of women in the church as others were about their tradition's adherence to traditional roles, I became aware of how parochial, in fact, we can all be about matters as important as our religious convictions.

Personally, I came away no less convinced about how important my gender is to my discernment of God's presence in my life and of God's Word to the church in this time. The same is true of race and national identity. There is something to be said for having to explain to the unconvinced what is of value and truth in one's religious identity and concerns, having integrated, one hopes, what of value and truth others have offered. The point of the explanation is not to convert others but to clarify and renew one's own sensibilities and commitments. We had to face squarely what we truly believed and what was superfluous or contradictory.

I recall the moment a group of participants from "united" churches worked on the worship service we would collectively lead, when I asked that we use inclusive language. One of the members, a man for whom English was not the language of origin (as was true for all the others in the group) commented that his U.S. missionary English teacher had told him that "man" referred to everyone. My first reaction was to think the teacher had told him outdated information. The more enduring lesson I learned was to become more, not less, committed to a new awareness of how God's purposes of justice and reconciliation are supported or hindered by the ways in which human language reflects our valuing of persons according to gender, race, and class.

I also recall debates I had with some of the participants from South Africa, all of whom were men. In the process of learning about the insidiousness of apartheid and its similarities and dissimilarities to racism in the U.S., I became even more deeply rooted in my identity as a religious person who is, inseparably, female of African heritage raised within the African-American culture of the U.S. I may never know whether my perspectives as a woman challenged my male colleagues to expand their struggle against oppression to account for the evils of sexism as well as of racism. I may never know if they trusted me in spite of the American power I represented to them. Perhaps I was not deserving of such trust.

## Learning a Religious Tradition: Identity by Contrast

I do know that my awareness of the evils of racism, sexism, economic injustice, and the imbalance of power was, while not new, certainly sharpened by interactions with other students at Bossey. Most of us from the U.S. had learned of the importance of the church's participation in God's mission in these liberating matters. At the Ecumenical Institute, we took the step beyond learning to being *educated*, led forward in experience and commitment.

### National and Cultural Aspects of Identity

One of the customs at Bossey is for each nationality group to present a cultural evening for the entire Graduate School. We in the U.S. group spent considerable time fretting over what we could share that was not already known, even perhaps resented, by our classmates. After all, between our global missionary and business presence, our clothes, music, movies, religious teachings, and styles of worship have been exported widely around the world. Everyone knew all about who we were and where we came from and, so we feared, would berate us if we dared to flaunt it again.

Wisely or not, we chose to host a "typical" Thanksgiving meal and evening. We sensed that Thanksgiving was a reflection of the impact that the Judeo-Christian tradition has had on the development of civil religion in the U.S. What began as a religious feast has been absorbed into our now quite secularized culture. Those of us who are consciously religious were able to articulate our comfort and discomfort with how easy it is to practice our religious ceremonies, recognizing how religious meaning has become overshadowed by commercial and other secular interests. We also had come to understand, from our colleagues who live where the Christian community is in the religious minority, the privilege and burden of being in the religious, at least nominally religious, majority. Growing up in a "Christian" nation had dulled our sense of what is faithfully Christian. Our Bossey classmates were able to challenge us to articulate questions and seek answers we had not so seriously entertained before, even for our most sacred, secularized Holy Days, such as Thanksgiving or Christmas.

In preparing for a Thanksgiving feast, we also knew that we needed to account for the religious and cultural insensitivity and oppression of our forebears toward the Native American peoples as the Christian community originally celebrated and continues to celebrate Thanksgiving.

In all our relationships we recognized the privilege shared by those of us for whom English is our first language. English is *de facto* the international language. As we watched colleagues struggle to express themselves in this foreign idiom, we were forced to choose words carefully or risk not being understood. The same was true of listening to others. Where language is not held in common, listening with greater intensity must be practiced. There is much to be said for "ecumenical English"; that communication of English spoken as a first language in various parts of the world and as a second, third,

or fourth language in other parts. It may not pass any particular test of grammar or vocabulary, yet it does reflect a discipline of intentionality required to communicate matters of profound spiritual importance. One gains a much better understanding of what one believes when one has to articulate it for persons who do not know your particular idioms or rhetorical expressions.

By expanding narrowly construed parameters of what constitutes religious identity or religious tradition, the Ecumenical Institute has pioneered in educational programs that are a meeting ground for the world of Christian traditions and identities. Participants typically have come to realize how inseparable are their other identities from their religious identities. One participant put it this way: "The fact that it always involves an international community of persons from a variety of religious traditions in a common discipline of study, worship, work, and common daily life in a way that values each person but at the same time challenges everyone to stretch beyond the limits of his or her experience. It provides room to rediscover one's own tradition through the experiences of others. It encourages small group method . . . and a special approach to Bible study and worship, which makes it ecumenical and not simply eclectic."

### **Implications for Theological Education in North America**

How do we help persons, clergy and laity, learn about what is of value and truth in their religious identity and tradition? What does it mean to raise people in a tradition? Certainly, the goal is not intolerant loyalty to a tradition. Appreciation of the value and truth of one's own tradition is much richer and more fertile if understood as part of a much larger living tradition with many varied, sometimes even competing, values and truths. It probably is not possible to replicate the Bossey experience in the U.S. or in other Western, English-language settings. Nor is it possible to offer large numbers of clergy and laity the opportunity to participate in either a short or longer-term course at the Ecumenical Institute. However, given the domestic and international influence of North American churches and the increasing diversification of our population, it is critical that current and future leaders of our churches receive the kind of exposure and challenge that leads one to deeper clarification and scrutiny of one's assumed (and taken for granted) religious identity.

Is the process of theological education on this continent, which is quite good at offering and expecting students to take courses about religions other than Christianity and religious perspectives other than those of a European-American male center of influence, designed to clarify and be more precise about one's own identity and religious expression? Or are students allowed simply to be scientific observers of others, rather than encouraged to be seekers on their own? Ecumenical formation is not about borrowing or appropriating the traditions and practices of the other. It is, rather, to have one's own sense of

## Learning a Religious Tradition: Identity by Contrast

truth and religious expression confronted and transformed and understood from within, not outside or above, the *oikumene*.

Denominations that require their students who attend interdenominational seminaries to spend at least some time in their denomination's seminaries might also require their students at a denominational school to spend some time elsewhere. Just as most students take a course in their own communion's worship and polity, perhaps they should take courses in the worship and polities of other communions. Surely, international students at U.S. seminaries could be better listened to for what they tell us about ourselves as much as about themselves. These are but a few suggestions, and certainly more and better ideas may emerge as students and faculty consider the possibilities.

### Following a Different Path

Early in this essay I mentioned that my own learning has followed a somewhat unusual path. This has continued to be true after Bossey. After twenty-one years of ministering in international and national settings, ministry which began with the 1975-76 Bossey Graduate School and continued with a few years on the staff of the World Council of Churches followed by more than fifteen years on the staff in the national setting of the United Church of Christ, I have recently been called to the pastoral ministry of a local UCC congregation.

I am quite conscious of the particular dynamics of this congregation—African American, urban, and deeply rooted in the traditions of congregationalism. I am also quite conscious of the fact that, to the extent that persons in professional ministry may move among the various settings of the church—local, national, denominational, ecumenical, global—it is usually the case that the local parish is the first setting for ministry. Thus, I may have moved in “reverse order.” Yet, if it is true that we may develop our own religious identities by learning in situations of contrast, then the churches may want to reconsider the common assumptions about service in certain settings before one is “promoted” to another “level” of ministry.

Having traveled a path of ministry that began professionally in a global setting, then moved to a national denominational setting but with responsibilities for global and ecumenical relationships and programs, I am now happily and gratefully serving in a local, culturally specific community. I wish that I could say that it is easy consciously to incorporate a global perspective into local pastoral ministry. It is not. Yet I do know since my Bossey experience that this challenge is not to be abandoned. And, I do understand much more about myself, my identities, especially my religious identity, and that of the community in which I live, work, and serve.

#### ENDNOTE

1. Kallistos Ware, “Tradition and Traditions,” *Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement* (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1991), 1013-1017.

# Does What Is Taught at Bossey Equal What Is Learned?

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Because my daily work involves questions about the effectiveness of the theological education offered by a large group of North American institutions, the invitation to participate in the research team that has examined the contribution of the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey constituted a sort of bus-driver's holiday for me. The overwhelmingly positive assessments by respondents to our survey questions and by the participants in four regional hearings were not a great surprise: the lengthy survey instrument and the requirement that those who attended the hearings pay their own way would have discouraged any but the most enthusiastic supporters of Bossey (or those whose experience was so unhappy that they would welcome any opportunity to register it). Accrediting committees hear similarly glowing reports from the groups of students and graduates they meet each week, usually with just enough complaint from the deeply disgruntled as is needed to trust all the positive findings.

A surprise for the research committee in the Bossey assessment, however, was the consistency of opinions expressed about how much participants had learned, how deeply graduates had been affected as persons and as religious leaders, how abiding the results had been—and how little these outcomes depended on the specific course of study in which Bossey participants had been enrolled. Across the fifty years of graduate schools and shorter institutes, seminars, and workshops, students emphasized how profound their learning had been, even when they also faulted (or valued less highly) the Institute's formal classroom instruction. From the survey and every conversation, the assessment team concluded that much has been learned over the years at Bossey, but that what was learned by no means equaled what was taught, at least in the narrowest sense of formal classroom instruction.

The larger task, then, was to identify the conditions and experiences beyond classroom teaching that had produced such remarkable learning by such diverse students over a long period of time. As the project considered an additional question, whether Bossey's achievement could be replicated in other settings, one factor became clear. Bossey outcomes have been neither serendipitous nor accidental. The Institute's success has come from intentionally interdependent patterns of activity that include Bible study, worship, common meals, required periods of residence, abundant opportunities for casual interaction, as well as formal instruction—and all of these in a secluded retreat

## Does What Is Taught at Bossey Equal What Is Learned?

setting, an hour's drive from the headquarters of the World Council of Churches, in an environment where almost none of the participants is genuinely at home. If the conscious goal of Bossey has consistently been to develop an ecumenical perspective and commitment among the participants, it has been reached by an over-arching experience that is recognizably greater than the sum of its parts.

### **Introduction to Terms . . . and to Bossey's Curriculum**

The term curriculum is often understood as the course of study completed through a pattern of formal courses, lectures, readings, and assignments. Sometimes it is regarded more broadly as a whole set of experiences with a formative aim.<sup>1</sup> Many of Bossey's graduates distinguished the former—which they called the “explicit” or “formal” curriculum—from the latter, referred to as the Institute's “implicit” or “informal” curriculum. When asked to evaluate the educational methodology of Bossey, U.S. participants gave relatively lower ratings to the classroom experience and teaching methodology than to other features of the program: the informal exchange with peers, the exposure to multiplicity, the practices of ecumenical worship, the themes of study, and the site itself. In reviewing these integrated elements, participants reported that Bossey's overall “curriculum” had very strongly helped to define their vocations and had influenced their work in lasting ways.

Any consideration of what has been taught and learned at the Ecumenical Institute needs to take into account the roads by which participants reached Bossey. For some, most often students from developing nations, attendance followed a rigorous process of nomination and selection. These participants represented church bodies and regional assemblies that identified them as emerging leaders and regarded the Bossey experience as an essential element of their formation. Others—and the U.S. respondents to the research project's survey were typically from this category—were self-selected. Even when endorsed or sponsored by local churches and larger denominations, these latter candidates typically had chosen to study at Bossey for purposes they themselves had discerned. Unlike the two-thirds-world churches, their sponsors rarely “commissioned” them, nor did the sponsors usually anticipate their return to specific formal leadership positions for which they were being prepared. Both categories, however, included students who arrived at Bossey with projects clearly in mind, and whose learning was largely self-directed, as well as students who depended primarily on teaching directed by others.

In the research project's interviews, former lecturers, tutors, and students all noted that Bossey expanded their definitions of “teacher” and “learner”: not only did the teachers teach, not only did the students learn, but the reverse happened as well. Further, not everyone learned the same things from the same “lessons” offered at the same time. Even more dramatically, according to participants, the students learned more from one another than from the regular “teachers.”



Many had arrived at the Institute with fixed expectations of educational and ministerial roles, but they found those expectations of themselves and others changed by their experience. A hallmark of the Bossey experience, in the participants' memories, has been the development of a mutuality that often set the direction for their subsequent ministry and teaching. In the words of one pastor who studied in the graduate program in 1969-70, Bossey forged "a living community, international and ecumenical, not just a study program, [where] everyone learns from everyone in a pattern far better than the formal Meister teacher/pupil model." A seminary professor who attended the graduate school ten years later wrote: "Its methodology is grounded in a community of lecturing and of faith—each one is a lecturer and a teacher, faculty and students alike— experiential and theological, spiritual and political, and integrally in conversation throughout."

## **Methods of Delivery**

The graduate school at Bossey developed from earlier formats of workshops, training courses, and conferences. But shorter educational events also maintained the Bossey "formula" that emerged in the graduate school: lectures and small group discussions, regularly scheduled Bible study and worship, informal interaction among participants who lived together at the chateau or another nearby house, Le Petit Bossey, and occasional field trips (to the World Council of Churches' headquarters in Geneva, to Berlin, to Rome, to nearby congregations). This pattern of activity was consistently supported by the opportunities to interact with a stream of visitors, often leading international ecumenists, and to explore the rich (albeit incompletely catalogued) holdings of the Institute's library.

North American participants described the educational work of Bossey as taking place at many levels. First there are programs (courses, seminars, conferences, a semester-long graduate term), which are described in brochures, syllabi, and course outlines, and for which people registered and sometimes received transcribed credit in home institutions. A second category of learning includes activities beyond the course descriptions that the organizers had intended (but did not always acknowledge) and that the arriving participants had hoped for or been open to (such as small-group work and Bible study, as well as the Bossey experience of living in community). Finally, there is the genuinely unplanned and accidental, seized upon by some or by all in a given group, and occasionally at the core of what was learned, remembered, and acted upon in the long term.

One church leader, who attended several program seminars and conferences in the 1960s and 1970s, described the Ecumenical Institute's greatest strength in this way: "[Bossey] always involves an international community of persons from a variety of religious traditions in a common discipline of study, worship, work and common daily life in a way that values each person but at

## Does What Is Taught at Bossey Equal What Is Learned?

the same time challenges everyone to stretch beyond the limits of his or her experience. It provides room to rediscover one's own tradition(s) through the experience of others. It encourages small group methods . . . and a special approach to Bible study and worship which made it ecumenical but not simply eclectic." Another strength identified by several participants was the educational program's "world-wide outlook [in] its attempts to show political and social implications of faith." Following an announced topic, with often quite formal lectures, the program still, in the words of a pastor who participated in the graduate program in the late 1970s, "relied upon the experience and expertise of the participants as the participants live out an ecumenical model of the church. That is, we practiced what we professed as we were learning how to profess."

Throughout the surveys, participants identified as the source of their learning a consistent set of factors: the mix of students, resources for renewal, solid content, significant teachers, and within those elements, they recognized that Bossey had capitalized upon available resources by its allowance for a great measure of flexibility, and that the strength of the faculty was not only their professional expertise but the quality of relationships they shared with participants in the residential community. These effects were heightened, many noted, by the intensity of the experience. One former faculty member described the curriculum's rhythm as embracing four components: content, experience, reflection, and integration. Participants often commented that the last of these is regularly accomplished powerfully through the daily Bible studies that follow the theme of the program but offer a different context for engagement and response.

Participants did not judge all the educational activities as effective. One graduate from 1965-66 wrote hopefully: "I assume that in thirty years the educational methodology has changed radically and is no longer the German lecture style." Other North American participants were similarly dissatisfied by a style of presentation that they perceived as too hierarchical, "straitlaced," and insufficiently inclusive. Evaluating the classroom methodology, several noted that the success of their programs had been undermined by the lack of continuity among the faculty, by shortfalls in organizational efficiency, and by outdated methods of instruction. In the context of their appreciative reminiscence about life-changing experiences at Bossey, some graduates' tone changed when they recalled their frustration and disappointment with the classroom teaching, but their comments usually isolated that portion from the Institute's wider teaching activities.

These criticisms point to one of the Institute's greatest instructional challenges: the response to the range of different cultural expectations of formal education, noted above particularly in reference to the status and role of teachers. For example, contemporary students from Asia and Africa are used to—and comfortable with—a formal lecture style. U.S. students, in contrast, have come to expect more informal methods and exchange. In acknowledging

these cultural differences, some respondents identified them as distinctive opportunities in the curriculum for “liberating learning”: Bossey provided them with a laboratory setting for social analysis, and simultaneously required them to reflect on their own experiences.

## **Diversity and Environment**

In their attempts to specify, often many years later, what and how they had learned at Bossey, many graduates cited the formative influence of diversity and the advantages of the Institute’s setting. One student described Bossey’s distinctive contribution as its “mix of individuals, churches, languages, perspectives.” Others underlined the “security” they felt in dealing with differences there. The Institute assembled “a diverse international group for dialogue in a situation of mutual respect . . . providing simultaneous translation in several languages, forming the students into a community that lives, cries, prays together.”

Not that such a community was easily achieved. One seminary professor recalled that, “Sometimes it was chaotic and highly conflicted, inviting people into a residential community for worship, study, play, eating together, etc. Exposing people to different points of view. Experiencing different types of worship, giving space for leadership to emerge in the group. Encouraging students to articulate their views and differences.” For some, the most vivid memories involved the resolutions their cohort groups found for the tensions they had experienced in worship, community life, and the classroom. In our project’s North American regional gatherings, many regarded the perspectives they had gained from this intensive encounter with diversity as an essential element of Bossey’s lasting legacy for their ministry and leadership, their spirituality and ecclesiology. A pastor who attended two programs referred to “a deep sense of oneness of our world—an abiding compassion that stems from seeing a ‘face’ whenever another country is named in the news!”

When asked to assess whether the effects of the Ecumenical Institute could be achieved in other settings or through other formats, many participants described the powerful impact of the place itself and of their residency in the community. A student from one of the first graduate programs said, “The incredible setting of Bossey is inseparable from the total experience. The facilities, location, staff, traditions are unique.” In contrast, another respondent wrote: “Bossey [is] a point of gathering and a place of inspiration, but it is not just the place . . . I believe that the experience can be replicated if a mix of people come together with intentional commitment and if the experience is framed to link study, small groups, free sharing, worship and worship planning, service/ action, and time for presence and interchange.”

Participants value the Bossey setting as a specific location where “the sounds of cowbells from the pasture below” are a reminder of its “relative isolation from the rest of the world,” though it is also “near enough to Geneva

## Does What Is Taught at Bossey Equal What Is Learned?

to make it possible to utilize resources of the international organizations there.” Beyond these geographical factors, Bossey is also the container of lived experience of ecumenism and community, an environment that both supports and teaches. Like other retreat settings, some noted, Bossey serves as a crucible where participants, at a distance from home and one’s normal daily occupations, encounter a whole that supports, integrates, and allows time for the assimilation of the parts.

### **Some Implications for ATS Schools**

In the surveys and consultations of this research project, the North American participants in the Ecumenical Institute’s programs often described them as a model for theological education and ministerial formation. Whatever its deficiencies in methodology or consistency, the formal educational program at Bossey has clearly achieved a lasting impact for its graduates in their commitment to ecumenism, their eagerness for multicultural dialogue, and their capacity for leadership in a variety of settings. This impact has depended not only on the explicit curriculum followed by students, but also on the broader set of experiences to which they were exposed and to which they contributed. Can the learnings from this history contribute to the broader discussion of quality and effectiveness in theological education? This question requires looking beyond the Bossey project’s data to the experience of a larger North American community of schools and students.

Earlier in this essay, I commented that the Bossey project has offered me a bus-driver’s holiday: the chance to try out my skills learned behind a certain wheel on a different highway. For the past four years, I have participated in another effort, the comprehensive redevelopment of accrediting standards, undertaken by The Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada, and focused on the question, what is the good theological school? That process was supported and enriched by recent research about basic issues in theological education, particularly the previous decade’s rich discussion about the nature of the theological curriculum. The goals for ATS were to develop a set of standards that would describe minimum levels of quality across a community of schools increasingly diverse in communion, purpose, enrollment, scale, location, and governance; and to include within the standards objectives that would challenge and assist the improvement of every school.

In the standards, adopted in June 1996, theological schools are defined as “communities of faith and learning guided by a theological vision.” For the first time in sixty years of accreditation, the standards give attention specifically to the interrelated work of learning, teaching, and research—understood comprehensively as theological scholarship—and to the curriculum by which this work is formally ordered.

The “over-arching goal” of a theological school, according to the ATS redeveloped standards, is “the development of theological understanding, that is, aptitude for theological reflection and wisdom pertaining to responsible life in faith.” Included in that over-arching purpose are other goals related to spiritual awareness, character development, intellectual growth, and abilities for ministry. One distinctive contribution of these new standards is to assert that “these goals, and the processes and practices leading to their attainment, are normally intimately interwoven and should not be separated from one another.”<sup>2</sup> The standards set forth more specific guidelines for the personnel, other resources, and practices seen as necessary for the accomplishment of these goals in the good theological school. For individual graduate degree programs, the standards include requirements both for the kind and range of instructional content, and for the full set of experiences (fieldwork, residency, duration of study) needed to achieve the curriculum’s goals.

In our assessment project, many anecdotes about Bossey’s impact seemed almost to paraphrase the preceding statements about quality, curriculum, and formation from the ATS standards. The Ecumenical Institute has forged a “community of faith and learning” intended to “foster in its participants an ecumenical understanding” that would lead them to ongoing reflection and to responsible ecumenical practice. To the larger conversation about the theological curriculum and ecumenical formation, Bossey can contribute its understanding and practices of the interrelatedness of teaching and learning, and its experience of interweaving formal instruction with other formative opportunities in a residential setting.

## **Learning More Than What Is Taught**

The preceding paragraphs and the other essays in this volume have attempted to explore the elements of Bossey’s successful formula: the structure of experiences (somewhat directed, somewhat open-ended), the pattern of activities, the opportunities for peer learning, the emphasis on an important theme, the role of teachers, the values of diversity, the significance of setting where residency is required for a specified time, the balance of input and reflection, of immersion and retreat, of controlled alienation and community life.

A recent seminary graduate who attended the Bossey graduate school in the early 1990s wrote: “Bossey was the single best educational experience of my life . . . the culmination of my seminary education and the final encouragement and inspiration I needed to enter ordained ministry . . . [From these experiences] I feel more deeply Christian—connected with Christians across different histories, traditions and cultures—and more deeply committed to difficult theological grappling with issues.” Not all theological students can or should go to Bossey, but this seminarian’s assessment of its contribution to his

## Does What Is Taught at Bossey Equal What Is Learned?

formation—similar to many other such statements—represents a goal that other schools would want to replicate.

During preparation for redevelopment of the ATS standards, similar stories and parallel testimony emerged about the particular ways in which theological education has shaped, and is shaping, the faith and ministry of students, faculty, and the larger community. Travel seminars to communities of the two-thirds world, field education that takes students to nearby locations but outside their familiar environments, intensive courses offered at extension sites, new models of ministerial formation contextualized within congregations, even pilot programs that complement short-term residency with ongoing interactive electronic delivery of courses on the Internet; in all of these, as well as in more traditional academic programs, graduates of ATS schools have reported similar conclusions to those in the Bossey assessment.

Through well-planned experiences of several different sorts, with a diverse community of inquirers, and with faculty who share an openness to discovery, students learn more than they are explicitly taught, and their learning moves beyond information to a renewed faith and a heightened commitment. In the report of fifty years of ecumenical learning at Bossey, there is much that offers hope to theological institutions that share a common task and seek models of effective education.

### ENDNOTES

1. cf. George Schner's survey of curriculum in *Education for Ministry: Reform and Renewal in Theological Education*, (Kansas City: Sheed & Ward, 1993), ch. 8.
2. *ATS Bulletin 42*, Part 3, Standards 1 and 4.1.1.

# Two Agendas for Ecumenical Formation

*Heidi Hadsell*

*Ecumenical Institute*

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At the founding moments of Bossey, “while many young Christians were assessing the Church as hopelessly inadequate and irrelevant for the new world emerging from the ruins of the Second World War, others, such as the pioneers of the modern ecumenical movement, were calling her to an exercise of self-evaluation and penitence, as a prerequisite to new beginnings.”<sup>1</sup> It was in this context that the first courses were offered at Bossey, initially drawing participants primarily from the resistance movement, the armies, and from concentration camps.

As WCC founding head W.A. Visser ‘t Hooft described those initial moments:

The idea of creating an ecumenical training center sprang from the growing awareness of the Church’s inability to respond to the challenges of the modern world, its powerlessness against the advance of secularization and paganization. This concern for radical spiritual reconstruction starting with the Church itself, was constantly present in the conversations. It was agreed from the outset that the emphasis of the Institute’s teaching would be on the foundations of the Christian faith and, in particular, the Bible. It should be a place where men and women from all the member churches of the ecumenical movement can learn together to give and to receive, can learn to struggle for one another, thus accepting the tension between truth and unity which is at the heart of all true ecumenical community. The program of the Institute thus comprises three main subject areas: the Bible, the world, the universal Church.<sup>2</sup>

From its earliest moments, the programs of the Ecumenical Institute have been committed to what we now call ecumenical formation. Church leadership is created not only through academic preparation, but also through dynamic and integrative “living” experiences.

Though the Bossey methodology has evolved over the decades, it has neither a fixed prescription of formation, nor is it always successful. As the preceding articles have suggested, much at the Ecumenical Institute seems to operate in terms of pairs of contrasting, yet ultimately complementary, concepts: unlearning and learning; dissonance and resolution; estrangement and community; explicit and implicit curriculum; identity by contrast. Another

## Two Agendas for Ecumenical Formation

primary set of opposites might be termed internal and external. Just as Bossey operates with both explicit and implicit curricula, it also operates with an “internal” and an “external” agenda. The internal agenda includes all that goes into the planning of any given Graduate School term or program seminar—both the formal and informal aspects. The external is what the participants bring to Bossey in terms of their experiences in the world: we call this element “the world’s agenda.”

Certainly the world’s agenda—the complex of events, actions, attitudes, and questions that comprise the blooming, buzzing confusion at a given moment—influences any educational agenda in some way. Just think of the numbers of courses now offered in feminist theology or environmental ethics at seminaries. But Bossey takes its relationship with the world a step further than do most educational programs. While its physical setting is somewhat removed and definitely pastoral, it lets the world into that setting, especially in the classroom, in unusual and dramatic ways. Yet it is surely due at least partially to the removed setting and to the communal living experience that participants have an ultimate feeling of safety in which such discussions can take place. The place is safe; the content is invariably not. The combination works.

Despite whatever themes are chosen, whatever curriculum is planned, staff are always prepared to let the world’s agenda intrude in a very direct way and to become part of or even the main topic of discussion. In the past 30 years, examples of the world’s agenda intruding at Bossey have included the Vietnam War, the fall of the Iron Curtain, the Gulf War, and, most recently, the warfare in such African countries as Rwanda and Burundi.

These issues are not kept on the sidelines or out of the classroom to be reserved only for evening or “in-between” discussion. They are allowed to interrupt and to upset prior plans if that is what the group deems appropriate. Sometimes the intrusions are abrupt or rude; emotions become part of classroom discussion in ways that are not common. This receptivity to the world’s agenda is part of the flexibility—and frustration—that is understood as healthy—even necessary—for real understanding and transformation to occur.

Since the inception of the Ecumenical Institute, and under the leadership of successive academic and program staff persons, pedagogy at Bossey has been planned to incorporate the two agendas: first, the rather traditional, formal, and academic/programmatic agenda, reflecting current themes and issues important to the ecumenical movement and expressing the history and core values of that movement; and the world’s agenda, arising from the specific personal experiences and issues the students themselves bring from their incredibly varied and mixed denominational, linguistic, national, and ethnic traditions.

While the inclusion of each of these agendas at the Ecumenical Institute has not always been accomplished evenly, smoothly, or without conflict, our research suggests that in both the Graduate School and in the various shorter seminars, the students learn from both agendas and from the interaction



between them. The more influential learning over time, however, seems actually to derive more often from the world's agenda brought by the students to Bossey, than from the more structured and formal one.

As many U.S. seminaries rapidly become more denominationally, culturally, and ethnically plural, they too struggle with these two agendas in new and unexpected ways. What happens at Bossey intentionally and intensely is increasingly mirrored circumstantially in U.S. theological education. Thus Bossey can be a helpful conversation partner as U.S. theological faculties seek both to understand their own experiences of plurality and the agenda it imposes, and to comprehend the implications of that plurality for teaching and learning in their own institutions.

## **The Graduate School**

For each Graduate School term at Bossey, the staff designates a formal theme around which the curriculum is organized. These themes are selected in relation to the then-current mission of the World Council as well as to issues emerging among Christian communities around the world. Among the many themes since the first Graduate School of 1952-53, most correspond to the three areas of the Council's work: Faith and Order, Church and Society, Mission and Evangelism—and are about equally represented over the years. In recent years, the range of themes has included: Education for Koinonia, Gospel and Culture, Come Holy Spirit—Renew the Whole Creation, and Towards an Inclusive Community. In its choice of themes, Bossey seeks to be in dialogue with but not limited by the work of the WCC. It sees itself as both informed by but also informing the ongoing thought of the Council, and of the ecumenical movement in general.

In addition to the thematic emphases, the Graduate School has recently begun to include a "core" curriculum designed to ensure that each student learns the history and the varied activities of the ecumenical movement. This addition of a common core was in part a response to the fact that students do not arrive fully informed by or even aware of key elements and moments in the life of the ecumenical movement, a problem which theological faculties in the U.S. also confront. Rather, students arrive at Bossey having had their own experiences of ecumenicity, locally and/or regionally, but most will not have reflected upon those experiences in any intentional or systematic manner. Common reading assigned before arrival is helpful in constructing a common stock of knowledge, and the core curriculum taught at Bossey continues this process.

The variety and immediacy of the experiences and personal stories brought to Bossey by the participants themselves have been so manifest and so powerful that even the most rigid curriculum cannot ignore them. Imagine then the power and the contribution that emerges when the Bossey curriculum fully anticipates and plans for these components to emerge, thus enabling the faculty

## Two Agendas for Ecumenical Formation

to shape each term according to the particular persons present and the experiences they bring.

Each year, inevitably, the Bossey student body has included students, and sometimes faculty, who were from just those places that the world was watching, from just those Christian communities most involved in those places, and from just those communities most productive of new and creative theological and biblical reflection. Thus, students from South Africa, the Southern Cone of South America, Korea, East Africa, Eastern and Central Europe have over the years helped shape the learning agenda of the Bossey Graduate School in unique and unexpected ways.

The “total immersion” of communal living is another dimension of the Bossey experience that provides almost unlimited opportunity for the world’s agenda to impose itself on students, sometimes in spite of themselves. Because students and faculty have eaten together, lived together, worshipped together, watched TV and played sports together, as well as attended class together, they have not escaped the tensions and themes the world imposes. As one student wrote, “As a small community for a few days or a semester, Bossey is the ideal Gestalt for corporate learning. The immediacy and intimacy of students and teachers is evident in classes, dining, worship, and social hours.”

In daily conversations with one another, students have encountered the concrete and immediate life of the church in the world and have had occasion to ask themselves repeatedly how and where God acts in that world. Students have come expecting a formal academic agenda and expecting to be challenged by conciliar and confessional differences. They have not often come, however, expecting the learning that takes place across cultures and economic, political and ideological lines—divisions that demonstrate eloquently how Christ is both borne by and embedded in culture and context.

Responding to the two learning agendas, Bossey’s formal curriculum and the world’s imposition, the educational methodology at the Graduate School has become, across the years, both formal and informal, deductive and inductive, structured and open-ended. Students have come to learn about the ecumenical movement, but they have come also *as* the ecumenical movement. They have been distanced from their local contexts and commitments, but they have also returned to those contexts and commitments; hence they have not left those behind or set them aside even amidst the very different atmosphere of Bossey. As Bossey faculty member Julio de Santa Ana notes:

It is part of the methodology of ecumenical research that it is born from praxis and returns to praxis . . . . The intention is not to produce ‘academic enlightenment’ but to produce ways for meaningful action by Christian communities . . . . Ecumenical research and ecumenical formation are part of the same process of trying to be faithful to the gospel of Jesus Christ in concrete situations where life is at stake and to participate meaningfully in the fulfillment of God’s mission.<sup>3</sup>

## **Program Seminars**

Our research indicates that the shorter Bossey seminars, aimed primarily at lay leadership and structured around specific issues, have shared the basic characteristics of the Graduate School. As in the School, seminar participants have arrived with passions, knowledge, and experiences that have shaped the seminars in which they participated, which in turn have shaped the participants themselves in often powerful and transforming ways. An early participant wrote, for example:

The pressure of the German group at Bossey in 1948 was particularly significant. Born in Hungary of Jewish ancestry, a Hitler refugee, I harbored a deep distrust toward all Germans, a wholesale prejudice. Thanks to those at Bossey, I learned to consider Germans once again as individuals. Against the background of the Holocaust, in which so many of my own relatives and friends in Hungary and Austria perished, I feel that I owe Bossey a lot—even for this.

The struggle to be both open to the other, and at the same time self-critical, has been an important but difficult balance for students to maintain, along with being aware of the limitations of all traditions and thought as well as their possibilities and gifts.

With teaching and learning at Bossey incorporating both formal and informal, ecumenical and contextual, and implicit and explicit components, with the intensity of the classroom, living, and worship experiences both estranging and challenging students, with the plurality and boldness of the programs often catching participants unprepared, the metaphor for Bossey that expresses its spirit most cogently is that coined by Hans-Reudi Weber: Bossey, he maintains, is a “laboratory for ecumenical living.”

## **A Laboratory for Theological Education**

Like a laboratory, Bossey is open-ended, experimental and experiential, and what is learned there, from both failure and success, in a relatively controlled and intense environment, reflects key elements often not yet clearly articulated or conceptually understood in the life of the larger church and world. Yet these learnings will be essential to leadership in twenty-first century Christianity, in both context and culture. As a laboratory, Bossey can be helpful in the larger arena of theological education, an arena that shares the same concerns and questions that Bossey has faced. These questions constitute the content of what might become a fruitful conversation between Bossey and theological schools and colleges across the world. They include:

## Two Agendas for Ecumenical Formation

What in the curriculum of theological education is helpfully structured and formally learned, and what is or could be more helpfully learned in ways that are intentionally open-ended, inductively acquired, and continuously transformed by participants?

What are the virtues and values required for ecumenical life and leadership in a global context, and how can Christians best acquire and teach them so that dialogue is fostered not simply between individual people but among communities and churches?

What, in the plurality and intensity of the short-term learning and living experiences that Bossey participants often find so transformative, might be helpful to U.S. theological students who, today, are often part-time, commuters, and hold family and job responsibilities outside the seminary community?

How might seminaries structure their curricula so they learn from and adapt to the varieties of learning styles and self-expressions that growing plurality introduces into theological education?

Essays in this issue have suggested some particular ways of getting at these questions: encouraging and providing ways for students to take on the role of stranger; seeking in new ways a more fully balanced educational experience between the life of the mind and the life of faith; making the most of and learning from differences rather than attempting to smooth them over; fostering the shaping of identity through contrast as well as through similarity; placing new emphasis on the informal aspects of education; inviting the world more directly onto the campus and into the classroom.

While the specific result of these practices at Bossey has been a dynamic process of ecumenical formation, it is clear that the practices have also had profound import for persons ministering in the U.S. in a variety of non-ecumenical, yet increasingly diverse, settings as well. We offer our project results as ideas that might creatively be used or adapted for a variety of purposes in theological education. As dean of a North American theological school, I have, along with the readers of this journal, been engaged in identifying and improving formative educational elements of theological education. As I begin my assignment as director of the Ecumenical Institute, I am convinced that as North Americans we must look globally for many of the resources and processes that can enrich the formative process. In so doing we will, in our theological laboratory, not only prepare students for ministry; we will begin to create the vision, define the issues, and develop the skills for the church's ministry and witness in a pluralistic age.

ENDNOTES

1. Jacques Nicole, "The Ecumenical Institute of Bossey," *Ministerial Formation*, 57 (April 1992): 9.
2. W.A. Visser 't Hooft, "L'église chrétienne dans la crise mondiale," *Cahiers de l'Institut oecumenique*, 1 (1946):4. This was Visser 't Hooft's introduction to Bossey's inaugural lecture delivered by Hendrik Kraemer. The lecture appeared in print only in French; the series of *Cahiers* which it inaugurated unfortunately lasted for only five numbers.
3. Julio de Santa Ana, "Research and Ecumenical Formation," *The Ecumenical Review*, 48, 4 (October 1996): 505.



# Appendix

## Ecumenical Formation: Ecumenical Reflections and Suggestions

*A study document of the Joint Working Group between the Roman Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches.*

### Preface

It is well accepted that there is an ecumenical imperative in the gospel. However, there is also the indisputable fact that the goal of unity is far from realized. In that context of contradiction, the Joint Working Group (JWG) of the Roman Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches (WCC) decided in 1985 to focus on ecumenical formation as a contribution towards conscientizing people with regard to ecumenism. The minutes for that particular meeting of the JWG report said: *“It might aim at a more popular readership. The pamphlet should be part of a wider process of promoting the idea of ecumenical formation. It should include an explanation of why ecumenical formation is a priority, along with documentation. Anything produced on ecumenical formation ought to be subtitled, ‘ecumenical reflections and suggestions,’ to make clear there is no intention of giving directives in a field in which each church has its proper responsibility.”*

The document is designed to be educational, aimed at stimulating ongoing reflection as an integral part of a process of ecumenical formation. It is rooted in a conviction that there must be a deep spirituality at the heart of ecumenical formation.

With these words, we are happy to recommend this document for study.

Most Rev. Alan C. Clark  
His Eminence Metropolitan Elias Audi  
Co-moderators

### I. The Ecumenical Imperative

1. In his high priestly prayer Jesus prayed for all those who will believe in him, “that they may all be one; as you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. The glory that you have given me I have given them, so that they may be one, as we are one” (John 17:21-22).

The unity to which the followers of Jesus Christ are called is not something created by them. Rather, it is Christ’s will for them that they manifest their unity, given in Christ, before the world so that the world may believe. It is a unity which is grounded in and reflects the communion which exists between

the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Thus the ecumenical imperative and the mission of the church are inextricably intertwined, and this for the sake of the salvation of all. The eschatological vision of the transformation and unity of humankind is the fundamental inspiration of ecumenical action.

### *Disobedience to the Imperative*

2. However, from very early in her history, the church has suffered from tensions. The earliest Christian community in Corinth experienced tensions and factions (I Cor. 1:10-17). After the councils of Ephesus (in 431) and Chalcedon (in 451), an important part of the church in the East was no more in communion with the rest of the church.

In 1054 there was the great break between the church of the East and the church of the West. As if those were not enough, the Western church was unhappily divided further at the time of the Reformation. Today we continue to have not only the persistence of those divisions but also new ones.

Whatever the reasons, such divisions contradict the Lord's high priestly prayer, and Paul considers such divisions sinful and appeals "that all of you be in agreement and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same purpose" (1 Cor. 1:10).

3. Against that background, ecumenical formation is a matter of urgency because it is part of the struggle to overcome the divisions of Christians, which are sinful and scandalous and challenge the credibility of the church and her mission.

### *Some Significant Responses to the Ecumenical Imperative*

4. If there is a tragic history of disobedience to the ecumenical imperative, there is also heartwarming evidence that time and again the churches, conscious of their call to unity, have been challenged to confront the implications of their divisions. For instance, attempts at reconciliation between the East and the West have taken place in the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries. Also in the centuries that followed there were voices and efforts calling the churches away from divisions and enmity. At the beginning of this century the modern ecumenical history received significant impulses from the 1910 world missionary conference at Edinburgh. In 1920 the ecumenical patriarchate published an encyclical proposing the establishment of a "*koinonia* of churches," in spite of the doctrinal differences between the churches. The encyclical was an urgent and timely reminder that "world Christendom would be disobedient to the will of the Lord and Savior if it did not seek to manifest in the world the unity of the people of God and of the body of Christ." Around the same time Anglicans and Catholics engaged in theological dialogue at the Malines conversations, and the first world conferences on Life and Work (Stockholm 1925) and Faith and Order (Lausanne 1927) were held.

5. Another recall to the ecumenical imperative in modern times was the meeting held in 1948 at Amsterdam, at which the WCC was formally consti-



tuted. The theme of this meeting was very significant: “Man’s Disorder and God’s Design.” The long process which culminated in the birth of the WCC represents a multilateral response to the ecumenical imperative, in which a renewed commitment to the *una sancta* (the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church), and to making our own the prayer of Jesus that “your will be done on earth as it is in heaven,” were openly declared to be on the agenda of the churches.

6. A further important landmark on the ecumenical road was the announcement made by Pope John XXIII, on 25 January 1959, the feast of the conversion of St. Paul, to convene the Catholic bishops for the Second Vatican Council, which Pope John XXIII opened in October 1962. This Council which has been highly significant for ecumenical advance definitely accelerated the possibilities for the Catholic church to take part in the multilateral dialogue in Faith and Order, and to engage in a range of bilateral dialogues which are now an important expression of the one ecumenical scene. Various bilateral conversations between various churches attest to growing fruitful relations between churches and traditions which for centuries were at variance.

7. There have also been historic and symbolic actions which are very significant efforts to overcome the old divisions. For example, on 7 December 1965 Pope Paul VI and Patriarch Athenagoras, in solemn ceremonies in Rome and Constantinople, took steps to take away from the memory and the midst of the churches the sentences of excommunication which had been the immediate cause of the great schism between the church of Rome and the church of Constantinople in 1054. Moreover, the icon of the apostles Peter and Andrew in embrace—Peter being the patron of the church of Rome and Andrew the patron of the church of Constantinople—presented by the ecumenical patriarch to the pope, illustrates in graphic and religious form the reconciliation between the churches of the East and the West. The responses of many churches to the Faith and Order document on *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*, which was the result of multilateral ecumenical dialogue, is a further illustration of ecumenical advance.

### ***The Imperative, A Permanent Call***

8. The foregoing historical moments in the life of the church stand like promontories in the ecumenical landscape and attest to the fact that in spite of persisting divisions, of which there is need for repentance, churches are experiencing a reawakening to the necessity of unity that stands in holy writ and in the Lord’s will for the church. Indeed many have observed that relationships between churches have radically changed from isolation and enmity to mutual respect, cooperation, dialogue, and—between several churches from the Reformation—also eucharistic fellowship. The people of God are hearing anew the call “to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called . . . bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Eph. 4:1-3). These and other develop-

ments are steps towards that visible unity which is a *koinonia* given and expressed in the common confession of the one apostolic faith, mutual recognition and sharing of baptism, eucharist and ministries, common prayer, witness and service in the world, and conciliar forms of deliberation and decision-making.

### **II. Ecumenical Formation: What Is Meant by It?**

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

This pilgrimage toward unity enables mutual sharing and mutual critique through which we grow. Such an approach to unity thus involves at once rootedness in Christ and in one's tradition, while endeavoring to discover and participate in the richness of other Christian and human traditions.

#### ***A Process of Exploration***

10. Such a response to the ecumenical imperative demands patient, humble and persistent exploration, together with people of other traditions, of the pain of our situation of separation, taking us to both the depths of our divisions and the heights of our already existing unity in the Triune God, and of the unity we hope to attain. Thus ecumenical formation is also a process of education by which we seek to orient ourselves towards God, all Christians and indeed all human beings in a spirit of renewed faithfulness to our Christian mission.

#### ***A Process of Learning***

11. As a process of learning, ecumenical formation is concerned with engaging the experience, knowledge, skills, talents and the religious memory of the Christian community for mutual enrichment and reconciliation. The process may be initiated through formal courses on the history and main issues of ecumenism as well as be integrated into the curriculum at every level of the education in which the church is involved. Ecumenical formation is meant to help set the tone and perspective of every instruction and, therefore, may demand a change in the orientation of our educational institutions, systems and curricula.

12. The language of formation and learning refers to some degree to a body of knowledge to be absorbed. That is important; but formation and learning require a certain bold openness to living ecumenically as well. In 1952 the third Faith and Order conference took place in Lund, Sweden. The statement that came from it may be read as a representative text: "A faith in the one church of Christ, which is not implemented by acts of obedience, is dead. There are truths

about the nature of God and his church which will remain forever closed to us unless we act together in obedience to the unity which is already ours. We would, therefore, earnestly request our churches to consider whether they are doing all they ought to do to manifest the oneness of the people of God. Should not our churches ask themselves whether they are showing sufficient eagerness to enter into conversation with other churches and whether they should not act together in all matters except those in which deep differences of conviction compel them to act separately? . . . Obedience to God demands also that the churches seek unity in their mission to the world.”

### *A Process for All*

13. Thus in pursuit of the goal of Christian unity, ecumenical formation takes place not only in formal educational programs but also in the daily life of the church and people. While the formation of the whole people of God is desired, indeed is a necessity, we also insist on the strategic importance of giving priority to the ecumenical formation of those who have special responsibility for ministry and leadership in the churches. To that extent, theologians, pastors and others who bear responsibility in the church have both a particular need and responsibility for ecumenical formation.

14. The ecumenical formation of those with particular responsibility for forming and animating future church leaders could involve the study of ecumenical history and documents resulting from the ongoing bilateral and multilateral dialogues. In addition, ecumenical gatherings and organizations, particularly of scholars, can provide a useful climate for it. Exchange visits among seminary students in the course of their training may also help this process of deepening the appreciation of other traditions as well as their own.

### *An Expression of Ecumenical Spirituality*

15. It follows from the ecumenical imperative that the process of formation in ecumenism has to be undergirded by, and should indeed be an expression of, ecumenical spirituality.

It is spiritual in the sense that it should be open to the prayer of Jesus for unity and to the promptings of the Holy Spirit who reconciles and binds all Christians together.

It is spiritual in yet another sense of leading to repentance for the past disobedience to the ecumenical imperative, which disobedience was manifested as contentiousness and hostility among Christians at every level. Having ecumenical spirituality in common prayer and other forms as the underpinning of ecumenical formation invites all to conversion and change of heart which is the very soul of the work for restoring unity.

Furthermore, it is spiritual in the sense of seeking a renewed life-style which is characterized by sacrificial love, compassion, patience with one another and tolerance. The search for such life-style may include exposing students to the spiritual texts, prayers and songs of other churches with the goal

and hope that such familiarity will contribute towards effecting change of heart and attitude towards others, which itself is a gift of the Holy Spirit. Such efforts will help deepen mutual trust, making it possible to learn together the positive aspects of each other's tradition, and thus live constructively with the awareness of the reality and pain of divisions.

16. Ecumenical formation is part of the process of building community in the one household of God which must be built on trust, centered on Jesus Christ, the Lord and Savior. This demands a spirituality of trust which, among other things, helps to overcome the fear to be exposed to different traditions, for the sake of Christ.

### III. Ecumenical Formation: How to Realize It?

#### *Pedagogy Built on Communion*

17. The renewed emphasis on understanding the church as communion, like the image of the church as the body of Christ, implies differentiation within the one body, which has nevertheless been created for unity. Thus the very dynamic of ecumenism is relational in character. We respond in faith and hope to God who relates to us first. God relates to us in love, commanding us to love one another (Mark 12:29-31). This response ought to be "wholehearted." Therefore, in order to help Christians to respond wholeheartedly to the ecumenical imperative, we must seek ways to relate the prayer of Jesus (John 17:20-24) to all our hearts and minds, to the affective as well as to the cognitive dimensions in them. Christians must be helped to understand that to love Jesus necessarily means to love everything Jesus prayed, lived, died and was raised for, namely "to gather into one the children of God who are scattered abroad" (John 11:52), the unity of his disciples as an effective sign of the unity of all peoples.

18. The *koinonia* or communion as the basic understanding of the church demands attempting to develop common ecumenical perspectives on ecclesiology. Unity is not uniformity but a communion of rich diversity. Therefore, it is necessary to explore with others the limits of legitimate diversity. In this regard special cognizance must also be taken of the religious and socio-cultural context in which the process of ecumenical formation takes place. Where there is a predominant majority church, ecumenical sensitivity is all the more required.

#### *Going Out to Each and Every One*

19. The effectiveness of Christian unity in the midst of a broken world ultimately depends on the work of God's Spirit who wishes each one of us to participate. God speaks to us today the words which were addressed to Adam and Eve, "where are you?" (Gen. 3:9) as also the words to Cain, "where is your brother . . . ?" (Gen. 4:9). All Christians should become aware, and make each

other aware, of who and where their sisters and brothers are and where they stand in regard to them, whether near or far (Eph. 2:17). They should be helped to go out to meet them, to get involved with them. Involvement and participation in the whole ecumenical formation process is crucial.

20. In a Christian response to God and the ecumenical imperative, which comes from God, there is no such thing as “the few for the many.” The response to the prayer of Jesus must be the response of *each and every one*. Therefore, the growth into an ecumenical mind and heart is essential for each and for all, and the introduction of, and care for, ecumenical formation are absolutely necessary *at every level* of the church community, church life, action and activities; at all educational levels (schools, colleges, universities; theological schools, seminaries, religious/monastic communities, pastoral and lay formation centers; Sunday liturgies, homilies and catechesis).

### ***Commitment to Learning in Community***

21. While ecumenical formation must be an essential feature in every curriculum in theological training, care must be taken that it does not become something intended for individuals only. There must be commitment to learning in community. This has several components: (a) learning about, from and with others of different traditions; (b) praying for Christian unity, and wherever and whenever possible, *together*, as well as praying for one another; (c) offering common Christian witness by acting together; and (d) struggling together with the pain of our divisions. In this regard the participation of different institutions for theological education in common programs of formation is to be encouraged. Working ecumenically in joint projects becomes another important aspect of ecumenical formation. The reason for such joint action must always be related to the search for Christian unity.

22. Seeking a renewed commitment for ecumenical formation does not imply to gloss over existing differences and to deny the specific profiles of our respective ecclesial traditions. But it may involve a common rereading of our histories and especially of those events that led to divisions among Christians. It is not enough to regret that our histories have been tainted through the polemics of the past; ecumenical formation must endeavor to eliminate polemic and to further mutual understanding, reconciliation and the healing of memories. No longer shall we be strangers to one another but members of the one household of God (Eph. 2:19).

### ***Open to Other Religions***

23. In this world, people are also divided along religious lines. Thus ecumenical formation must also address the matter of religious plurality and secularism, and inform about interreligious dialogue which aims at deeper mutual understanding in the search for world community. It must be clear however that interreligious dialogue—with other world religions such as

## Ecumenical Formation: Ecumenical Reflections and Suggestions

Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, etc.—has goals that are specifically different from the goals of ecumenical dialogue among Christians. In giving serious attention to this important activity, Christians must carefully distinguish it from ecumenical dialogue.

24. That spirit of tolerance and dialogue must get to the pews and market places where people feel the strains of the different heritages which encounter each other. The faith that God is the Creator and Sustainer of all also requires Christians to do everything in their power to promote the cause of freedom, human rights, justice and peace everywhere, and thus actively to contribute to a renewed movement towards human solidarity in obedience to God's will.

### *Using the Instruments of Communication*

25. In today's search for unity there is a relatively new factor which must be taken seriously—the scientific technological advances, particularly the communications revolution. The world has become a global village in which peoples, cultures and religions, and Christian denominations which were once far off, are now next door to one another. The sense of the "other" is being pressed on us and we need to relate to one another for mutual survival and peace. Thus the possibilities of mass communication can be an asset for communicating the ecumenical spirit.

The media can be an extremely important resource for ecumenical formation, and the many possibilities which they offer to promote the ecumenical formation process should be made use of. However, the world of the media has its own logic and values; it is not an unambivalent resource. Critical caution must, therefore, be exercised in availing ourselves of the media for the ecumenical task.

### **Conclusion: Ecumenical Formation and Common Witness**

26. Ecumenism is not an option for the churches. In obedience to Christ and for the sake of the world the churches are called to be an effective sign of God's presence and compassion before all the nations. For the churches to come divided to a broken world is to undermine their credibility when they claim to have a ministry of universal unity and reconciliation. The ecumenical imperative must be heard and responded to everywhere. This response necessarily requires ecumenical formation which will help the people of God to render a common witness to all humankind by pointing to the vision of the new heaven and a new earth (Rev. 21:1).

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# Supplementary Reading

## *Available from World Council of Churches Publications*

*A Laboratory for Ecumenical Life, The Story of Bossey, 1946-1996*, Hans-Reudi Weber, 1996

*The Teaching of Ecumenics*, Samuel Amirtham and C. S. Moon, eds., 1987

*Towards Viable Theological Education*, John Pobee, 1997

*A History of the Ecumenical Movement, 1517-1968*, Ruth Rouse, Stephen C. Neill, and Harold E. Fry, eds. Fourth Edition, 1993

*Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement*, Nicholas Lossky et. al., eds., 1991

*The Ecumenical Movement, an Anthology of Key Texts and Voices*, Michael Kinnamon and Brian E. Cope, eds. (WCC Publications/Eerdmans), 1997

## *Periodicals available from World Council of Churches*

*The Ecumenical Review*, (published quarterly) Vol. 48, No. 4, October 1996 (Bossey and Ecumenical Formation)

*The International Review of Mission*

*Ministerial Formation* (published quarterly by Ecumenical Theological Education [ETE] of Unit I, Unity and Renewal, World Council of Churches)

## *Available from The Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada*

*Theological Education, Index to the Five Issues on Globalization in Theological Education*