

Ecumenical Theological Education  
Ecumenical Institute / WCC Geneva

April 2008

## *Jubilee Issue*



*The founding of the Theological Education Fund (TEF)*

### **International Missionary Council Assembly, Accra, Ghana 1958**

*(Shown are most of the more than 200 participants from over fifty countries who took part in the International Missionary Council Assembly, Accra, Ghana, Dec. 28, 1957, January 8, 1958 during which the Theological Education Fund was founded)*



This biannual journal aims to encourage sharing and cooperation among all who are working for the renewal of the churches through programmes of ministerial formation. All correspondence regarding MINISTERIAL FORMATION should be sent to the address below. Submission of relevant articles, reports and news is welcomed. Items in this journal do not necessarily reflect the views of the WCC and its programme on Ecumenical Theological Education.

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***Ministerial Formation - 110***  
***April 2008***

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## ***Ministerial Formation - 110***

***April 2008***

### **LETTER FROM STAFF**

This issue of Ministerial Formation is at the special occasion both of the Jubilee of ETE which was founded during the Ghana Assembly of the Missionary Council in 1958 as well as the congress of the World Conference of Associations of Theological Institutions (WOCATI) which takes place from 31 May to 7th June 2008 in Thessaloniki, Greece.

50 years of work in promoting ecumenical theological education in six continents – what a history of struggling, what accumulation of dedicated efforts of many gifted theological educators, what persistency in the promotion of both contextualization and globalization of theological education are imbedded in and part of these 50 years!

Many of those from younger generations active in institutions of theological education today do not have access to a broader knowledge on the depth and intensity of the international dialogue on concepts and goals of theological education in past decades. It was due to this background and the interest to honor and to make visible some of the key persons and programmatic themes again which contributed to the promotion of ecumenical theological education in the past that we decided to focus this issue of Ministerial Formation on some of the fundamental key contents of the work on ecumenical theological education in the past five decades.

The themes and issues dealt with by former TEF, PTE and PTE staff members by no means lost their relevance and their challenging and provoking character for today.

The immense need for more scholarships for post-graduate study programs on Masters and doctoral level, the passion for contextualization and ecumenicity in theological education, the creation of regional centres of excellency in theological education, innovative curriculum developments taking up challenges of marginalized groups and new issues, the enormous value of theological education by extension, the role of women in theological education or the increasing importance of ecumenism, missiology and interfaith dialogue in theological education – all these key issues are on the agenda today as they were in the past.

What has certainly changed are the conditions and political as well as ecclesial circumstances under which these fundamental issues and demands for an ecumenical orientation in theological education have to be pursued and given shape to. The contexts and conditions for promoting ecumenical theological education have dramatically changed – in some regions for the better but in some areas also to the detriment of ecumenical theological education:

- interdenominational colleges and centres of excellency in theological education have more difficulties to become financially self-reliant and viable than ever before;
- many churches as well as funding organizations in developmental work still do not give proper importance to theological education in their budget plans;
- there is a mushrooming of new colleges and bible schools in many regions most of which have no experience or connection to the organized ecumenical movement;
- there is a shortage of contextual institutions and programs of higher theological education in many regions with fast growing churches in rural areas;
- the international lobby for promoting and funding programs of ecumenical theological education has remained or become small both in WCC commissions as well as in member churches or funding agencies;
- globalization of economy and the continuous brain drain of highly trained theologians from countries of the South to countries of the North deepen the problem of glaring discrepancies in the availability of proper expert and library resources for theological education;
- rapidly changing political scenarios in many national situations as well as the global relation between christianity and other world religions demand for much higher commitment to and expertise in new frontiers of the theological discourse like issues of christian-muslim dialogue, bio-ethics, ecological ethics and communication ethics than the present capacities of the infrastructure of institutions of theological education can provide for;
- the resurgence of fundamentalism and confessionalism as counter-movements to the pressures of globalization demand for an even deeper commitment of all participants in theological education for ecumenism – despite the dwindling of funds and financial resources.

It is in this context of theological education in the 21st century that we are reminded and comforted by the fact that we belong to a history which is extremely rich and precious and to a learning movement for ecumenical theological education which has started long before us. We can gain new courage and hope by being reminded of the persistence and perseverance of our mothers and fathers in struggling towards viable theological education today.

Without the WCC programme on Theological Education in its various forms (TEF, PTE, ETE) many developments in creative new contextual theologies and in models for theological education in the past decades would not have been possible.

May we combine our sincere thanks for our forebearers in the struggle for ecumenical theological education with the hope and prayer that proper and future-oriented ways may be found to continue this important task by a variety of means and ways through WCC as well as WOCATI and beyond.

March 2008

Dietrich Werner

## **NOTE ON CONTRIBUTORS**

**Sam Kobia**, General Secretary WCC

**Desomd Tutu**, former TEF Executive Staff member

**Ross Kinsler**, former Assistant and Director of PTE

**Lesslie Newbiggin**, Bishop of the Church of South India (CS), after 1958 General Secretary of IMC

**Aharon Sapsezian**, First Director of PTE

**Samuel Amirtham**, Second Director of PTE

**Ofelia Ortega**, Executive Staff member of PTE and later Latin American Consultant of PTE

**Judo Puerwowidagdo**, Executive Staff member of PTE and later Asian Consultant of PTE

**Nyambura Njoroge**, former Global Coordinator of ETE

**John Pobee**, former Executive Staff member of PTE

**Konrad Raiser**, former General Secretary of WCC

**Dietrich Werner**, Global Coordinator of ETE



**Rev. Dr Samuel Kobia**  
**General Secretary WCC**

## **50TH JUBILEE OF ECUMENICAL THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION (ETE)**

*Your education is your life – guard it well (Prov. 4:13)*

*... everyone who is well trained will be like the teacher (Lk 6:40)*

Dear ecumenical friends,

It is with deep gratitude to God that I greet you, the community of ecumenical theological educators the world over, on the occasion of celebrating 50 Years of Ecumenical Theological Education and Ministerial Formation. Congratulations – *HONGERA!* as we say in my national language, Kiswahili.

As a beneficiary of an ecumenical setting in my early days of seminary training I am full of great memories of the many paths we have paved from Accra, Ghana, to Thessaloniki, Greece, venue of the current WOCATI Conference. I recall the many committed visionaries, ecumenical leaders, teachers and theological students who have benefited from scholarship grants, better-equipped libraries and well-trained faculty. With deep gratitude I recall the committed ecumenical funding partners who faithfully continued to provide resources for theological education and training. I salute the women and men who gave their skills, talents and time to bring people together to deliberate on contextualizing theological education. Where would we be without theological education by extension programmes (TEE) that have made theology by the people and for the people possible? It is thanks to the genius of TEE that theological training was democratized and became accessible to many ordinary folk.

I join you in celebrating the many theological voices that have emerged from all corners of the globe, from the hearts and minds of women, the traditionally marginalized and people with disabilities. We have been able to take the challenge of the global HIV pandemic because of the fruits of contextualization of theological curriculum and liturgical materials.

Without such a legacy, the struggle to overcome stigma, discrimination, denial and silence on HIV and AIDS in the churches and theological institutions would have been daunting indeed.

We have come this far because God is faithful and generous. However, much remains to be done as we seek to discern new ways of strengthening the ecumenical movement in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Our confidence as the World Council of Churches is that we can continue to count on theological institutions, faculties and TEE programmes as powerful forces at work in educating younger generations of ecumenical church leaders, theologians and educators and, indeed, in influencing the directions churches move in mission, evangelism, *diakonia*, ministry and ecumenism.

Thank you for your faithfulness that strengthens our courage to hope!

Rev. Dr Samuel Kobia  
General Secretary



**Desmond Tutu**  
**Archbishop Emeritus**

## **GOLDEN JUBILEE**

### **ECUMENICAL THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION PRIZE GREETINGS**

**to Theological Ecumenical Conference held in Greece: 31<sup>st</sup> May 2008**

Dear Friends gathered in Greece for this very important conference on marking the golden anniversary of the Ecumenical Theological Education Programme, I greet you very warmly in the blessed name of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. How I wish I could be present physically with you to be able to give thanks with you for an exciting enterprise so richly blessed by God.

I went to England in 1962 to study at King's College, London. I was helped to do this with a T.E.F. grant and subsequently returned to South Africa to join the staff of St Peter's College, one of four denominational colleges that constituted the Federal Theological Seminary in Alice in the Eastern Cape situated close to the University of Fort Hare where people like Oliver Tambo and Nelson Mandela had been students, as were others from further afield in Africa. After a while I went to teach at the University of Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland based at Roma in Lesotho. I learned that there was a vacancy in the T.E.F. team based in Bromley, Kent, U.K and applied to be considered for that vacancy. One of the T.E.F.'s Associate Directors, Dr James Bergquist, came to Roma to interview me. Instead of doing this he said he had come to offer me the position of Associate Director with area responsibility for sub-Saharan Africa in 1972. So began one of the most exhilarating and formative years of my life. With my family we trekked across to settle for a while in Grove Park, South London for just about three years.

I had the privilege of being part of an extraordinary team of remarkable colleagues who jointly were charged with the responsibility of fulfilling the Third Mandate of the T.E.F. Our boss, the Director of the T.E.F. was a self-effacing but dynamic and inspiring leader, Shoki Coe, an exiled Formosan/Taiwanese. Then there were the irrepressible and gifted

Aharon Sapsezian, a Brazilian of Armenian extraction who was a walking Tower of Babel judging from the different languages he spoke, Jim Bergquist from the US and the diffident, gentle and charming Ivy Chou born on mainland China but now a Malaysian. Much later we were joined by another American, Herb Zorn. We each had area responsibility for a specific part of the world so that we covered the entire globe.

I still marvel when I think of our various staff meetings when we had to approve the projects that each director presented from his/her area either for faculty development, institutional strengthening, as with equipping libraries, or encouraging the foundation of associations of theological institutions, etc; all to be tested against the rubric of contextualisation which was the benchmark of this Third Mandate. Our meetings were hilarious, noisy affairs as each of us tried to convince their colleagues about the validity of their particular projects. We were quite boisterous, hardly what you might have thought appropriate for a meeting of former professors, most of whom were ordained to boot. Only Ivy would remain demure and impressively gentle and quiet. Aharon especially was almost contemptuous of anything that was not in his view radical.

I give thanks to God for this wonderful opportunity accorded me. I know I grew in my theological understanding. I was exposed for the first time to the exhilaration and challenge of liberation theology from Latin America and black theology from the U.S. Yes, contextualization seemed a jargon term but it basically was calling us to take seriously the specificity, the scandal, of the Incarnation. God became a particular human being in a specific context dealing with the perplexities, the challenges and demands of that context. An authentic theology had to be equally specific. There could be no universal, no final theology, but it was that which gloried in its inherent, in-built obsolescence for it was true only if it sought to answer the questions and perplexities of a particular, a specific, community in a particular and specific context.

I can say without fear of contradiction that my stint with the T.E.F. gave me the best possible preparation for my work in South Africa as we struggled against the viciousness of apartheid. I give thanks to God to my T.E.F. colleagues, the T.E.F. committee and my W.C.C. colleagues for all they contributed to form me and prepare me for that ministry.

I pray that the theological education enterprise will go from strength to strength as it prepares ministerial candidates to deal with urgent contemporary challenges such as HIV/AIDS, poverty, corruption in high places, injustice, oppression and perennial conflict. What is God saying to the Churches?

God bless you all now and in the future.



## RELEVANCE AND IMPORTANCE OF TEF/PTE/ETE

### Vignettes from the Past and Possibilities for the Future

#### Ross Kinsler

As we celebrate 50 years of World Council of Churches' involvement in theological education, I can only begin to express my own gratitude for the extraordinary privilege of working with outstanding colleagues and widespread networks in this arm of the ecumenical movement over the past 40 years. In addition to those mentioned below I must add the names of Directors John Pobee, Ofelia Ortega, Nyambura Njoroge, and Dietrich Werner.

Jim Hopewell was the Director of the Theological Education Fund when he visited the Presbyterian Seminary of Guatemala in the late 1960s. In our conversations we soon realized that, because of his work and travels with the TEF, he probably knew more about theological education around the world than anyone else had ever known. That observation eventually led to the creation of the journal, *Ministerial Formation*, beginning in 1978.

The Guatemala experiment in Theological Education by Extension caught Hopewell's attention. In fact not much after his visit to Guatemala he suggested in an article that, if churches around the world were not so tied to the Western school model for theological education, they might well create something more like the TEE model.

The TEF Committee chose as the study theme for its 1973 meeting, *Learning in Context: The Search for Innovative Patterns in Theological Education*, and I was invited to present the TEE model based on our experience in Guatemala and more widely in Latin America. In 1977 the TEF was reorganized as the Programme on Theological Education of the World Council of Churches. Aharon Sapsejian became the director; he invited me to become Assistant Director; and Shoki Coe continued as Advisor, followed later by Assistant Director Sam Amirtham. Tom Campbell, who became Chair of the PTE Commission, commented at one point that decentralized programs might well become the predominant form of theological education.

One of my assignments with the PTE was to follow the TEE movement as it spread rapidly around the world. In 1983 we published a collection of 29 reports of TEE programs on all six continents under the title, *Ministry by the People*, and this year (2008) we have published another anthology of 13 case studies under the title, *Diversified Theological Education: Equipping All God's People*. I was also asked to create and edit a periodical to share news and reflections about theological education coming to us from many regions.

We called it *Ministerial Formation*, which was the name for the new focus of the PTE. That journal has for the last 30 years provided a forum for a wide range of ecumenical issues and reports about developments in theological education at global and regional levels. For obvious practical and ecological reasons, future communication about ecumenical theological education may well shift to the Internet.

Throughout the history of the TEF, PTE, and ETE our primary concern has not been method but mission, not form but substance, but method and form are essential for the realization of our mission in theological education and the mission of our churches. New wine requires new wineskins.

One of the most important contributions of Aharon Sapsezian has been the concept of **contextualization**, which he introduced in 1972 and which spread rapidly throughout ecumenical and evangelical circles. This has become one of the continuing challenges to theological education and the mission of the churches. Contextualization is another word for the biblical concept of incarnation, which is theological and pastoral as well as cultural and socio-economic.

Another major concern of PTE and ETE has been Paulo Freire's understanding of education as **conscientization**, which has little to do with memorization of information and everything to do with human and social transformation. This concept continues to be used by theological educators around the world, especially in Latin America and Africa. This concept, too, is biblical, theological, and pastoral, cultural and socio-economic.

It can be said that contextualization and conscientization culminate in various **liberation** theologies and liberating theological education programs in different parts of the world. As the churches and their theological institutions become ever more deeply aware of the structures and dynamics of poverty, marginalization, and oppression, they develop biblical, theological, and pastoral tools for personal, ecclesial, and social liberation. The churches and their theological institutions struggle to overcome all forms of injustice and dehumanization, in particular those based on race, ethnicity, class, and gender, and we are beginning to face the enormous challenges of global warming and ecological destruction, violence and militarism, the marginalization of people with disabilities, economic polarization, and consumerism.

Throughout the history of the TEF, PTE, and ETE we have seen that theological education can be a significant channel for the pursuit of the great ends of the ecumenical movement and the mission of the churches. It can be a channel for spiritual renewal through contextualization, conscientization, and liberation. It can continue to open up deeper understandings of the biblical Good News of God's Reign, so that we may live more faithfully in today's world.



Rev. Detareki Tuilovoni, Rev. Dr Charles W. Ranson (Gen.Sec. of IMC), Rev. Dr Christian Baëta, Dr John A.Mackay. International Missionary Council Assembly, Accra, Ghana, Dec. 28, 1957 - January 8, 1958

## **THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION FUND (TEF)<sup>1</sup> DURING THE IMC ASSEMBLY IN GHANA, 1957/1958**

### **Report of the Committee III: THE MINISTRY**

The Assembly received the following report and recommendations from the Committee:

1. The Committee has reviewed the pressing need for a more adequately trained and effective ministry in Asia, Africa, Latin America, Oceania, and other areas, and recommends to the Assembly the constituting of a Standing Committee on The Ministry, of approximately thirty members, adequately representative of the various areas of the world, of the major confessions, of theological education, and of the laity.
2. In the course of its discussions of the whole range of problems connected with the training of the ministry, the Committee had presented to it the proposal for a conditional gift, outlined in the document below.

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<sup>1</sup> Minutes of the Assembly of the IMC, Ghana, Dec 28th, 1957 to Jan 8th, 1958, London/New York, p. 52f

3. The Committee recommends to the Assembly the acceptance, with deep gratitude, of this gift in accordance with the terms of the document here presented to us.

4. In constituting the Standing Committee on The Ministry, it is understood that twenty of the thirty members will be selected in accordance with the terms of this plan, from the Theological Education Fund Committee.

The Assembly agreed

1) That Standing Committee on The Ministry be constituted, in accordance with recommendations 1 and 4 above

2) That the gift of Mr. John Rockefeller, Jr. of \$2,000,000, for the establishment of a Theological Education Fund, be accepted in accordance with the terms of the document presented to the Assembly

3) That the Fund shall be established as of the date of the approval of the Plan by the Assembly; probably the earliest date when the operations will begin is 1<sup>st</sup> of July 1958

## **THE THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION FUND**

I. The Assembly has learned with profound appreciation and with deep gratitude to God, of the conditional contribution of \$2,000,000 to the Sealantic Fund Inc., by Mr. John D. Rockefeller, Jr., for the setting up of an I.M.C. Theological Education Fund (hereafter called the Fund, or T.E.F.) for the advancement of theological education in Asia, Africa and Latin America.

II. The Assembly gratefully welcomes the generous action of the nine mission boards in the U.S.A., whose pledges for a total of \$2,000,000 over a period of five years have made it possible to request the payment of the additional gift received by the Sealantic Fund, and to initiate the Fund with substantial resources.

III. The Assembly recognizes the great potential importance of this undertaking for the Christian World Mission. It is convinced that such a project should be international in support and operation, and therefore urges every member body of the I.M.C. to make additional contributions to the Fund.

IV A. The Assembly notes the following statement made by the representatives of the principal donor to the General Secretary of the IMC regarding the administration of the Fund, and which was approved by the nine mission boards in agreeing to meet the offer of the Sealantic Fund:

"It is recommended that the Council set up a 'Theological Education Fund Committee' of approximately 20 members charged with the responsibility of supervising the project. The membership of the Committee would include Protestant leaders of various denominations from both the younger and older church areas, as well as representatives of the mission boards contributing to the project. Two executives would be employed full-time by the Committee to administer the two main phases of the project, namely making grants to a few key seminaries and carrying out a Text Program.

The Committee would :

( 1 ) Select for individual institutional support those seminaries which on the basis of their strategic location, the excellence of their present work, and their plans for development, offer the greatest possibilities for qualitative growth in the future. It would pursue a policy of concentration by limiting its institutional grants to approximately twenty seminaries throughout the younger church areas, thereby endeavouring to build on strength rather than weakness. The main thrust of the program would, as far as practicable, be toward improving the level of scholarship at the institutions, rather than in defraying the cost of constructing new buildings at the seminaries, although grants for the latter purpose would not be precluded. The Committee would normally give preference to institutions receiving support from several denominations, having due regard to the facts of the situation in the country concerned. The Committee would not attempt to create new seminaries, and ordinarily would not place its major emphasis on attempts to unite existing institutions, desirable as such mergers may be. On the other hand, it would not be precluded from assisting certain new undertakings, such as the proposed Higher Theological Faculty in Asia, etc. It would also make grants only in response to carefully formulated requests carrying the full support of the governing body of the institution concerned.

(2) Spend' approximately \$1,000,000 in furtherance of the Text Program outlined in detail in the Survey. This Program would be designed to improve the condition of the libraries of theological schools generally which desire to participate in the project. It would also enable the translation of suitable theological texts into those foreign languages which are of major importance to the Protestant missionary enterprise."

V. For the further guidance of the Theological Education Fund Committee (hereafter referred to as the T.E.F.C.) the Assembly adopts the following supplementary statement of policy:

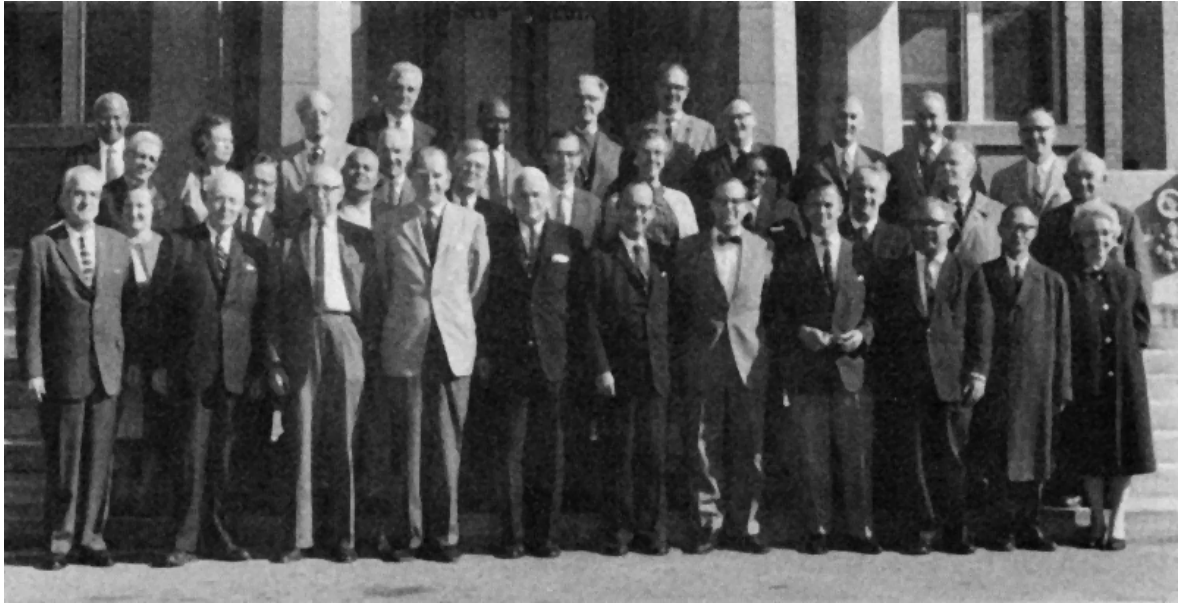
(1) Grants should be designed to develop and strengthen indigenous theological education. They should stimulate local responsibility, encourage creative theological thinking and provide a higher standard of scholarship and training which is suited to the needs of the churches to be served.

(2) The present resources of the Fund shall be designed to be used over a period of five years.

(3) Grants from the Fund shall normally be made in the first instance on the basis of a five-year plan.

(4) The phrase "in Asia, Africa and Latin America" shall not be interpreted as excluding church institutions otherwise qualified in such areas as the South or Southwest Pacific Islands, the British West Indies, Madagascar. etc.

(5) Care should be taken to avoid making any institution dependent upon the Fund.



Conference of TEF Fund Committee and TEF Staff 1963

### **CONTEXTUALIZATION OF THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION – FROM THE THIRD MANDATE OF TEF<sup>2</sup> (1972)**

The third mandate's strong emphasis on renewal and reform in theological education appears to focus upon a central concept, contextuality, the capacity to respond meaningfully to the Gospel within the framework of one's own situation. Contextualization is not simply a fad or catch-word but a theological necessity demanded by the incarnational nature of the Word. What does the term imply?

It means all that is implied in the familiar term "indigenization" and yet seeks to press beyond. Contextualization has to do with how we assess the peculiarity of third world contexts. Indigenization tends to be used in the sense of responding to the Gospel in terms of a traditional culture.

Contextualization, while not ignoring this, takes into account the process of secularity, technology, and the struggle for human justice, which characterize the historical moment of nations in the Third World.

Yet a careful distinction must be made between authentic and false forms of contextualization. False contextualization yields to uncritical accommodation, a form of culture faith. Authentic contextualization is always prophetic, arising always out of a genuine encounter between God's Word and His world, and moves toward the purpose of challenging and changing the situation through rootedness in and commitment to a given historical moment.

It is therefore clear that contextualization is a dynamic not a static process. It recognizes the continually changing nature of every human situation and of the possibility for change, thus opening the way for the future. The agenda of a Third World contextualizing theology will have priorities of its own. It may have to express its self-determination by uninhibitedly

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<sup>2</sup> In: Ministry in Context. The Third Mandate Programme of the Theological Education Fund (1970-77), eds. Staff of TEF, Bromley, England: TEF 1972, p. 19ff

opting for a "theology of change", or by recognizing unmistakable theological significance in such issues as justice, liberation, dialogue with people of other faiths and ideologies, economic power, etc.

Yet contextualization does not imply the fragmented isolation of peoples and cultures. While within each diverse cultural situation people must struggle to regain their own identity and to become subjects of their own history, there remains an inter-dependence of contexts. Contextualization thereby means that the possibilities for renewal must first of all be sensed locally and situationally, yet always within the framework of contemporary inter-dependence which binds both to the problems of the past and present and to the possibilities for the future.

Finally, contextualization, while it stresses our local and situational concerns, draws its basic power from the Gospel which is for all people. Thus contextualization contributes ultimately to the solidarity of all people in obedience to a common Lord.

If then contextualization becomes a chief characteristic of authentic theological reflection, a request for support submitted to the TEF will be judged to have potential for renewal when:

- 1 There is evidence of contextualization in *mission*.
- 2 There is evidence of contextualization in *theological approach*,
- 3 There is evidence of contextualization in *educational method*,
- 4 There is evidence of contextualization in *structure*.

**All of** these six (guidelines) ...point to a common concern, namely the very strong emphasis on *contextualization*, and consequently the *capacity* to respond to the context in theological education. This seems to be implied in the determinant goal which highlights the three urgent issues of our time, though the respective intensities may be felt differently from area to area.

It may be stated that contextualization should be the focal concern because through it alone will come reform and renewal. Contextualization of the Gospel is a missiological necessity. But there are dangers, one of which in the Third World is that such contextualization might not take place in response to the really urgent issues of its *own* context, in its *own* time, and in its *own* place, but in those times and places which are out of date and out of place in the Third World, and so irrelevant.

What is contextual may not be equally strategic for the mission of the Church, which is called to participate in the *Missio Dei*. This is the point where the Church, whether in the global or local sense, "walks on the waters" in faith, heeding the signs which are God's way of talking to us in our time and context. Relevance takes contextuality seriously by discerning God's mission for man in history; it must also do so intelligently, understanding the contextual issues and their significance.

Missiological orientation requires the incisive thrust, which is given three highlights in the mandate:

- a) The widespread crisis of faith and search for meaning in life;
- b) The urgent issues of human development and social justice;
- c) The dialectic between a universal technological civilization and local cultural and religious situations.

The missiological imperative is not just for **any** contextualization, but for the contextualization of the *Gospel*. It is not just for any relevance, but for *theological relevance*.

The mandate calls us to apply this authentic contextualization to theological education in its three vital aspects, as stated in the third mandate goals:

a) To encourage relevant and indigenous theological reflection and expression. (This aims at theological formation through self-determination, involvement, participation and dialogue in its own context - a living theology.)

b) Examine and experiment with theological curricula and teaching methods. (This is educational, but it is increasingly felt that more important than curricula is finding the answer to-What is education for? Is it human formation for liberation? How does it avoid the danger of elitism? How does it create that kind of Christian leadership which is the existence for others?);

c) To analyse and experiment with seminary forms and structures.

(What we really need is nothing short of the structural reformation of theological education in the Third World which should take its own context very seriously and evolve its own patterns.).

Out of these considerations, therefore, we would like to draw the discussion of criteria together by applying "contextualization" as the bench mark by which a prospective project or proposal is to be evaluated.

A project or programme will be judged to have potential for the renewal and reform of theological education if it demonstrates a sense of urgency in seeking to revise, change, or create new options to meet the needs of its situation. There are four marks of such responsive faithfulness:

**1 Missiological contextualization:** Is the school, centre or undertaking seeking to develop a style of training which focuses upon the urgent issues of renewal and reform in the churches, and upon the vital issues of human development and justice in its particular situation?

**2 Structural contextualization:** Is the school, centre or undertaking seeking to develop a form and structure appropriate to the specific needs of its culture in its peculiar social, economic and political situation?

**3 Theological contextualization:** Is the school, centre or undertaking seeking to do theology in a way appropriate and authentic to its situation? Does it offer an approach to theological training which seeks to relate the Gospel more directly to urgent issues of ministry and service in the world? Does it move out of its own cultural milieu in its expression of the Gospel?

**4 Pedagogical contextualization** Is the school, centre or undertaking seeking to develop a type of theological training which in its approach attempts to understand the educational process as a liberating and creative effort? Does it attempt to overcome the besetting dangers of elitism and authoritarianism in both the method and the products of its programme to release the potential of the servant ministry? Is it sensitive to the widespread gap between the "academic" and the "practical"?



## **THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION IN A WORLD PERSPECTIVE<sup>3</sup>**

### **Lesslie Newbigin**

I suppose that the only excuse I can offer for speaking to such a pretentious title is that I have been asked to do so, and that I had some small part in the work of the Theological Education Fund of the W.C.C. That splendid chapter in the story of ecumenical cooperation had its origins in the World Missionary Conference at Tambaram in 1938. Previous world conferences had given scant attention to theological education. It was "the Cinderella of missions". The delegates at Tambaram met at a moment when western Christendom had become aware of the fearsome power of the new paganism, when it was seen that the confessing Church was the only true agent of mission, and when the slogan "Let the Church be the Church" had become a powerful rallying cry. In this context Tambaram drew attention to the shocking neglect of ministerial training in the "younger churches", which were now the growing counterparts of the missions. It called for a much higher priority for theological education in the whole work of missions.

The war followed and then the struggle for reconstruction. But the call was not entirely forgotten. Mainly through the tireless and imaginative persistence of one man--Charles Ranson--the Ghana Conference of 1958 was able to launch an ecumenical venture designed to do what Tambaram asked.

The Theological Education Fund, with an initial capital of \$ 4 million and with a brilliant and dedicated staff, was entrusted with the task of assisting roughly 20 centers of theological education in the Third World to come up to the standards of the best theological faculties of Europe or North America, and of initiating a massive programme to improve libraries and to stimulate the production of theological text books in the major languages of the Third World.

At the end of two decades it was possible to report that the task had been - in substance - accomplished. It is rare in history to be able to record that - the task accomplished - the task force was disbanded. The WCC has had the courage to recognize that the TEF has done its job and that a new kind of action is now needed. What is now needed is an agency which - working on a six-continent basis - can provide a forum for the exchange of experience among all the churches in the whole enterprise of ministerial formation.

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<sup>3</sup> In: Ministerial Formation 4, 1978, 3ff ;

This is the purpose of the newly created Programme on Theological Education in which we in Britain are being invited to participate through the creation of a new national agency.

As always in human affairs, however, the accomplishment of one task provides the unsolved problems for those who follow. As the work of the TEF developed, it became more and more clear to those involved that new problems were being uncovered. It was not just that the theological schools of the Third World needed to be brought up to the "best" Western standards. It was the question whether these standards really are the best, whether the models of ministerial formation accepted in Europe and North America are really the right ones for the Third World - or even for the areas where they have been developed. TEF staff and consultants found themselves asking more and more searching questions. These may be grouped under three heads:

1. Questions about structure--sociological questions.
2. Questions about method--pedagogical questions.
3. Questions about content--theological questions.

For the purpose of this paper it will be convenient to look at these three types of questions first (A) as they arose during the work of TEF and second (B) as they may perhaps confront us now in the smaller British scene.

## **A. Questions emerging in the Third World**

### **1. Questions of Structures**

a. The life-span of the TEF has been within the period of decolonization, and it is well known that during this period the searching questions of men like Roland Allen - brushed aside in the heyday of colonialism - are being raised afresh. The patterns of ministry and therefore of ministerial formation introduced by the Western missions are now seen to have been the imposition of a style of leadership foreign to the cultures in which the church was being planted. The rapidly growing churches of today are those which rely on more indigenous patterns of leadership and of leadership training.

Leaders in evangelism are "thrown up" from among the ordinary rank and file of these churches. Their training happens in and through the exercise of their gifts of leadership in the situations to which they belong. The style of leadership envisaged in our Western-style theological seminaries can only exist in a colonial situation where there are large foreign funds to support it.

b. It has been seen that the standard type of seminary training tends to create a professional *elite* - separated from the ordinary membership. A theological seminary is seen as a sort of Sandhurst where an officer class is trained, thus creating a chasm between "clergy" and "other ranks". The style of training in the Church (it is held) ought to be more akin to that of a "citizen army" - something which is available to all, which is not confined to one initial period, which continues all through life as members show growing capacity to profit by training and to exercise wider leadership.

c. This line of criticism leads to the further point that the standard type of seminary training aligns the leadership of the Church with the privileged elements in society instead of with the poor and the marginal. It thus serves to perpetuate an improper alliance between the churches and the ruling classes in society.

### **2. Questions of Method**

a. Theological education of the traditional type inevitably comes into the target area of the whole contemporary attack upon formal education associated with such names as Paulo

Freire and Ivan Illich. There is a growing questioning of the assumption that education really happens in the formalized structures of the class-room. I do not attempt to enlarge upon this, for the arguments are well-known.

b. Critics point to the contrast between the methods employed in the training of the ministry and those used in the preparation of men and women for comparable professions--law, business and medicine. Law schools--it is said--train men through the study of concrete cases and are less and less interested in general courses on the principles of law. Business schools similarly work almost entirely through concrete projects. Medical schools regard the "pre-clinical" years, when general theory is taught, as simply introductory to the essential training which is given in the teaching hospital.

By contrast ministerial formation still relies almost entirely on what might be called the ministerial equivalent of the "pre-clinical years".

c. As the work of the TEF went forward, more and more insistent questions were raised about the relation of what was being taught to the living context in which the churches concerned had to give their witness. The familiar words "indigenisation" and "acculturation" were found unsatisfactory because in practice they always led to a search for alliances in the conservative and backward looking elements in society. What was needed - it was seen - was a style of ministerial training which was related to the actual and ever-changing context, which includes of course all the usual tensions between conservative and radical elements in society. Hence the horrendous word "contextualization" was born. The word is unattractive, but the thing sought for is essential. Ministry must be trained in a way which relates the Gospel to the real issues of obedience which the church faces in this particular time and place. One of the key questions which the TEF had to face was that of the language of theology. At the beginning it was assumed that only institutions which used English or another European language could be regarded as qualifying for help, since "vernacular" training was bound to be on a "lower" level. It has taken 20 years of struggle to convince Church leaders that men trained in the mother-tongue of their church may be equipped to engage in an encounter with their culture at least as competent as those trained in English, even if they are unable to devote their primary attention to the latest scores in the on-going battles between the various theological schools in Europe.

### **3. Questions of Content**

This has already brought me to the third, and most persistent criticism which has developed during the 20 years of the TEF's operations, the criticism namely that theology has come to the churches of the Third World in such an intimate relation with Western culture that one could not have the one without the other. It is a plain fact that if a theological student in Asia or Africa is to read with any real understanding any of the great classics of modern theology, he must be required first of all to undergo a full introduction to the whole tradition of Western thought--its origins in Greek philosophy, its development in the Middle Ages, the significance of the Reformation, the Renaissance, the Enlightenment and the Industrial Revolution.

There is at present a lively interest in "Third World Theologies". In our supermarket culture a few new varieties on the shelf are always interesting! But, of course, these theologies are all written in English, by men and women who have undergone many years of acculturation into Western patterns of thought, and whose theology is heavily dependent on European models.

"Liberation Theology", for example, obviously depends heavily on Marxism.

This is in no sense a criticism; matters could not be otherwise, if theology is to be done in Western languages. But, of course, there is a vast amount of theology being done all the time of which Western Christians must remain ignorant, because it is done in the language

and thought forms of the native culture. The Tamil language, which has a religious and philosophical literature far more ancient than any Western language, is also the vehicle of a continuing stream of Christian writing hardly any of which is ever put into English. A contemporary Christian Tamil scholar and poet, in a recent article on the great Christian poet of the 19th century, Krishna Pillai, has remarked that it is a matter for thankfulness to God that Krishna Pillai never learned English. He was able to give his whole heart and soul to the task of interpreting Christ to his own Tamil people in poetry which ranks among the finest in the language. A style of ministerial formation which assumes that "advanced" theological training must be in a European language will exclude itself from what is most creative in the contemporary encounter of the Gospel with the cultures of Third World.

If we set the experience of the TEF in broad historical terms, we may see it as reflecting in a tiny mirror the larger movement of our time, the movement from the first stage to the second stage of decolonisation. In the first stage the invaded culture masters the invading culture and uses its models (intellectual, juridical, political) to expel the invader. In the second stage there is a return to the original roots of culture and the efforts to find the basis for a new independence. The TEF has been an instrument to enable churches of the Third World to come through the first stage, to develop a leadership which has fully mastered the theology which the Western world brought to them. Apart from the work of the TEF it is difficult to see how the present generation of outstanding Third World theologians could have developed. Now we move to the second stage. Here there is no place for the idea of "lifting" Third World theology to the level of the older churches. Here we need to create a new type of forum in which we learn together, and from one another, how to develop styles of ministerial formation which will help the churches in all our varying cultural situations to bring about a real encounter between the Gospel and the contemporary world. This is what the PTE exists to become.

At this point, therefore, I move to the second part of my paper to ask (and the questions must be very tentative) whether there are lessons to be learned from the experience of the TEF which may be worthy of attention in the theological colleges and faculties of the U.K.

## **B. Challenge to the First World**

### **1. Questions of Structure**

Must we not face the fact in this country also that the model of ministry as a full-time salaried professional group, analogous to the doctors and the lawyers, is a legacy from a period of history which has now passed? We know, in fact, that it has already broken down. We are not happy with the spectacle of aged clerics running round three or four parishes on a Sunday morning to administer sacraments to congregations of which they are not a living part. I know that we are trying to remedy the situation by the development of non-stipendiary ministries to relieve the salaried clergy of part of this load. I am wholly in favour of this. But would not a sound theology of the ministry lead us to reverse the roles as they are normally understood, to see these non-stipendiaries as the normal ministry, and the salaried clergy as auxiliaries? Would it not be in accordance both with Scripture and with our real situation if (at least in many of our scattered parishes) it was a local and respected elder of the local congregation who normally presided at the Eucharist, and a full-time salaried person who would be his auxiliary both to supplement his teaching ministry and also to assist him in the continuing process of leadership-development?

I am certainly not implying a total rejection of present patterns, which would be absurd and destructive. Development in the way I have suggested would include the following:

- Flexibility in patterns with room both for the salaried, full-time and for the non-salaried, part-time minister. (It is important, in this respect, that St Paul, by both claiming the right of support and refusing to exercise it, has providentially left the door open both ways for the succeeding generations. It is impossible on Scriptural grounds either to exclude a salaried ministry or to demand that it shall be the only norm.)

- Development of a salaried ministry which is primarily concentrated on the development of local "indigenous" leadership in each congregation.

- Acceptance of the fact that the *normal* local leadership would be that of non-salaried members of the congregation.

- Willingness to learn from such rapidly growing bodies as the Pentecostals about the way in which Christian leadership can be developed in the living situation. This would not necessarily mean that we have the same criteria of leadership. With (perhaps) a more sophisticated understanding of the ministry of the Church to the public sectors of society and to those who hold specialized positions in the ordering of these sectors, we might wish to use other criteria of fitness for leadership and other models of training than the Pentecostals. But we would be willing to learn from the basic pattern of leadership-development "on the job". (I am assuming here that we are planning for our contemporary type of urban society in which the private sector is sharply separated in the lives of most people from the public sector.)

- In using the word "leadership" I am obviously distancing myself from the currently fashionable attack on "elites". (I have sometimes thought of founding a society for the encouragement of elites!) I fully recognize the justice of this attack. But I think it is one of the illusions of our time that the participation of the whole body comes about otherwise than by the exercise of gifts of leadership. There are types of leadership which cause individual initiative to wither. True leadership seeks it out and encourages it. But "leadership" within the Christian vocabulary can only mean that leadership which Jesus exercises when he calls his disciples to follow him on the way that goes to the Cross.

- If these lines of thinking were followed, it would mean that the normal customer for what we offer in the way of ministerial training would not be a young man or woman at the beginning of a professional career but someone of mature Christian experience who is proving himself or herself in actual situations to have the kind of capacity for leadership (defined in the sense of the previous paragraph) which is appropriate to the life of Christ's people.

## **2. Questions of Method**

The implications of what I am saying would - I think - lead to a shift in our styles of ministerial formation which would bring them nearer to the patterns suggested in the training of lawyers and doctors. A much larger place would be given than is now common to the study of particular cases in which the issues for Christian faith and obedience can be teased out, discussed, and related to the great themes of the Bible and of the classical Christian tradition. I do not think that this can ever be the *only* way in which theology is taught, but I think it could and should have a larger place than at present. Here, however, I would want to enter two caveats.

a. I am not advocating the sort of "contextualization" which in effect eliminates the text in favour of the context. The statement that "real theology arises out of concrete situations" can be taken to mean that one arrives at a true theology by purely inductive processes--

studying the world in order to find out "what God is doing". In that case it parts company completely from the Christian faith, which depends upon a unique revelation which can never be replaced by any other sort of communication. The end of "contextuality" in that (false) sense is either some sort of paganism, or else some sort of crusading moralism. The Gospel is not discovered by analyzing the situation. The true sense in which we must say that theology must be contextual is that we can know God as he has revealed himself to us in Jesus Christ only as we are continuously engaged as his disciples in the actual context of secular affairs in which God has placed us, and that a theology divorced from such discipleship will be a false theology.

b. I am also disinclined to endorse without qualification the phrase constantly repeated by the theologians of liberation the "true theology is a reflection on praxis". It is certainly true that there can be no authentic theology which is not part of a life of faith, worship and obedience within the believing community. These are the conditions for a true contextualization for theology. What must be rejected is the idea that one begins with praxis based upon a Marxist analysis of the situation and then proceeds to reflect theologically upon it. It seems to me that some of the exponents of liberation theology, in their justified rejection of the philosophical idealism which has so often formed the (unacknowledged) presupposition of traditional theology, have swallowed uncritically the Marxist idea that all science depends upon class orientation. In fact, of course, the doctrine that in order to evaluate a statement one must first ask "Whose interest does it serve?" has not been uniformly applied in Marxist theory. Michael Polanyi has discussed this point in several of his writings. To summarize the matter briefly: Marx and Engels seem to have accepted 19th century Physics, chemistry and mathematics as giving a true account of reality irrespective of the class orientation of the scientists. Consequently these sciences have been allowed to develop in the Soviet Union without ideological control by the party. Human sciences, such as economics and sociology, have never been given such autonomy. The borderline case of biology has been the subject of a well-known effort at ideological control (under the leadership of Lysenko) with disastrous results. The effort has had to be abandoned. It seems to me that there are no good reasons for trying to do for theology what has never been attempted in respect of the natural sciences and was proved disastrous in respect of biology.

Having made these negative statements I would go on to affirm that true theology can be done only in a community which is committed to faithful discipleship including both worship and practical obedience. It is this conviction which has led to efforts to involve theological students in action programmes of various kinds. The most impressive of these known to me are those in operation at the Tamilnadu Theological Seminary, Madurai, South India. But, as has been pointed out, there is an element of artificiality in these programmes. Having withdrawn students from their normal secular activities into a residential community, you then try to re-involve them as a community in secular situations. There does seem to be a case for saying that the norm for theological training should be the extension type of programme. Here the theological training runs concurrently with the secular engagement, and there seems to be more possibility of an authentic "contextuality", since the students will be coming to their theological reading and discussion with their minds already fully involved in secular situations where ordinary Christians have to find and do the will of God from day to day. There is also, it seems to me, a much greater possibility that the theology learned in such a way will be a genuinely missionary theology - a theology concerned with the world and God's purpose in it, not just with the Church. If this kind of ministerial formation were the norm, there would not have to be specialist training for - for example - industrial mission; the trainees would themselves be hammering out their understanding of the Gospel in the midst of their actual wrestling with the powers at work in industry, in public administration, in the professions and in the media.

And this brings me to my third section.

### **3. Questions of Content**

Here the possible issues for discussion are so vast that I can only skirt the edges of them. If a "world perspective" has anything to contribute to the re-shaping of theological training in this country, I suggest that it may be chiefly at the point of helping us to be aware of the unexamined assumptions which underlies most of our contemporary English theology. I believe that English theology is to a dangerous extent encapsulated within a particular culture, and that it may be the role of our partners in other areas of the world to make us aware of this.

The word "myth" is being bandied about freely at the moment, and much confusion is caused by the differing senses in which it can be used. Let me use it in a non-pejorative sense to denote the models, the images, the patterns through which a whole community grasps and makes sense of its experience.

In this broad sense there is no sharp break between the models used by science to make intelligible the structure of the molecule or the gene and the models used by ordinary people to make sense of their experiences of joy and sorrow, pain and comfort, guilt and death. In fact we usually use the word "myth" to describe the models used by other people, for the simple reason that we are normally no more aware of our own "myths" than I am of the curvature of the lens in my spectacles. We do not "see" our own myths; we see by means of them, and we normally take it for granted that we are seeing things as they really are.

The most powerful myth of our culture is that which is usually described as the "modern scientific world view" in contrast to the world view which preceded it. The study of the exact nature of the change which took place, mainly during the 18th Century, in the way in which western European man understood his world is a fascinating one. It is perhaps especially important at the present time when this "modern" view shows many signs of disintegrating.

The point, however, is that this view--though it has been and still is enormously influential--is still only one of the possible ways of grasping the totality of human experience. My criticism of much contemporary theology is that it so often fails to recognize this. I find it very interesting, for example, that such a brilliant and sensitive expositor of the Christian faith as Hans Küng can write that the theologians of the other great world religions will have to develop a "modern scientific theology" before there can be real dialogue among the world religions. In contrast to such a view, I would want to assert that the great service which the ecumenical movement can do for us is to confront us with ways of affirming the Christian faith which are formed by other cultures than our own. It is only with this help that we shall be able to subject our own cultural "myth" to examination in the light of the Gospel. Without this ecumenical correction we are always tempted to judge the Gospel in the light of our myth. The real task of ecumenical theology will be to learn how to use the different myths of different cultures to communicate a Gospel which transcends them all.

In fact we are still far from such a truly ecumenical theology because we have created a situation in which the only languages in which the ecumenical conversation can be conducted are the languages of western Europe, and consequently the only theologians of the Third World who can play a real part in the conversation are those who have been coopted into the dominant European culture with its accepted myths and models. Nevertheless the voice of protest is coming through. I am thinking of the witness of those churches which are the contemporary growing edge of Christendom - the Pentecostals and the African Independent churches. Their way of doing theology is - I am convinced- bound to become a more and more powerful critique of those which are dominant in this country.

I am sure, for example, that the extreme nervousness and circumspection with which English theologians of today approach the subject of the resurrection of Jesus from the dead will eventually have to meet the challenge of these vigorously growing communities of believers for whom it is precisely the resurrection which is the very heart of their gospel.

The ultimate commitment of the Christian theologian is to the biblical myth. Yet he is also a man of his own culture and his whole way of thinking is shaped by the myths of that culture. He cannot absolutise his own cultural myth and from within it judge the biblical; that is - it seems to me - the temptation of contemporary English theology. His task - and it is the unending task of a missionary theology - is to open his whole being to the biblical myth in such a way that his own myth is placed in its light, and then to find ways in which the biblical myth can be expressed in terms which use the forms of the cultural myth without being controlled by it. But this, I would claim, can only be done if he is continuously open to the witness of Christians in other cultures who are seeking to practise the same kind of theology. In fact, as I have argued in another place at some length ("Christ & Cultures", *Scottish Journal of Theology*, Vol. 31: pp 1-32), I believe that a true theology can only be done in a triangular field of which the three points are:

(a) Obedient discipleship within the Christian community and governed by the Tradition of which the Scriptures are the primary embodiment; (b) openness to the witness of Christians in other cultural situations as they seek to communicate the Gospel in the models of their cultures; (c) openness to the culture within which the theologian has to live out his discipleship.

The newly created Programme for Theological Education of the World Council of Churches provides a forum in which this kind of inter-cultural sharing of experience in theological training which I have indicated can take place. I hope and believe that the initiative taken by the British Council of Churches to provide for vigorous British participation in this will be effective.

## **THE FIRST MANDATE OF THE PROGRAMME ON THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION 1978<sup>4</sup>**

From 1958 to 1977 the Theological Education Fund played a strategic role in the strengthening and renewal of theological education in the Third World. It has now been superseded by the Programme on Theological Education, a new sub-unit of the World Council of Churches created to carry on and broaden these concerns on all six continents. What are its plans and prospects for the future?

### **A new start**

Many months of study, evaluation and prayer led to the creation in July 1977 of the Programme on Theological Education by the Central Committee of the W.C.C. in order to take a fresh step forward in supporting the churches

- *in their central concern for the preparation of leaders,*
- *in fostering a new ecumenical vision of theological education,*
- *in sharing experiences and resources for training in ministry,*
- *in developing better patterns and tools for theological education,*

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<sup>4</sup> Programme on Theological Education – An ongoing concern of the Churches now an integral part of WCC (first PTE agenda from 1978), in: Ministerial Formation 1, 1978, 3ff

- *in enabling the people of God to witness more effectively today and tomorrow in a world of vast needs and complex crises.*

The underlying conviction of the Central Committee and of the new P.T.E. is that "theological education is vital for the life and mission of the church".

### **Building on 20 Years of Fruitful Service**

The P.T.E. inherits many lessons and insights from the Theological Education Fund's 20 years of involvement in the Third World. This period has been characterized by a progressive search . . .

- *for quality, which combines intellectual rigour, spiritual maturity and commitment to service,*
- *for authenticity, which requires critical encounter with each sociocultural context in the design, content and purpose of theological education,*
- *for creativity, which leads to new approaches and deepens the church's understanding of an obedience in mission.*

This search is as important in Europe and North America as it is in the Third World. And the different regions have much to learn from and with each other. The P.T.E. is called to encourage and facilitate mutual growth.

### **The Central Concern: Ministerial Formation**

In setting out a new plan of action the P.T.E. will focus its attention on ministerial formation. The central concern of theological education is, of course, ministry in the broadest biblical sense. Ministry involves all the people of God, and theological institutions are effective insofar as they enable the churches' leaders--ordained and unordained, men and women--to equip others for discipleship and witness. The P.T.E. will relate with church bodies, institutions, experiments and pioneering individuals who are engaged in and concerned with "*enabling the enablers*".

### **On Six Continents**

Major problems, important trends, and exciting experiments are developing in different parts of the world, and the P.T.E. will attempt to keep theological educators and church leaders informed of these developments through *consultation, publication and documentation service*. Fundamental issues relating theological education, ministry, the church and its mission are being raised and debated and the P.T.E. will be a channel and a participant in those debates.

At first glance it seems impossible for a small entity like the P.T.E. to relate meaningfully with theological education "on six continents". But there is already a strong partnership among institutions and associations of theological schools in the Third World, and new links are being forged with other regions of the world. The goal is to establish a fellowship and working partners in this common task for the benefit of all.

In order to give full attention to the *specific concerns and issues of theological education in each area*, relationships are being strengthened at the national and regional levels. Inter-regional contacts and exchange programmes are being planned to ensure the widest benefit from new advances while safeguarding the fundamental integrity of contextual adaptations.

### **Ecumenical Sharing of Resources**

Historic circumstances demand that the P.T.E. maintain as one of its commitments the support, financial and otherwise, of selected projects in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, Latin America, the Middle East and the Pacific in the following areas of priority concern:

- *centres of theological creativity where original and contextual reflection and writing are taking place.*

- Associations and regional bodies of *theological education*, of which there are now about 25 in the Third World.
- The continuing search for new patterns of *theological learning and ministerial formation* more relevant to the socio-cultural conditions and more responsive to the demands of mission and ministry.
- The training of theological educators.
- Intra- and inter-regional exchange of students and teachers.

This sharing of resources is a part of the larger scheme of ecumenical participation in the common task of theological education around the world.

### A Challenge

There are many signs of crisis and promise in theological education worldwide today;

- Traditional seminaries are being compelled to develop **more flexible programmes** to enable many more people to engage in theological studies and in ministry--lay people and ordinands, people of different levels of schooling, representatives of ethnic minorities as well as dominant groups.
- Theological schools are increasingly concerned about **basic pedagogical reform**. Engagement in ministry and mission, long treated as an adjunct or a department of the curriculum, is now being regarded as an integral dimension of any theological learning.
- **Decentralized and non-formal training models** are multiplying in order to meet the needs of local community leaders and to enable the churches to expand their outreach.
- The question of **economic viability** is becoming ever more urgent not only in the Third World but also in the more affluent countries.
- The implications for theological education of **ideological issues** and of **dialogue with other living faiths** are being debated.
- **Elitist and professionalist tendencies** in theological education and ministry are being questioned by churches and learning institutions.
- Varying degrees of **tension between "church" and "school"** sharpen the debate about how theological education can best respond to the needs of mission.
- **Science and technology** pose new questions to faith which theological education can not ignore.
- Theological schools are being called to overcome the captivity of narrow confessionalism and of provincial outlook in order to see their task in light of the **ecumenical demands and global needs** of our time.

These and other currents provide the ingredients for an unprecedented movement of renewal and change of great potential for the life and mission of the church, The P.T.E. can do little on its own to meet the possibilities and respond to the opportunities of this historic situation. The liberation of theological education from any bonds that hinder the fulfillment of its original calling is a challenge which the churches and their institutions must meet individually and in partnership. The P.T.E. is one instrument created by the World Council of Churches to help the churches meet that challenge.



## EXPLORING THE NATURE OF MINISTERIAL FORMATION<sup>5</sup>

### Invitation to and insights from the Manila Consultation 1979

#### Aharon Sapsezian

At its first meeting in July 1977, the Commission of the newly-formed PTE stated that the focus of the new WCC sub-unit should be "ministerial formation".

In so doing, the Commission most certainly wanted to indicate that the "ministerial" dimension of theological education was often neglected and that a concerted action by the churches was timely in order to redress the balance.

From its inception the PTE used the word "ministerial" with at least two connotations in mind:

- Ministry is a whole life-style *of self-giving and service to others in the name of Christ; it is existence inspired, shaped and empowered by the one who said that he came to serve, not to be served;*
- *Sharing in this life-style of service--i. e., in the ministry of the church--is open to all men and women , lay and ordained, who have responded to Christ's call to join him in his concern for humanity.*

The Commission further stated that ministerial formation meant "the training of practitioners of Christian ministry in regard to their

- *intellectual resourcefulness,*
- *awareness of God and sensitivity to real human problems,*
- *the assimilation of appropriate skills ,*
- *enrichment in exemplary spirituality,*
- *commitment to congregations and people."*

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<sup>5</sup> In : Ministerial Formation 5, 1979, 20ff and : Exerpts from the report of Manila consultation on theological education 1979, in: Ministerial Formation 8, 1979, 6ff, here 15ff

It may be useful to add a few comments on each of these five components or ingredients of the overall understanding of ministerial formation.

They have been quoted frequently as expressions of PTE's self understanding, and as an invitation to its partners to look critically at their respective theological education programmes.

**1. Ministerial formation cannot disregard *intellectual resourcefulness*.**

The widespread and healthy dissatisfaction with abstract and purely theoretical academic exercises cannot be taken to suggest any complicity with mediocrity or softening of the disciplined and rigorous verification of tradition and service. Emphasis on "praxis" is for the benefit of intellectual seriousness, not to its detriment.

**2. Preparation for ministry can no longer be content with vague impressions and sentimental opinions about the forces in history that generate human suffering, deprivation and death. Therefore emphasis is put on *awareness of human problems* as an ingredient in ministerial formation. More than just a casual approach to the human and social sciences is required if ministry is to relate effectively the good news of the Gospel to contemporary human predicaments.**

**3. The need to *assimilate appropriate skills* derives from the dynamic changes in the situations where ministry is carried out. Rural-urban realities, development issues, the struggle for justice, secularization, community organization, faith and science, etc. constitute phenomena of the daily encounter of the church and society requiring a certain degree of specialized skills. The use of the-word "skills" seems to indicate that ministry should be trained not so much to be able to talk intelligently about these situations but rather to be actively engaged and effectively present in these situations.**

**4. One of the areas where theological education institutions and programmes most need rethinking and imagination is perhaps what they do to stimulate *spiritual growth*. Failure to cope with this task can lead to what is almost an abandonment of responsibility for the spiritual life of the students, or to the easy way of pietistic spiritual accommodation. Restless students do well to reject both and to demand that theological training processes make their contribution to a mature spiritual formation capable of undergirding a life-style of self-giving service to others.**

**5. Commitment as a component in ministerial formation and practice is an expression of love that generates solidarity, particularly when solidarity is with the neglected and the despised. It is in this perspective that we can best understand the concern for *commitment to congregations and people*. Ministry can be effectively carried out only as an act of solidarity with congregations of believers and with the wider human community in the midst of which the church is called to be a sign.**

To start a conversation on the components or ingredients of ministerial formation is to embark on a long journey. We all know that these components may receive varying degrees of priority according to the confessional tradition, the culture, the school, etc. Some may even note serious omissions in the five PTE components. We will all agree that whatever the components of theological education, it is their total interaction and impact on ministerial formation--rather than the weight of any single one--that really matters. Obviously, much reflection and experience are needed to deepen our understanding of the implications of the various components and of their interaction.

## **BASIC ISSUES IN MINISTERIAL FORMATION – Insights from Manila Consultation 1979**

Perhaps the most significant contribution of the Manila Consultation was that it gave its full attention to the meaning of ministerial formation and worked out a list of basic issues which should be considered by any programme of theological education. This list and the accompanying commentary emerged out of discussion of specific Asian cases. It does not presume to be complete in range or definitive in formulation. Rather it suggests that the churches and their institutions need to reexamine their theological education programmes in the light of questions that go far beyond the typical institutional penum, that may challenge the assumptions and presuppositions of existing patterns, and that could lead to fundamental changes in the understanding and practice of theological education around the world.

*A. How does the shape and style of the institution, its ethos and spirit, its formal programmes and activities, express its goals and values?*

The major cases presented at the Manila Consultation--and other programmes represented by the participants--emphasized that their purpose was to provide a spiritual community of people highly motivated and equipped for service in the churches and in society, especially among the poor and oppressed. It was quite clear that this general goal and related values had to be translated into educational experiences not simply through the study of academic subjects but through the style and ethos and commitment of the whole institution. There must be coherence and consistency between what is taught or affirmed and what is lived and experienced. Theological students (and teachers) are now spending more time among marginalized people and participating in their struggles because these experiences provide the context and stimulation for meaningful theological reflection, ministry, and mission. At the same time these experiences continue to call into question--to greater or lesser degree--the style and structure and content of the institutions themselves and of the churches they represent.

*B. What constituency does the institution serve: the professional ministry, the entire community of believers, or an even wider community?*

The traditional understanding has been that theological schools best serve the churches by providing excellent training for those few (usually ordinands) who will in turn equip the whole church for witness and service. This understanding is now challenged on several fronts: some question whether the chosen few actually engage in the task of equipping others; the specialization and ordination of the few may foster dependence rather than mutuality and even create barriers to participation in ministry; the process of selection implicit in this approach may actually exclude the majority of the churches' leaders, particularly those who demonstrate the gifts and qualities and maturity needed. Theological schools increasingly include lay persons as students, and some give them an active role in the training of clergy. Newer approaches open the door of theological education widely so that the churches' leadership will more likely emerge from the people, represent them, and engage them in service and witness to the wider community.

Whatever approach is used, the growing conviction is that theological education must ultimately be evaluated in terms of its service to "all those for whom Christ died".

*C. What definition of ministry is being used? Can the institution assist in the development of all types of ministries and all the elements in their formation?*

The participants at Manila defined ministry not narrowly in terms of Word - sacraments - pastoral care but broadly in terms of the whole person and the whole of society--though the former continues to receive far more attention. Furthermore they expressed the need for openness to God's action in the world for broadening or changing the church's understanding of its mission, and for dealing with the structures of poverty and injustice. Ministry is thus conceived not in terms of the status quo but in terms of dynamic change in response to human need. At the same time innovation must be balanced by accountability and order in the churches. The major cases presented suggest a variety of ministries for which preparation is being provided: Two prepare Protestant pastors; one trains Catholic priests; another is a development center for women; and the last provides advanced studies for theological teachers. Each undertakes certain tasks in training its candidates; all perceive that their role is set within the larger framework of the ministry and formation of the whole people of God. Further clarification is needed to explain the relationships between the Gospel and contextual needs, specific (ordered) and general ministries, theological formation and personal growth in Christian life and service. This will in turn enable theological schools to understand more clearly their limitations and to relate more effectively with other agencies and forces that equip people for ministry.

*D. How has the institution used all available opportunities for serving the church while maintaining a realistic assessment of its resources?*

The participants at the Manila Consultation were impressed at the way some theological schools have multiplied and extended their programmes in order to include more people and to train them in living situations. At the same time they were concerned that these institutions might lose control or focus by over-reaching their capacity. On the other hand they noted that some schools could utilize their resources more fully or more effectively. Specific suggestions: ecumenical pooling and coordination of resources, mobilization of local congregations to play an active role in basic and/or continuing education of clergy and laity. In general, training should take place in or close to the candidates' cultural context and area of future service--not simply for economic reasons. Urban training centers are often artificial, privileged, and irrelevant for rural people. Advanced studies in foreign countries may offer special resources and prestige, but regional programmes can be more geared to local needs, issues, and realities--and far less costly. The vast demands of renewal in mission and ministry call for careful evaluation of and maximum utilization of all available resources.

*E. What is the appropriate creative tension between the institution and the life of the church? How is communication and mutual influence maintained between the church and the institution? How are people trained to be both loyal and creative?*

A whole range of tensions or conflicts can develop between churches and theological schools concerning the understanding of the Gospel, the mission of the church, the nature of the ministry, the role of specific ministers, etc. We have noted for example that many theological schools place high on the analysis of social problems and the need for social change, but most candidates are preparing to enter traditional church leadership roles and will be expected to maintain existing ecclesiastical programmes and structures.

Insofar as theological schools recognize themselves as living parts of the churches and are so recognized by the churches, however, these tensions provide necessary opportunities for mutual correction and growth. As theological schools prepare people for service in and through the churches, they must earn the confidence and support of the churches. If theological schools are to provide leadership for the churches, they should become models of community and service for the churches. The cases discussed at Manila generally accept the need to prepare people who can function within established patterns and traditional

concepts and also become change agents and catalysts, loyal and creative servants of the churches. Each institution must discover how to maintain this critical distance most effectively in its own context.

*F. What is the local or national situation (social, political, minorities, ecumenical relations, other faiths, etc.), and how is it analyzed? In what ways are mission and ministry understood as transforming the situation as well as accommodation to it? How does the situation affect the patterns of ministerial formation?*

Throughout the Manila Consultation there was an overarching concern to determine how theological education relates to each context. The five Asian cases provided much material for discussion concerning linguistic, cultural, religious, social (class, role of women, caste), economic, and political factors. It was evident that each programme must be evaluated in terms of the needs and possibilities of its own context, that these factors must inform the whole formation process, and that students and teachers must discover the critical issues in their particular situation. At Tamilnadu the use of a regional language is a significant aspect of forming indigenous leadership; at Tainan it is a political option of identification with the rights of the Taiwanese people. The constraint of an oppressive political situation limits the possibilities of political action at Tainan; at Tamilnadu students and teachers are able to engage in advocacy and social action on behalf of marginalized people. In the 60's students of Divine Word Seminary were involved in protest and action movements in the Philippines; the present state of martial law has silenced opposition to the government, though commitment to the poor and minorities remains a top priority of the apostolate. Harris Memorial is deeply committed to the growing consciousness of women's role in church and society. The South East Asia Graduate School of Theology is wholly committed to "the critical Asian principle", which seeks to discover the critical interaction of Gospel and culture in each living context for the transformation of human life. All of these efforts are significant; all are partial and unfinished. Surprisingly, all these institutions continue to hold to the standards and levels of established educational systems, though not uncritically, and pursue government recognized degrees.

*G. How do programmes of ministerial formation respond to the emerging roles of women in church and society? What other special groups (youth, the handicapped, etc.) need to be included in programmes of theological education for ministry?*

The case study of Harris Memorial College prompted the Consultation to enter into the debate on women in ministry, though many other theological schools represented are involved in this issue at various stages according to their local situations. In some places up to half of the theological students are women; in others they are involved only as students' wives. In some churches women are accepted for ordained ministry; in others there are canonical impediments. In some cases separate training and distinct ministries for women are expanding; in other cases they are being abolished in favor of full integration and equality among women and men. In general it can be affirmed that there is growing awareness that women have traditionally been relegated to secondary and dependent roles in the churches and in society, and there is increasing commitment to the full participation and recognition of women in ministry. This process is important not only for the churches' understanding of the role of women but also for their wider understanding of the process of human liberation and fulfillment among other sectors of society and among all the people of God.

*H. How is popular religion (religiosity, folk-religion, traditional culture) assessed, and how is it related to ministerial formation and indigenous Christianity (theology, liturgy, life-style, etc.)?*

The Consultation noted that there is often a wide gap between theological articulation and theological institutions on the one hand and popular religious faith and practice on the other hand. Theological schools tend to regard this gap as indicative of the theological underdevelopment of the people, as if the former had a monopoly of Christian truth. It was suggested that we need to reexamine and reevaluate popular religion to discover its real significance, to learn from the experience of ordinary people, and to develop critical theological faculties within this basic context--just as we are beginning to take seriously the scientific analysis of the social, economic, and political dimensions of human need and salvation. Christian faith, to be relevant and effective, must be embodied in the symbols, language, cultural framework, hopes and aspirations of the common people. This is not folklore; it is essential to the process of the incarnation of the Gospel.

*I. How do the programmes of the institution inculcate servanthood and leadership? How do they avoid the dangers of elitism and servility?*

There are diverse gifts and functions in the one body of Christ; all are rooted in Him and given by His Spirit to the church; there is no ground for boasting or privilege. Equipping those who will equip others for ministry is an on-going need; it should not become hierarchical or convey special status; the prime model is Jesus Christ, who chose the way of service, suffering and sacrifice. Yet theological education is in constant danger of fostering elitism as it responds to the legitimate need for leadership in the churches.

Certain abilities and qualifications and functions are given greater honor and privilege and remuneration. Leaders enjoy their privileges; the people prefer to depend on them; the system perpetuates itself. The challenge is to develop non-elitist ministry through biblical models of leadership, participatory educational processes, continuous contact with the people to be served, experiences in team ministry, the creation of collegial patterns of leadership and egalitarian salaries, and personal formation that is selfgiving rather than self-seeking. There is no easy solution, for in most societies education is a powerful vehicle for personal advancement and social classification.

*J. What indigenous as well as borrowed methods of education and research are available? How do programmes of theological education for ministry make appropriate and effective use of them?*

The content of theological education in Asia is increasingly committed to Asian concerns, issues and needs, but it is not yet clear to what extent the methods are Asian or appropriate for Asia. To a large extent Asian theological education follows the same patterns of academic classwork, courses, levels, and degrees that are practised in the West, and it is assumed that Asian theological and missiological tasks require no less rigorous preparation in biblical exegesis, historical theology, and other tools of critical research. As in other parts of the world, passive and abstract methods of learning are strongly criticized, but these are deeply rooted in Asian as well as Western traditions, and they are difficult to change. The 5 cases presented at Manila mention some varieties of methodology (seminars, case studies, team work, group discussion, dialogue, role play, debate, audiovisuals, guided reading, individual research, etc.), but far more important is the growing emphasis on exposure, learning by doing, involvement, and action/reflection. It is through living among the poor and engaging in the work of congregations and other groups that theological students are motivated to learn and to serve, discover for themselves the meaning of the Gospel today, and develop the essential sensitivity and ability to lead others in ministry. There has been some discussion of Hindu, Buddhist, Confucian, and other Asian patterns of leadership and learning, but thus far little has been incorporated into Protestant or Roman Catholic theological education.



## LEARNINGS FROM PTE'S CONSULTATIONS<sup>6</sup>

**Samuel Amirtham**

### **Introduction**

Consultations have been part of the accepted style of work of the Programme on Theological Education. Its mandate included promoting consultations to discuss realities, problems, and potentialities of theological education in each region, to test evolving principles and programmes, to explore new patterns, and to devise programmes for action within and among regions. Four consultations were held during the period Nairobi to Vancouver -- Basel (1978), Manila (1979), Herrnhut (1980) and Toronto (1981) -- within the framework of a six continent approach. Each consultation centred around the concerns of a particular region within an ecumenical context, and participants from other regions were invited to be present and to interact. These consultations have lifted up the concerns of Orthodox, European and North American churches in theological education and have, in a sense, realized and completed the six continent scope of PTE's new task. Experience with the churches of the Third World in the Theological Education Fund period had clearly brought to light challenges and new insights for the churches of the First World, especially for the renewal of theological education. On the other hand, the patterns of theological education in Europe and North America still exercise great influence on theological education in Third World churches. These consultations have implicitly recognized global interdependence in theological education.

The specific purposes of the consultations were as follows. The Orthodox Consultation in Basel(1978) called together the theological seminaries from the Orthodox churches all over the world for the first time to share information, to discuss some of the problems in ministerial formation pertaining to the situation of the schools themselves and the challenges of the contemporary world, and to see how theological education is related to the life and witness of the church. The Manila Consultation (1979), international in participation, had as its purpose the critical examination and concrete exploration of the meaning of ministerial formation, which is the primary focus of the PTE, testing it through major examples from Asia. At the European Consultation in Herrnhut, representatives from

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<sup>6</sup> In: Ministerial Formation 20, 1982, 11ff

churches and theological education programmes in Europe came together to celebrate their fellowship in Christ and to consider matters related to their common commitment to the renewal of theological education for the training of the ministry. They identified five specific areas for study. The Toronto Consultation for North America was on global solidarity in theological education and set for itself the goal of exploring possible rationales, programmes, and resources for the internationalization of theological education, bringing the issue of justice, in the local as well as the global context, to the heart of theological education in the USA and Canada.

The consultations have themselves provided models for new styles of theological education, such as the use of specific cases for ecumenical education, allowing persons from different traditions and contexts to dialogue and learn with each other, affirming global solidarity, and challenging all participants to rethink their commitment to justice and peace for all peoples of the human family.

### ***A Comprehensive Concept of Ministry: Ministry belongs to the Whole People of God***

The emerging concept of ministry is that it belongs to the whole people of God and not just to a few persons within the church set apart to do special functions.

Ministry is the service of the whole church in the whole world. The concern in theological education, therefore, is to enable all people, men and women, ordained and lay, to perform their varied ministries. The supreme paradigm for ministry is set by Jesus Christ, "who came to serve and not to be served." Ministry is directed to the whole person and to all persons. It is open to society, challenges the status quo, transforms situations to meet human need, contributes to justice, and offers life in its fullness.

The traditional understanding of theological education as serving those few ordained ministers who will in turn equip the whole church for witness and service has been found inadequate. The set-apartness, the specialization, and the elitism inherent in such an approach can in fact hinder participation and mutuality in ministry. It prevents people from offering their diverse gifts and thus enriching ministry and training for ministry. Leadership must evolve from among the people, and theological education must foster the emergence and equipping of this leadership. Manila affirmed that "theological education must ultimately be evaluated in terms of its service to all those for whom Christ died," thus extending the scope of theological education even beyond the borders of the church.

### ***New Patterns of Learning: Patterns of Learning Must Correspond to the Avowed Goals and Available Resources***

There will always be a variety of ministries in the church, and this will call for diverse forms of training. The same kind of theological education is not needed by everyone, nor can each institution serve all people. But appropriate theological education should be available to all.

If theological education is to be available to all the members of the body of Christ, appropriate patterns of theological education need to be fostered. Such patterns are suited to the life situation of students, emphasize cooperation and participation, allow continued testing of learning in actual life, promote learning from life, encourage self-reliance and structural flexibility, and minimize separation and elitism. Extension education models become very significant in this context.

***A Holistic Understanding of Ministerial Formation: The Total Life of the Church and Theological Institutions Contribute to Theological Education***

The focus of theological education has been identified as ministerial formation. The goal of ministerial formation is to provide a spiritual community of motivated and equipped people for a life of service. The training programme must then combine learning and life, knowledge and commitment. The education experience needs to be a wholesome process that combines academic learning with appropriate lifestyles. The total ethos of an institution, learning and teaching, administration and structures, community life inside and openness to society, all have significance in the process. There must be coherence and consistency between what is taught and what is experienced. A mutual stimulation of theological reflection, community living, and Christian service becomes essential.

A holistic understanding also involves the question, where does theological education happen? Theological institutions can in no way have exclusive claim in this area. As Herrnhut rightly pointed out, primitive theological education, in the sense of that which is original and fundamental, takes place in the home, and is imparted by parents and family to children already in their impressionable years. Christian education programmes, liturgy, sermons, evangelistic or revival campaigns, all contribute to the learning process of the people of God.

In this context, liturgical education gains importance not only because of the relationship of liturgy to "liturgy after the liturgy (liturgy in worship and liturgy in life)", but also because the renewal of liturgical life forms part of the learning. The Orthodox Consultation stated: "The very structure of the eucharistic assembly points to the need for a gradual reorganization of the theological colleges. We should not let the theological college become merely a vocational training college. The universal royal priesthood of all believers, which makes full participation in the eucharist possible, requires that the goal of theological education should be to make basic theological knowledge available to all Christians."

It is readily accepted that theological education needs an integrated approach among its different disciplines and between the practical and theoretical fields. It is not just a question of integrating theoretical knowledge and practical skills like, for example, learning the theory of preaching and then the skills of preaching, but bringing the involvement in actual life issues to bear upon theological reflection and therefore into all the subjects of study.

Further, the development of the whole person requires structured corporate reflection, openness to society, community life, and personal guidance. The basic ingredients in ministerial formation will include intellectual resourcefulness, rootedness in the context, sensitivity to human issues, involvement in social concerns, appropriate skills, exemplary spirituality and commitment to congregations and people.

Concern for wholeness in ministry also involves the accountability of theological education to the whole church. Theological education is related to all the aspects of the life of the church. But to talk of accountability to the church without at the same time talking of the accountability of the church would be one-sided. Churches and theological education are mutually responsible in their obligation to seek integration and resourcefulness for the fulfillment of their task. However, a critical tension between the church and theological education with open doors for communication and mutual influence within a framework of trust and loyalty is also needed.

***Contextualization: Theology and Theological Education Have to be Contextual for the Sake of the Mission of the Church***

All relevant theologies are contextual. They relate to the realities of a particular time and place. Unless they do so, they do not make the Gospel meaningful to a specific situation. Therefore, the strength and relevance for mission stems from theology's rootedness in the context. Contextuality in content, method, and structures of theological education is now a widely accepted principle.

This principle has laid bare the fact that the so-called eternal truths in theology are, after all, historically and contextually conditioned. It exposes the tendency to universalize particular contextual formulations and marginalize and suppress others. Herrnhut noted, "Theology often reflects the dominant position of one group over against another, for example, of men over against women, of an oppressing class over against the oppressed, of whites over against people of other races, of clerics over against lay people." As no theology can claim perennial and universal validity, the principle of contextuality relativizes all theologies. But it also liberates. Theologies are helped to see their hidden enslavements under the authority of Christ and God's Rule.

Awareness of such factors should help theological education to relate itself critically to the social reality in which it finds itself. "It must struggle with the problem of having to be rooted in reality but at the same time having to question that same reality in the name of the reality to come.

The concept of ministerial formation will be modified by this emphasis on contextualization. Ministerial formation or training for leadership does not come to a finished state at any time. It is rather the beginning of a process of explicit reflection on one's own personal and social position as also on the role of the church in relation to the context in the light of the Gospel. Often the challenge for contextualization comes from the life of the churches. At other times theological education will have to offer these challenges to the churches. It is important that for this to happen ministerial formation programmes keep close contact with the life of the churches and of society at large.

Contextualization does not in any way conflict with the concern for academic excellence. It has been the experience of many programmes which emphasize contextualization that they did not have to sacrifice educational standards or quality but that they have gained immensely in creative insights, social commitment, and personal motivation.

One is often reminded of the danger of fragmentation and isolation in the process of contextualization. A genuine catholicity needs the encounter of persons from different contexts, but, as Herrnhut pointed out, these perspectives do not all meet in a symmetrical process. Conflicts arise and must be resolved in the basic conflict inherent in the Gospel. To that end the voice of the poor and oppressed has priority over the voice of those in positions of dominance.

Analysis and action are two components of a contextual pedagogy. Toronto said, "We observed that analysis is not an excuse for lack of involvement and action, while action and involvement are not an excuse for lack of competent analysis." An action-reflection model seems to be the most relevant for contextual education.

***Ecumenical Dimension: Theological Education has to be Carried on in an Ecumenical Perspective***

The ecumenical dimension in theological education is related to the understanding of the wholeness of the Christian Gospel. The Gospel is addressed to the whole inhabited world, and the church's mission is to proclaim the Gospel in its wholeness, to the whole person and

to all persons. Within this perspective of wholeness three levels of meaning of "ecumenical" were identified at Herrnhut: the inter-confessional, the trans-confessional, and the meta-confessional.

The inter-confessional dimension involves openness to other confessions, a positive appreciation of the riches of other church traditions, a commitment to the unity of the church as a visible sign of the promise of unity for all humankind in Christ. It means a critical relationship to one's own tradition in the light of the Gospel and the realization that membership of the church of Christ is more inclusive than one's own, that no one church is complete in itself without belonging together with the universal church. Theological education must benefit from and contribute to this ecumenical understanding. Theological schools are called upon to grapple seriously with the ecumenical demands inherent in their own tradition and to the challenges for ecumenism coming from contemporary situations in the church and in the world.

The second level of meaning of ecumenical is trans-confessional or global. This is related to "the advance of the churches from a parochial conscience to a worldwide perspective as the inescapable content of God's purpose to unite all people and all things in Christ." This refers not only to socio-political issues but also to the theological understanding of other faiths and perspectives for community building with neighbours. Theological education is concerned with the unity of all humanity.

Ecumenical also refers to meta-confessional or grassroot level concerns. It has to do with the building of "oikos" or space for local communities to realize their desire for unity and concern for justice. They are part of the ecumenical reality today, though often they are loosely related to the church. Theological education needs to be related to these groups and help the churches to be in dialogue with them.

Ecumenism is not just a special subject to be studied as one of the disciplines in a theological curriculum. It is a dimension in all theological education. As Herrnhut put it, "It has to do with a readiness to experience and take account of other confessions of Christian faith, other religious traditions and other social cultural realities in order to see things whole." Ecumenism has to be internalized in all the disciplines.

This ecumenical perspective has pedagogical implications. Ecumenical education happens best when there are possibilities for dialogue, personal encounter, and exposure to hitherto unknown experience.

***Global Solidarity: Theological Education has to be Concerned with the Global Issues of Justice and Peace.***

Ecumenical commitment means responsibility for the whole earth and all humanity. This implies that theological education must include education for peace-making and for creating a just society within nations and among nations. Biblical insights must permeate the whole spectrum of theological enterprise in this regard. Theological education should help people to grow in the knowledge of and commitment to human rights, disarmament, and strategies for building trust between peoples. This involves, among other things, as demonstrated at Toronto: exploration of key issues which have ramifications for global consciousness and interdependence, such as racism, sexism, classism, the quest for peace, the international economic order, etc., evolving pedagogical strategies which will bring feminist, black, minority, rural, and urban concerns into the curricula and encouraging present programmes

which sensitize people to these issues. In all these the central importance of people, not just ideas, in creating this global awareness has to be affirmed.

***Women in Theological Education : Churches Need to Recognize the Gifts of Women for Ministry and Enable Them to Exercise these Gifts***

While the ministry of women is included in the comprehensive understanding of ministry and the search for justice within the church, theological education must lift up this issue, as it has been largely neglected in many churches. Manila said, "In general, it can be affirmed that there is growing awareness that women have traditionally been relegated to secondary and dependent roles in the churches and in society, and there is increasing commitment to the full participation and recognition of women in ministry." Herrnhut admitted that "women's concerns could not easily be integrated into the agenda, apparently because feminist issues are not yet a self-evident concern for many involved in theological education." This issue was not fully discussed in the consultations, though it was identified as a concern that needs further exploration and realization. It was affirmed that enabling the ministry of women would contribute very much to men and women being more fully involved in the life of church and society.

***Spirituality: Spiritual Formation Includes Servanthood in Leadership and Accepting Social Responsibility***

It is not insignificant that Herrnhut combined social responsibility and spiritual formation as one issue. Christian spirituality has to do with being rooted in the power of the Spirit and standing against all that prevents people from living in peace and harmony. It is concerned with personal and corporate growth into the stature of Christ, who chose the way of the cross and the model of servant through suffering and sacrifice.

The Orthodox Consultation stated that " spiritual formation of the future clergyman was found to be central to the process of theological education." Liturgical life , the example of teachers, and the support of the community are some of the means of accomplishing this. Manila commended involvement with the poor and the congregations for fostering a wholesome spirituality : "It is through living among the poor and engaging in the work of congregations and other groups that theological students are motivated to learn and to serve, discover for themselves the meaning of the Gospel today, and develop the essential sensitivity and ability to lead others in ministry."

***Conclusion***

Consultations provide occasions for sharing of information, exchange of ideas, personal encounter and transformation, evolving of new concepts, highlighting of issues, etc. But there are also limits to what consultations can achieve. Sometimes they bring together only those of a common mind or those already "converted" to the concept. Often the vision and enrichment of participants do not reach beyond their own circles . Too many issues are considered, and no one single subject is searched to its full breadth and depth. Yet , in the absence of better instruments, there is not much choice left except to live with the dilemma of some usefulness on the one hand, and limited effectiveness on the other as regards the consultation model. Whenever consultations are planned, greater thought will have to be given t o follow-up programmes and ways to disseminate the findings to a wider constituency. Participation in consultations should also include those responsible for decision-making in ministerial formation programmes of the churches.

## MINISTRY BY THE PEOPLE <sup>7</sup>

### F. Ross Kinsler

A major shift seems to be taking place in the field of medicine, and the need for this shift is incontrovertible. According to Halfdan Mahler, Director-General of the World Health Organization, "If we do not succeed in making radical changes, the vast majority of the world population will still have no access to decent health care at the end of the century."<sup>8</sup>

Similarly there is wide-spread dissatisfaction with inherited concepts and structures of ministry in churches all around the world, and there are numerous attempts to build new patterns of training and leadership. It could be said that a major shift is taking place here also.

The purpose of this paper is to examine briefly the parallels and the convergence of these developments in order to discover what challenge they bring to the churches as they seek to pursue God's purpose for all people in today's burgeoning, troubled, needy world. More specifically it raises questions about the way the churches select and train their ministers in the light of new approaches to primary health care; it calls upon theological educators to direct their attention and their resources to "primary ministries". Finally, it affirms that institutions and networks for ministerial formation have a significant role to play in promoting health and ministry by the people.

### I. Parallels

#### A. The Western Academic-Professional Approach

Both health care and the ministry have come increasingly under Western cultural dominance. They are now shaped by academic institutions and controlled by professionals. This has led to greater specialization and competence among those who practice medicine and ministry. It has also limited the number of those who can be trained and the availability of their services to those who can pay the price.

The rationale for this approach is quite understandable, and it has until recently been widely accepted. No one would want to submit to a surgical operation under any but the best university-trained specialist available. Increasingly educated church members, themselves becoming more specialized in their own fields, require highly skilled ministers to direct worship, counselling, and other religious activities. So enormous resources are being invested in the training and support of professional doctors and pastors.

#### B. The Current Crisis

The inadequacy of this approach has been brought to our attention by startling reports from Third World countries. The W.H.O. reports that "About two-thirds of humanity does not even have access to the simplest of health care systems."<sup>9</sup> Medical resources are concentrated in the urban areas and reach only 10 to 15 % of the population. The rural and urban poor population, who now number at least 3000 million, lack not only professional

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<sup>7</sup> in: Ministerial Formation 5, 1979, p. 3ff

<sup>8</sup> "Health for all by the year 2000" (booklet) (Geneva: World Health Organization), p. 3

<sup>9</sup> Ibid. p. 5

are and hospitals but safe drinking water and basic nutrition. Among many groups one out of four children dies before the age of one year.

Similarly the churches among the middle class people tend to set the standards for the training and hiring of pastors--in Asia, Africa, and Latin America as well as Europe and North America. The result is that the vast majority of congregations in the Third World do not have fully trained and credentialed ministers. In many areas there is one ordained pastor for 10, 20, or more congregations, one priest for 5,000 or 10,000 members. It has been reported that some congregations have not received the Lord's Supper for as much as five years.

### **C. Ideological Questions**

The obvious question that arises out of these simple observations--which could be affirmed much more strongly with endless examples and statistics - is, "How can the existing maldistribution of medical services and ministry resources be rectified for the good of all people?" The assumption of existing systems has been that the benefits of the great medical and theological centers would eventually "trickle down" to the lower levels of society and the remote rural hinterlands. In fact the benefits gravitate upwards; ever greater sums are required to support these institutions and their graduates; more and more is being done for fewer and fewer people. This is intolerable. Radical change is necessary.<sup>10</sup>

A more fundamental question arises as to the nature of health care and the nature of the ministry. Not only is the traditional approach unjust and inadequate; it is tragically misguided. What is health care, ultimately? What is ministry basically? In both spheres highly skilled practitioners and theoreticians can and should play a necessary role, but in neither one could they ever begin to meet the basic needs of people. The problem is rather that the professionals have, to some extent unwittingly and unintentionally, pre-empted the field and made the people increasingly dependent on their services. It is important to note that local people in remote areas continue to carry on most or all of the functions of health care and ministry- certainly with grave limitations but often with great effectiveness- while in technologically advanced and highly "educated" societies the people seem to be incapable of performing for themselves the most elementary tasks. What is needed, therefore, is not to extend the present system until it reaches all countries and communities--if that would ever be possible- but rather to build a new understanding and approach to health care and ministry.

### **D. Proposed Changes**

Both the Christian Medical Commission of the World Council of Churches and the World Health Organization of the United Nations have during the last decade taken the option to dedicate their attention and efforts to Primary Health Care. The underlying assumptions are that local communities--whatever their socio-economic condition and geographical location--can and should take primary responsibility for their own health, that local leaders - of any cultural group or educational level--can readily learn the basic information and skills to respond to most of the health problems of their people. Although this new approach is most urgently needed in poor countries and among disadvantaged peoples, it is just as valid and essential where professional medicine is more pervasive--because health can be

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<sup>10</sup>R. A. Lambourne, "Secular and Christian Models of Health and Salvation": Contact (Geneva: Christian Medical Commission) No. 1, November 1970, p. 2 refers to inequality in health care as "the final injustice, the ultimate injustice" i.e. where some are in a position to consume the health care that would save their neighbors' lives.

achieved only when the people themselves become responsible agents of their own well-being.

During its Third Mandate (1970-1977) the Theological Education Fund raised critical questions about the authenticity and viability of traditional Western patterns of ministry and training in Third World countries and began to encourage the development of alternative approaches, notably theological education by extension. Taking up this concern, the Programme on Theological Education of the World Council of Churches is now exploring the significance and potential of locally based ministerial formation, not only in Asia-Africa-Latin America but also in Europe and North America. The underlying assumptions are that local congregations are quite capable of discovering and developing among their own members the necessary gifts for all the functions of the ministry, that local leaders can be provided opportunities for training in critical theological reflection and pastoral skills without being uprooted from their cultural contexts and social responsibilities, and that both ministry and formation should ultimately and primarily be the responsibility of the people of God.

## II. Convergence

### A. A People-Centered, Community-Based Approach

In the early 60's a young North American doctor, Carroll Behrhorst, began to approach the health needs of the highland Indians of Guatemala *on their own terms*. His basic philosophy was to work *with* the people and not *for* them. The 200,000 people living in the region of Chimaltenango had serious health problems: malnutrition and tuberculosis were endemic; children were dying of diarrhoea and measles; there were virtually no health or social services in the area. Moreover the people were mostly illiterate and extremely poor. Rather than using his technical skills and tools to attack the diseases he was trained to identify and treat, he began by asking "What do you think you need?" He soon established a clinic and began to train Indian health promoters. These men and women are chosen by local health committees, so they represent and respond to the concerns of their communities. Some of them have never been to school, but they know their people and are trusted by them. It has become evident that these health promoters and local committees are able to respond effectively--more effectively than outsiders--and within local resources to 80% or 90% of the health problems of their people, and in this process they are strengthening their people's confidence in their own ability to meet their own needs.<sup>11</sup>

At about the same time and just 120 kilometers by road the Presbyterian Seminary of Guatemala was going through a radical change in its approach to ministerial formation. Having attempted during 25 years to follow the North American pattern of training young men for 3 years at a central location, they realized that they were not responding to the basic needs of the congregations. The candidates who came to the institution were inexperienced and therefore unproven; they were uprooted from the varied subcultures and situations of their people; and this program was grooming them for professional service which most of the congregations would never be able to support. On the other hand the church was growing rapidly, especially in the rural areas, under the leadership of active elders and deacons, women and youth, ordinary believers who carry full responsibility for their congregations. These observations led to a new understanding of ministerial formation and a new pattern of training. The Seminary now encourages and enables local leaders to pursue theological studies on a part-time basis in their own contexts and at their own academic

<sup>11</sup> Carrol Behrhorst, "The Chimaltenango Development Project, Guatemala" Contact (Geneva: Christian Medical Commission), No. 19, February 1974.

levels through 25 to 30 extension centers scattered across the country. The process of leadership formation and selection is fostered at the local level throughout the church. Theological and missiological reflection are carried out within the on-going life of the congregations and their communities.<sup>12</sup>

These two illustrations from Guatemala suggest that parallel developments in health care and ministry--and other areas of human need--may actually converge. From the beginning the architects of these two programs were in contact with each other, although their constituencies, geographical areas, and tasks were quite separate. Both were shaped by a concern to respond to the realities and potentialities of the people and their natural leaders. In July 1973 Dr. Behrhorst was invited to tell his story at the annual meeting of the Christian Medical Commission, which has in recent years concentrated its efforts on this kind of health care around the world. Also in July 1973 a staff member of the Presbyterian Seminary of Guatemala was invited to present a paper at the annual meeting of the Theological Education Fund, which has similarly given support to this kind of ministerial formation in recent years. Curious as this coincidence may seem, this is probably the first time that it has been mentioned in print.

## **B. Networks for the Training and Support of Local Leaders**

Carroll Behrhorst and others in many places have given much thought and effort to the development of networks for the training and support of primary health workers, especially for poor, rural areas where the needs are so acute and so vast. It is generally agreed that the Primary Health Care Workers should be selected by their communities and have their communities' support in developing health services for their people. They should be responsible to local authorities and paid by them (in cash or kind, part-time or fulltime). They may receive an initial training of 6 to 8 weeks and further annual training of 2 to 3 weeks, or they may go to the training center for monthly sessions and examinations. They should receive specific, practical instructions through teachers and manuals; they need supervision; they should report regularly to their local authorities and to their supervisors in the health system. They must know what they can treat and when to refer. Their work includes not only medical care but health education and community development. Their task is to help the local authorities and communities to identify and solve their problems.

The extension program of the Presbyterian Seminary of Guatemala has become a model for ministerial formation in many parts of the world during the past 10 years. The aim of this program is to reach out to local leaders with basic tools for theological education so that their ministry can be strengthened and given full recognition. The educational design provides for home study guided by various kinds of texts and study manuals, ongoing participation in local congregations, and weekly seminar sessions where theological content and practical experience are integrated through discussion among peers with a visiting tutor. Extension programs have been set up specifically to train lay persons, candidates for ordained ministry, lay or auxiliary ministries, and experienced clergy. A strong case can be made for integrating these various functions in order to break down artificial distinctions and to make ministry once again the shared responsibility of the people in their local congregations. It is now clear that theological education can reach far wider than traditional training approaches and that it can enroll many more people at different levels, including both those who are more and less educated than those who attend existing theological institutions.

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<sup>12</sup>F. Ross Kinsler, *The Extension Movement in Theological Education* (South Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1978).

The convergence of these developments is increasingly important. A recent report of the Christian Medical Commission, for example, mentions various community-based health projects in Argentina, Bangladesh, Cuba, Guyana, Hong Kong, Liberia, India, Kenya, Nigeria, Singapore, Sudan, Taiwan, Tanzania, and Zaire.<sup>13</sup> All of these countries--in fact all of Latin America, most of Africa, and many countries of Asia--are now experimenting with theological education by extension. A recent survey, for example, indicates that Nigeria has 11 extension programs with about 6000 students. The potential of these networks for training local leaders for health care as well as for ministry is incalculable. Ronald and Edith Seaton, on the basis of wide experience of primary health care systems and exposure to theological education by extension, have proposed a comprehensive strategy for the mobilization of the world's health resources for the benefit of all people in their book *Here's now: Health Education by Extension*.<sup>14</sup>

### C. Holistic Concerns

Dr. Behrhorst soon realized that concern for health was only partially a medical problem. Most people are sick because they have a poor diet and unsafe drinking water and inadequate sanitation facilities; these factors are related to poverty, which in turn results from unjust land distribution, lack of employment opportunities, poor and inappropriate education, etc. In 1973 he listed the following priorities for his program: social justice, land tenure, population control, agricultural production and marketing, malnutrition, health training, and curative medicine. He placed curative medicine at the bottom in their concern for health! And he found himself engaged in a wide range of programs for community development and social action. The same is happening in other health care programs.

The Presbyterian Seminary of Guatemala, which still offers many of the traditional theological courses, discovered that all of this material took on new meaning and became far more interesting because the extension students are by and large not neophytes but active leaders in their congregations and communities. Class discussions inevitably evolve around real experiences and problems, and "students" become equal partners with "tutors" in the local situation. Furthermore it soon became evident that the extension network provides an ideal channel for the discussion of current issues and the sharing of new ideas and programs throughout the church. As parallel networks for training in community development and health care were formed, it turned out that many of the same people were involved in these programs. The church maintains a strong evangelistic bias in its understanding of mission, but a more holistic concern is beginning to emerge.

The convergence of health care and ministry becomes altogether obvious and necessary when one acknowledges that people are indivisible wholes immersed in cultural contexts. In recent years the churches have begun to recognize that neither health care nor ministry can rightly ignore the other nor fail to grapple with the social structures that shape human existence.

### D. Bringing the Two Together

The advocates of primary health care are unanimous in affirming basic principles which must be applied and which can and should be worked out through the church. Primary Health Care requires a base of support among the people in every place--people who have a

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<sup>13</sup> *"Report on the Activities and Concerns of the Christian Medical Commission July 1976-December 1977"* (Geneva: C.M. C., 1978)

<sup>14</sup> *Ronald S. Seaton and Edith B. Seaton, Here's How: Health Education by Extension* (South Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1976)

concern for others, who are responsible and dedicated, who are seeking to form a healing community and to develop a vision of a more abundant life for all. It also depends primarily on local leaders who are willing to serve their people and who have gained the confidence and respect of their people. Throughout all of Latin America, North America, and Europe, most of Africa, and many-parts of Asia there are now congregations of Christians who can and should provide these essential elements.

On the other hand the Christian ministry is increasingly perceived to be the responsibility and the work of all believers. There is therefore a great need to discover practical ways in which "ordinary" members can engage in effective service to others within their own fellowship and beyond. In many places the congregations are outward looking but with a narrow understanding of the Gospel and evangelization. The enormous need for primary health care, even in technologically advanced countries, provides unlimited opportunities for service and could also help to broaden the churches' understanding of mission.

The convergence of primary health care and local ministries may be further sealed in many indigenous cultures by recognizing that those people have traditionally believed that health and religion are inseparable and that religious leaders should also be healers. This convergence may be considered imperative for all cultures because the Bible itself reveals that salvation and health are interrelated and Christian theology affirms that God's purpose in creation and redemption embraces whole persons, human societies, history, and the cosmos itself.

### **III. Challenge**

#### **A. Primary Health Care and Primary Ministries**

The changes which the Christian Medical Commission and the World Health Organization have been advocating are not only structural but conceptual. They call for a basic shift in values and attitudes regarding health and health care services. They challenge churches and governments not only to reach out to the underserved and unreached but to make their primary concern the affirmation of *health for all by the people themselves* --including the wealthy who are overserved and overly dependent on professionals and hospitals.

This is not to say that professional physicians and hospitals should be by-passed or eliminated. They will probably be asked to play a much more far-reaching role. But the pyramid of health care services (specialists, doctors, nurses, paramedics) should be turned on its side so that the people and their local health promoters are in fact *primary*.<sup>15</sup> The professionals, then, instead of dominating and monopolizing health care, should be considered *auxiliary*, enabling and supporting the others.

Similarly the renewal of the ministry calls for new structures and a new vision. In an intellectual way most churches affirm that the ministry is the responsibility of all the people of God, but in practice they continue to invest most of their resources in the training and support of fulltime professionals and to depend on them to direct all activities locally and throughout their hierarchies. This is as true of congregational and reformed as it is of episcopal churches. And the recent growth of extension training is in danger of being "domesticated" by limiting it to the "laity" or to churches that cannot afford residential training or to lower academic levels or to "auxiliary" clergy. What is needed is a new

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<sup>15</sup> David B. Werner, "The Village Health Worker-Lackey or liberator?" (Palo Alto: Hesperian Foundation, 1977)

ecclesiology in which the people and their local leaders are in fact the *primary* base of ministry.

Seminaries and fulltime specialists will still be needed, but their role must change radically in relation to the *primary ministries* of local congregations- however they may in future be organized. The seminaries can no longer limit their vision to schooling a handful of bright young candidates for ordination; they should become resource centers to provide orientation, strategies, and resources for mobilizing and equipping the people of God for witness and service. Fulltime "ministers" should no longer be allowed to pre-empt the ministries of their congregations; they must play an essential but *auxiliary* role--to enable and support local leaders who should carry the *primary* responsibilities for ministry.

The experience of many Third World churches today is that local congregations and their natural leaders can bring to the ministry and to health care an enormous reservoir of energy and enthusiasm, gifts and abilities, experience and dedication far beyond the range and imagination of traditional Western churches as they now function. It is difficult to estimate the potential of the Western churches if they were to release among all their members the dynamics of participation and leadership as now being experienced in Asia, Africa and Latin America. At the same time there is a continuing need for critical biblical-theological reflection in all the churches and at every level, so that the power of the people for service may be guided by the Gospel of the Incarnation.

## **B. Theological Bases for Change**

Dr. R.A. Lambourne, a Christian psychiatrist and university lecturer, has made a provocative analysis of the theological roots of medicine and the ministry in the West which helps both to explain the present dilemma and to provide a basis for change.<sup>16</sup> Health and salvation have been negativized and individualized to mean respectively the treatment of specific diseases or malfunctions and the eradication of specific sins. In both cases care is obtained by going to the proper professional. Health care is thus epitomized by the hospital, and the Christian life is defined primarily in terms of church attendance. Physical ailments and their treatment are increasingly refined and isolated, requiring specialists with ever greater competence in more limited fields. Theological seminaries provide ever "higher" and longer studies and increased specialization.

In challenging this tendency Dr. Lambourne and others affirm that health and Christianity are concerned fundamentally with becoming fully human, a positive, social search for life. Surgery and inoculations and counselling and sophisticated theology will always be necessary, but the attention and resources of people should be directed primarily toward the building of the Kingdom, the new humanity. Dr. Lambourne proposes a map or grid of healthcare concerns, moving from the microbiologist and the surgeon, who deal with the most minute dimensions of illness, to the political utopian, the WHO visionary, and the theologian, who speak to the social and cosmic dimensions of human existence. He points to the expression of forgiveness and salvation through the Eucharist, which was originally a corporate experience, with no professional leader, in homes, using ordinary bread and wine from the kitchen. He calls for a new vision of health and salvation in which increasing attention is given not to cures but to caring, not to professionals but to the people, not to treatment but to liberation.

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<sup>16</sup> "Secular and Christian Models of Health and Salvation": *op. cit.*., and mimeographed papers, "A Concepts Map of the Practice of Medicine", Parts I and II

### **C. Sociological and Educational Realities**

How can such changes take place? Unless effective means are discovered, these proposals remain as illusions, mere words. The main stream of Western culture, which continues to exercise inordinate influence in the Third World, leads to greater institutionalization, specialization, and commercialization. This is especially true of medicine, and it will probably become increasingly true of the ministry.

On the other hand there is hope for change because these proposals respond to basic social and spiritual dynamics. The Pentecostals of Latin America, the Independent Churches of Africa, and indigenous churches elsewhere continue to demonstrate the effectiveness of locally based leadership and to experience dynamic and in some places astounding growth. The historic churches in the First World continue to decline, but they may be forced by economic and political factors to turn to indigenous patterns or give way to new movements, both of which could bring new vitality.

Furthermore, there is hope for change because the proposals respond to basic educational realities. The myth that education takes place only or mainly in schools has been unmasked, and increasing opportunities for extramural, field-based, and non-formal education are being created and recognized. This should help to break the monopolies of the professional guilds and allow ordinary people to take elementary or even primary responsibilities for health care and ministry anew.

### **D. Toward a New Vision of Ministerial Formation**

A brief WHO booklet on primary health care is called *Health for all by the year 2000*, and a related book recording examples of Primary Health Care program is entitled *Health by the people*<sup>17</sup> This is the vision proclaimed by both the W.H.O. and the C.M.C.

Recent developments in theological education, notably the extension movement, run parallel and promote a vision of primary ministries led by local leaders. This, too, could become a universal reality by the year .2000.

No doubt each of these movements can learn from the other, but the greater challenge is to build a new vision of ministerial formation, based in local communities everywhere, which will embody all the people of God and involve them freely and widely in all kinds of witness and service, in creating true community, in building a just, participatory, and sustainable society, in proclaiming the Gospel of healing salvation.

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<sup>17</sup> Kenneth W. Newells, ed., *Health by the People* (Geneva: World Health Organization, 1975). See also the new W.H.O. booklet *Health: A Time for Justice; Primary Health Care* (Geneva, 1978).



## **WOMEN AND THEOLOGY A LATIN AMERICAN VIEWPOINT**

**Ofelia ORTEGA**

*“The Starting point is life”*

Most of our women theologians agree that feminist theology is the result of our actual experiences. The two basic lines which we take as the starting point in our theological reflection are: the existential experience of our own quest for identity, and our experience of faith, always lived out on the margins of power and authority.<sup>18</sup>

In this quest for our own identity we are united by our common experience of the (cultural, social, economic and religious) oppressions to which women have been subjected over the centuries. It is out of this situation of oppression that our women are becoming aware of the structures which prevent their own liberation, and that of the peoples to which they belong.

“Life itself” is the key to all our theological reflection. That being so, we always try to do our theological work inclusively, and on a basis of community and participation. “Our theology goes beyond gender to embrace humanity in its integrity”.<sup>19</sup> All over the world women are the ones who are constantly renewing a covenant with is giving life and protecting it.

In this struggle “starting with life” and “for life” women are fighting on two fronts: on the one hand, for the satisfaction of the basic needs of all human beings - themselves and others; and on the other, for recognition of women's right to take part actively in the life of society, the popular movements, trade unions, the church and the production of theology.

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<sup>18</sup> See the paper by Ana Maria Tepedino, a Roman Catholic theologian from Brazil in the book *With Passion and Compassion*, edited by Virginia Fabella and Mercy Amba Oduyoye, Orbis Books, Maryknoll, New York, 1988.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, Introduction, p. XI.

## **I. Women Doing Theology**

It has been said that theology is a "sexist" product, and it is not unreasonable to think so. We carry on our shoulders the enormous ancestral weight of male-centred, patriarchal church structures - structures which exclude women from theological training and from any significant role in ministry. As a result, pastoral practice and theological output (exegesis and theology), for so long the preserve of men, in one way or another reflect a partial male view of things.

Yet women of faith, as members of Christian communities, are actively engaged every day in doing theology, sharing their experiences of God, joining in the celebration of the faith in Bible study groups, prayer and discussion groups, producing pamphlets, bulletins, etc. helping with pastoral visiting. Women's daily experience is always one of relationships, which is why women are more disposed to understand the community meaning of the Christian faith. This is what Latin American women theologians call "the practice of tenderness".<sup>20</sup> Women are closer to practical reality, the vital processes, and their view of things is more inclusive and comprehensive, they work in categories of relatedness rather than segregation.

Consequently, it is easier for them to break with the dualism common in western thinking which is unmistakably masculine.

For these reasons it is essential that women should be involved in the production of theology because their contribution "radicalizes theological method"<sup>21</sup> since in doing theology women start from their own experience of God and their own spirituality.<sup>22</sup>

## **II. Factors Affecting Women's Participation in Theological Education (Objective and Subjective Obstacles)**

### **1. Women's socio-economic Status in Society: (Obstacle and Challenge to Change)**

In societies where the majority of women are poor, where the work traditionally done by the woman, keeps the family alive, and where the level of general education is low, women's participation in the more formal aspects of theological education is very limited. Nonetheless, in these situations of extreme poverty, women see themselves as the "subjects", i.e. the active agents of pastoral ministry in the church which is emerging among the people. From this point of view, the future takes on a different aspect, not because church institutions are concerned to give women a different place, but because the organization in which the women are directly involved makes participation possible.

The direction is set by the social, not the church organization. The involvement with social problems makes it possible to live out the faith more authentically in practice. When a woman becomes involved in the problems experienced by the people and takes part in their struggle, she takes part in the community's reflection; she becomes a subject and discovers herself and is discovered as a person. She moves from a passive to an active role in the

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid. ,p. 167

<sup>21</sup> Teologos de la liberacion hablan sobre la mujer, DEI, Costa Rica, 1986 (Interviews by Elsa Tamez with liberation theologians).Published in the USA under the title "Against Machismo", Meyer Stone Books, USA, 1987

<sup>22</sup> Women' Spirituality, edited by Joann Wolske Conn, Paulist Press, Hew York, 1986 (the book studies the contribution of a spirituality that includes all dimensions of human life).

social process of defending the claims of the marginalized sectors and is at the same time drawn into reflecting in the light of the faith on the historical situation, in other words, in doing theology.

Starting with this experience of social and church involvement in the local community, the woman begins to articulate "her message" and feels a hunger for improvement which prompts her to attend training workshops, Bible study sessions and various educational facilities in order to make herself better prepared to be an "agent of a renewed pastoral ministry".

More and more scholarships are being requested by women wishing to enter our seminaries and universities to acquire the level of education which will enable them to play an active part in theological tasks as intellectuals who are also an organic part of the popular movement (a phenomenon to be found especially in Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Caribbean and the Pacific).

So far, however, our institutions have failed to respond adequately to these requests. A global strategy is needed to answer the applications reaching us from the regions. We are not prepared for the arrival of women in the field of education and theological production. The programmes and curricula of our institutions, the composition of the teaching staff and our scholarship systems are geared to meet the needs of men wishing to study theology and of hierarchical and clerical church structures. We have not allowed the "feminine" to penetrate the teaching faculties and the life of our centres of theological education. As a result women have a double struggle: a) to get there in the first place, and b) to be constantly fighting against an education system which is imposed on them though it does not meet their needs, which are much more directed towards wholeness, participation and community.

## **2. "Separate" or "Specialized" Forms for Women (Second-Class Ministries?)**

In the seventies I was appointed dean of the School of Christian Education of the Evangelical Theological Seminary in Matanzas, Cuba. I immediately realized that there was a tradition in the churches of sending the women to the School of Christian Education and the men to the School of Theology. The men left the school with a fuller training (they did courses in biblical languages, exegesis, more theology courses, etc.) while the women did courses in methods, and concentrated less in classical theological disciplines. At the end the students received two different types of degrees, with that of the women being conspicuously lower than that given to the men, and not entitling them to aspire to ordination in their respective churches. They of course exercised a "second-class" ministry, at a lower salary and always subordinate to the pastor of the local church.

A few months after starting my job I decided to propose the disbanding of the School of Christian Education; it seemed a very radical step, but by approving it we were releasing both the women and the men from stereotyped educational patterns because we included on the programme of the resulting single School of Theology special courses in Christian Education, Bible, or Pastoral Work, etc.

In this way the women obtain a degree which has the same standing as that of the men and the male students have the opportunity to take Christian Education as a speciality, which trains them for practical Christian educational work in the local church.

"Separate" provisions of this kind prevent women from participating fully in our theological institutions, especially in the Third World, and also limit the men's participation in other ministries which are automatically assigned to women.

In some confessions and cultures, it is true, there is the problem that if women do not attend these separate theological institutions, there is no other option open to them. In that case there is no alternative but for women to take the limited opportunity for training open to them, but at the same time to keep pressing for wider fields of opportunity.

### **3. The question for ordination**

The "legal" restrictions on the ordination of women in some confessions does not seem to have dampened women's growing interest in following academic theological studies. In Latin America more than ten Roman Catholic women are in the process of completing their doctorates in theology and some are already teaching in theological faculties; three at least are doing their doctorates in feminist theology. A large number of nuns are training as pastoral agents in ecumenical centres (such as DEI in Costa Rica, CESEP, CEDI, and CEBI in Brazil). Greater difficulties seem to arise in the more conservative Protestant denominations where women not only encounter serious obstacles to ordination but also to their participation in decisionmaking and even, in some cases, in the running of the local congregation (e.g. the Presbyterian churches in Mexico and Brazil).

In the churches where the laity are highly involved in theological education women participate more freely because in those churches, they generally find new forms of ministry being practiced and different approaches in theological education (e.g. the involvement of women in base communities; in some Pentecostal churches and in local congregations of the historic denominations where pastoral renewal is taking place).

### **4. Difficulties Preventing Women from Attending Residential Programmes**

The percentage of women registered on extension courses or nonresidential programmes is always higher than the number able to attend the residential courses offered by our theological institutions.

This is basically due to the fact that women continue to fulfill many of the "functions" or "roles" imposed on them by the cultural patterns of society (family responsibilities, marriage at an early age, the "double work-load", which makes it difficult for them to join a full-time programme lasting several years. However, today women are finding new alternatives. More "late vocations" are coming forward after the children have grown up, and young women make tremendous efforts to complete their theological education in institutions near at hand, close to home, which offer evening or weekend courses. Scholarships and financial aid are also needed for this because many of these poor and middle class women help to support their families. Others are single mothers or divorced, with no other household income except what they earn themselves.

There has also been an increase in the number of women wishing to accompany their husbands during post-graduate studies - not just in the sense of "keeping them company" to make the stay abroad more pleasant, but with the specific intention of taking courses for their *own* advancement. Our scholarship systems have to take account of such cases which obviously change our frame of reference and criteria for deciding which requests for aid are to be granted, how and on what conditions.

Women are today demanding theological courses that work on different patterns and time-scales than those provided by the traditional style of residential courses.

### **III. The Specific Contribution of Women in the Field of Theology**

#### **1. A More Holistic Approach to Theological Education**

Women all over the world are expressing their concern about the gulf that exists between "pure" theology and daily life, between theological doctrine and practical ministry. They often express this by saying, "Theological education is too academic" - but the sentence seems to have different meanings. One of the main problems is the lack of spiritual formation in theological education, and it is the women who are trying to integrate the social, personal and theological dimensions in the training for the ministry. Integrated training of this kind is a feature of the alternative forms of theological education created for women by women.

#### **2. Great Sensitivity to the Social Context and Particular Historic Experience**

A good number of women say that their decision to study theology was prompted by a growing consciousness of social injustice towards women and other marginalized social groups. Embarking on theological education also implies trying to acquire a better knowledge of the specific social developments on which theological reflection is based, and the tools to analyse them. Women are aware not only of their own "captivity" but also of the captivity and struggle of other groups (Black, Hispanic or indigenous students, etc.).

#### **3. Biblical Theology from the Standpoint of Women**

In what sense and on what conditions is the Bible a source from which we can elaborate a women's theology?

There is no denying that beyond the cultural, anthropological mediations in which the Bible speaks to us of women, the message is clear and enlightening:

- No form of oppression of women can ever be justified from the Law or in Yahweh's name.
- Faithfulness to Yahweh can overturn the cultural patterns imposed on women, and the corresponding patterns of behaviour in the people of God.
- The "strong personalities" - the women in the Bible who could not be silenced play an important part, generally in connection with political and religious events of significance for the people.
- The "witnessing women" in the Bible, who are the prototype of the new people are figures who can teach great numbers of men and women how to make the prophecy and the promise of the kingdom vivid and effective.

Church tradition has projected anti-feminist prejudices into its reading of the Scriptures, not only obscuring the richness of these women's testimonies but actually undermining the spiritual strength of God's Word as a whole, and weakening its historical efficacy. Women today are reading the Scriptures in a militant spirit, recovering and developing the collective

experience of women yesterday and today, and staking their lives on the liberation of the people and the proclamation of the Good News.

As the key to a coherent exegesis, women take the prophetic practice of Jesus who continues, actualizes and renews the prophetic practice of the Old Testament. Jesus' behaviour towards women is consistent with his mission and message of justice and has to be understood and articulated in the light of his commitment to the cause of the poor and oppressed. For those who follow Christ, discipleship requires them to overcome the cultural and ideological blockages which cause them to discriminate against women.

It is not possible to embrace the cause of Christ while still clinging to attitudes which marginalize and oppress women.

#### **4. Inclusive Language in Liturgy and Theology**

For many years Latin American women regarded the question of inclusive liturgical and theological language as a concern of First World women. But that view has changed today; a wide measure of interest in the question has developed because it is thought that in a liberation process such as ours in Latin America this is one of the aspects, which has to be changed at the same time as male behaviour and attitudes. Our women theologians believe that "language is very important; and we must begin to take hold of it and discover the degree of discrimination women suffer in language"<sup>23</sup>.

It will be useful to point out four basic affirmations which will provide us with some hermeneutic keys with which to approach some of the fundamental issues concerning women in regard to language.

##### **a) Language can be a Creative or Liberating Force or an Oppressive and Imprisoning Force**

Language and social structures are intimately related. Language conceptualizes the reality and behaviour patterns of the group which holds power; so, in their process of self-liberation oppressed groups need to change the language. A new language emerges, or a new interpretation of symbols and images. Without a change in language the process of change in the structures is very slow. Language has power. In the inclusive and humble love of the suffering Christ, God showed forth the true nature of the Word. It is not a Word that alienates, oppresses or excludes, but a Word which opens the way to life in mutuality, equality and freedom.

##### **b) The Bible was written in a Patriarchal Culture: the Father was the Supreme Head of the Family, the Clan, the Nation (Women and Children were Subordinate)**

We have to remember that there are two fundamental perspectives in the Bible: justice and liberation. That being so, we do find many elements of criticism of the patriarchal society in the Bible itself, though they are not always easy to find.

Painstaking work is required to reconstruct the place of women in the Revelation and make a proper reading of the messages hidden in the texts. The work done by women biblical scholars in recent years has produced astonishing results.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Elsa Tamez, op. cit., p. 147

<sup>24</sup> See the following :The Liberating Word, ed. Letty M.

The predominance of male metaphors in speaking of God has led us consciously or unconsciously to think that there is something in "maleness" which is closer to the divinity.

God is far beyond all the descriptions of which our language is capable; our God transcends the categories of human sexuality. If we worship a human image of God we ourselves become idolaters. Hence the importance of re-establishing a proper balance in the metaphorical language we use in speaking of God.

**c) The Function and Influence of Language is not only a concern of women**

More and more socially marginalized groups (blacks, women, indigenous populations, the disabled) are insisting on the importance of language, and many churches and theological institutions have published documents reaffirming our position.<sup>25</sup>

**d) Language has a formative influence**

The words we use to our children shape images, symbols and pictures in their minds which remain with them for the rest of their lives.

More than that; language not only forms our image of God but also our image of ourselves, which limits or increases our possibilities in life.

I always remember the long process it required in my own life to get over some of the things my mother said in my presence when I was a child. As we were poor she-used to say in daily conversations: "If only my daughter were a man, it would be better for her."

If we are committed to working for a better humanity for all, we have to be aware that this is not possible so long as we are limited by the language and images we use unconsciously or by choice.

**5. New Patterns of Ministry**

There are a great many women who feel themselves called by the Spirit to work for renewal of the ordained ministry and the church's pastoral care.

This new vision of pastoral ministry is neither clerical or hierarchical nor racist. It does not incorporate, absorb or smother all the church's ministries. It is a ministry seen as a gift of the Spirit through the community in which we live and work. It is a pastoral ministry which calls forth, enables and promotes the different ministries in the community of faith and which celebrates the unity of the community and ministries in the Eucharist, on the basis of that faith. Women's presence in doing theology prompts an analysis of the concept of the ordained ministry and how it relates to the ministry of the whole people of God.

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Russell, The Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1976; Through her Eyes (Women's Theology from Latin America), ed. Elsa Tamez, Orbis Books, New York, 1989; Reuther, Rosemary Radford, Sexism and God Talk, Beacon Press, Boston, 1983

<sup>25</sup> See: Language about God, a Study Guide, Presbyterian Church in the United States, 1979; Daughters and Sons of GM, United Church of Canada, 1988; Speaking of God, J. Shannon Clarkson, Letty M. Russell, Church Women United, New York, 1986.; Making Women Visible, (The Use of Inclusive Language with the ASB), a Report of the Liturgical Commission of the General Synod of the Church of England, Church House Publishing, London, 1989.

Increasingly, women in the ordained ministry are trying to organize themselves to help one another, and to exchange experiences and new views of the work to be done. These meetings are being held at local level but the most effective ones have been those held at national, regional and even international level. They are generally ecumenical and are intended to reinforce women's involvement in the work of theology and the renewal of the church's ministries.

To give an example: the meeting of 40 Brazilian women pastors belonging to the Methodist, Lutheran and Episcopal churches, from 26 - 28 April 1988, led to the setting up of a working group known as "The ecumenical organizing group of women pastors" to examine the possibility of creating a national representative body for women pastors to confront and unmask all the forms of inequality existing in society and in the church. Similar things are going on in Asia and Africa.

#### **IV. Women's Participation in Theological Education is now on the Agenda of the Ecumenical Organizations, the Cooperating Agencies and the Various Confessions**

Last year (1988) the World Council of Churches launched the programme for "The Ecumenical Decade of the Churches in Solidarity with Women". One of the basic aspects of the programme is "women doing theology and sharing their spirituality".

Taking account of the needs of the different regions, training workshops have been organized for young women as part of the programme "Young Women doing Theology". As a result of this work a good number of women have indicated their wish to continue their theological training in institutes in their respective regions.

The World Council of Churches "Program on Theological Education" is not only cooperating with the programme but has decided to devote 50% of its funds for 1990 to supporting theological education for women and in 1992 it will allocate all its funds to this purpose.

At the conference of Third World theological educators organized by the Lutheran World Federation in Brazil from 5 to 11 September 1988, the decisions taken included: the need to develop and promote an inclusive and participatory process in theological education, giving special attention to the concerns and standpoints of women.

The conference called on the churches and theological institutions to show due sensitivity to the concerns of women and painted out the need to provide opportunities for women under the scholarships programme, in access to teaching posts in theological institutions and in increasing mutual aid among men and women in the churches' ministries.

The Department of Theological Education of the Association of Protestant Churches and Missions in the Federal Republic of Germany and Berlin (West) – Evangelisches Missionswerk - has agreed, with the approval of its sub-committee on theological education for ecumenical mission and service - Oekumenisch-Missionarischer Weltdienst - to promote the participation of women in the field of theological education. The document presented by that department includes support for women's place in the scholarships system, in the use of alternative methods in theological education, consultations and conferences, study projects for women theologians, publications for women, etc.

We welcome all these initiatives which show that women are not struggling on their own, but that various churches and ecumenical movements have decided to accompany them in their progress towards becoming subjects in history.

## **Conclusion**

### **Reality and Vision**

Let me end this presentation with an extract from the Final Document of the Latin American Encounter on Theology from the Standpoint of Women. Heölf in Buenos Aires from 30 October to 3 November 1985. In this document the Latin American women stated that the women's task in theology is to try

- to integrate the different human dimensions: strength and weakness, Joy and sorrow, intuition and reason.

- to work in community and relationship: gathering in a wide range of experiences, expressing something that relates to real life and feelings, so that people can recognize themselves in it and feel directly challenged by the reflection.

- to be contextual and practical: starting from the geographical social, cultural and ecclesial reality of Latin America, and taking note of the vital questions facing the communities. It is a way of doing theology in the context of everyday life, as the place where God manifests himself.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Final Document of the Intercontinental Conference of Third World Women Theologians, held in Oaxtepec, Mexico, from 1 – 6 December 1986, under the auspices of the Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians (EATWOT).



## **TOWARDS THE 21ST CENTURY : CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION<sup>27</sup>**

**Judo Poerwowidagdo**

### **1. The Dawn of a New Era.**

1.1 "We stand at the dawn of a new era." With this statement, John Naisbitt and Patricia Aburdene introduce their recent book, MEGATRENDS 2000. In it the authors describe the various significant changes currently taking place which influence our lives. These changes are happening in many places, and affecting so many people around the globe that they indicate clearly the global trends as we approach the 21st century. The authors list ten megatrends which are currently leading us towards the third millennium. These megatrends are in a way, signals of the impending 21st century. Indeed, we can sense that 'aura' dawning upon us, as we experience the end of the 20th century rapidly disappearing into history while the 'tip' of the 21st century is fast approaching on the horizon of the new millennium.

In this new era, the world economies of the 1990s will boom and become increasingly interdependent. We will also see the emergence of free-market socialism while the welfare state will decline. The world will become increasingly uniform in lifestyle and culture and the arts will enter a new golden age. The Pacific Rim will rise and expand. It is interesting to note, that according to Naisbitt and Aburdene, **'Asia's Pacific Rim has demonstrated for all to see that a poor country can develop, even without abundant natural resources, as long as it invests enough in its human resource.'**<sup>28</sup> No doubt, investing in human resources means providing education, good education! This we must take note of.

The last decade of the 20th Century will be the decade of women in leadership. MEGATRENDS 2000 points out the shift of the dominant principle of organization, from **management**, which was once needed in order to control an enterprise, to **leadership** which is needed in order to bring out the best in people and to respond quickly to change

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<sup>27</sup> In: Towards the 21st century: Challenges and Opportunities for Theological Education, Lectures for the Dr. Samuel Amirtham Chair on Ecumenical Studies, Taminadu Theological Seminary, Madurai, India 1993, WCC Geneva 1994, p. 50ff

<sup>28</sup> John Naisbitt and Patricia Aburdene, Megatrends 2000, Sigwick&Jackson 1990, p. 193

Further, "the primary challenge of leadership in the 1990s is to encourage the new, better-educated worker to be more entrepreneurial, self-managing, and oriented toward lifelong learning." **Through education** women have achieved a major proportion of "the previously male-dominated careers in the information and service industries, the jobs from which business and social leadership emerges."

This will also be the age of biology as opposed to physics. "Physics furnished the metaphors and models for the mechanistic industrial age ...Today however, we are in the process of creating a society that is an elaborate array of information feedback systems, the very structure of the biological organism." Bio technology is becoming more and more influential in our daily lives. The thrust of biotechnology has occurred in health care as well as in food production, through the genetic manipulation of plants and animals. No doubt, biotechnology promises a great contribution to the improvement of life, however it also raises serious ethical and theological questions (when applied to human beings, particularly) especially with regard to genetic manipulation which alters the inherited characteristics.

At the dawn of the third millennium there are unmistakable signs of a worldwide multi-denominational religious revival. While the evangelical and the fundamentalist churches, the charismatic and the New Age movements increase their membership by the millions worldwide, the mainline denominational churches in the USA are experiencing a sharp decline in their membership lists. Why and how? Naisbit and Aburdene explain, "Fundamentalism's most visible strength has been its effective use of television - an outlandish, incongruous, perfect balance. The hard edge of technology in service to the high touch of religion". And last but not least, the new era will see the triumph of the individual. "This new era of the individual is happening simultaneously with the era of globalization .... The triumph of the individual signals the demise of the collective .... It is the triumph of individual responsibility as against the anonymity of the collective. Within all collective structures - organized religion, unions the Communist party, big business, political parties, cities, government - there is the possibility of hiding from one's individual responsibility. At the level of the individual that possibility does not exist. There is no place to hide."

1.2 Our understanding of **time** forces us to think of events in terms of the past, the present and the future. We think, speak, and do things in terms of that linear dimension of time. We organize our thoughts and our lives, around that time frame of reference. We learn from what we have done in the **past**. We talk about what we **are** doing **today**. We **think** what we will do **tomorrow**. So, we think, we do, we speak in this linear time frame. The Bible also speaks about events in the world using this linear time concept as its frame of reference. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." (Genesis 1: 1) Even God, speaking of His timeless Being, says: "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end." (Revelation 22: 13) Certainly, I do not think that the Bible intends to suggest that God is a 'circle', having no beginning nor end. The Judaeo-Christian concept of time is linear, not 'cyclical.'

1.3 In the first lecture we discussed the need for the churches to look at themselves and their task in the perspective of time dimension : the past - the present-the future. We have also suggested that theological education is a part of the church's educational mission. Therefore, when we discuss our common concerns in theological education, we would do well to look also at theological education in a similar time perspective. 'The past' has given the church the traditions which it preserves, and from which it can learn so much about its own present life and the tasks for which it was called into existence. From 'the past' we can learn how the church has propagated itself through nurturing the koinonia, teaching and educating its younger generation, and how through witnessing its faith and through its service for the

world the church has grown. From 'the past' also, we learn of the mistakes the church has made, and understand how the present church should not make the same mistakes. On the other hand, the 'future' gives the church hope for the final fulfillment of the kingdom of God, the hope which sustains the church to face the present challenges. The 'future' will also give the church the opportunity not only to avoid the same mistakes it has made but by learning from these errors of the past, the church is enabled to set the 'course of the future'. We should be able to learn from the future as much as we learn from the past. Understanding the future, what the future may be like, is as important as understanding what the past has been. The present church is a continuation of the church in the past, and will continue to be the church in the future. The three-fold task of the church: *koinonia*, *martyria* and *diakonia*, remains the same, as long as the church exists.

1.4 In the second lecture we mentioned that in the daily life of the local churches, members of the congregations need to be helped and guided in doing theology. Doing theology is the task of every Christian, of every member of the church. Doing theology is not the monopoly of professional theologians. Theology does not exclusively belong to theological professors and their seminarians. It is the right and the proper responsibility of every believing Christian, because doing theology means discerning where God reveals himself in the world and responding to this revelation. It means that in doing theology we need to actively discern the presence of 'God in Jesus Christ' in the daily events surrounding our lives in the community, in society and in our nation. This discernment requires us to be actively engaged, not only reflecting academically or intellectually and speculatively; but we must also physically, mentally and emotionally engage and involve ourselves with our whole being, in the life of the people where we may be able to grasp the presence and the work of God. It is through such 'active critical involvement' that our doing theology can become 'evangelistically relevant'? However, 'active critical involvement' is not the same as mere social activism. 'Active critical involvement' is making the "TEXT" relevant to the (local) context. It is making the life and suffering, the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ manifest in and through the lives and works of Christians as members of the church in the community.

1.5 The local community in which our congregations are called to witness, is the context for doing theology. Ecclesiologically speaking, we can say that the church is called to witness and to serve not only in the local communities in which the church is set, but in the whole *oikos*. It is in the whole *oikumene*, the whole inhabited earth, that the church is called to fulfil its missionary task. The context of doing theology therefore is not only the local community, but also the whole *oikos*. Therefore, to do theology contextually, we must take into consideration **the global perspective of the local issues** and the **local relevance of the global issues**. Local issues which have been 'globalized' or which have been lifted and become 'global ecumenical concerns' are likely to have a better chance of becoming the foci of global attention and hence global effort to find their solutions.

We need to mention the fact that the issue of racism in South Africa's apartheid system became a global ecumenical issue in 1976 with the establishment of the Programme to Combat Racism (PCR) in the WCC structure. More recently, the issue of land rights of the Aborigines and other indigenous peoples and the plight of Dalits in India have become sharper ecumenical and global concerns since the WCC's General Assembly in Canberra in 1991. These seemingly local problems and issues have now begun to receive global solidarity. On one hand we see that local issues are not free from global influence. As a matter of fact, many local issues such as poverty, unemployment, and other forms or manifestations of economic injustice, human rights violations, etc. when analysed critically, will be found to have root causes which are global in character, and are the result of global

power play. The solution of many local issues may not be possible without global involvement. On the other hand global issues should become local issues when they have local implication or relevance. Many global problems, such as the economic recession, the environmental and ecological destruction, global warming, arms race etc., which may seem to be remote from the daily concerns of the people, are actually impinging on the local communities, bringing serious consequences.

1.6 What are the challenges facing theological education in the future, and what kind of opportunities are opened to our theological institutions, as we move towards the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and enter into the new era of the 21st century? What should our theological colleges and seminaries do? Before we turn our attention to these very important questions, however, we need to look at the more basic and fundamental questions which we, as the church, must clearly answer.

## 2. Basic Issues and Questions in Theological Education.

2.1 What is the *raison d'être* of theological education? What is the purpose or function of theological education? And who needs theological education? As discussed in the first lecture, theological education is part of the educational mission or task of the church. And indeed, because doing theology is the task of every believing Christian, therefore theological education is also for the whole people of God, because the mandate of theological education as aptly described by Ross Kinsler, is "to motivate, equip, and enable the people of God to develop their gifts and give their lives in meaningful service."<sup>29</sup> But how can the members of the church in local congregations get their theological education, so that they can be motivated, enabled and equipped to develop their talents and gifts for the ministry of God's people? How can they be strengthened in their faith and commitment to Jesus Christ in their own local but globalized context? In a time when our local communities, our local congregations and our daily lives are so much affected and influenced by globalization, we need to ask what is the role of our theological education in the daily life of our congregations? What kinds of challenges and opportunities are confronting our theological education institutions in Asia today and in the new era of the twenty-first century?

2.2 Basically, the function or the task of theological education institutions (seminaries) is enabling the enablers to equip "the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." (Eph. 4:11-13)

Theological institutions and seminaries therefore should become the primary sources of leadership for the churches or local congregations. There are many issues and problems facing the congregations or the local churches. such as poverty and the great disparity of wealth, racism and racial conflicts unemployment and homelessness, child abuse and oppression of women, Dalits and other marginalized people, alcoholism, drug addiction, crime, etc. It is a challenge to theological education institutions to motivate, to equip and to enable the people of God to develop their gifts, i.e. to educate them, so that in turn they can give their lives in meaningful service, and be able to motivate, equip and enable others to do the same. It is a challenge to theological education to do theology in the "**glocal context**". That is to say, that these **local issues or problems** must be carefully and systematically analysed and studied in their **global perspective**, because these local problems cannot be separated from their global interrelatedness with other issues of justice, peace and the integrity of creation at the global level.

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<sup>29</sup> Ross Kinsler, *Ministry by the People*, WCC/Orbis Books, 1983

However, intellectual and academic analyses will become meaningless if they are void of "the ingredient of active involvement." This means that theological education in the *glocal* context, by definition requires the dynamic interaction between the reflective analyses on the global and ecumenical perspective of local issues and problems, and the active existential discernment of the presence of God, through active involvement in the local situation.

On the other hand, theological education in the *glocal* context must also take up the study and deal with the global issues, i.e. issues of global and ecumenical nature or proportion, which should be analyzed and reflected through discerning the presence of God in the universe, which must be interpreted into the local existential setting or situation in such a way that it becomes "evangelically relevant." To do this, theological education institutions need not neglect the serious study of the Bible, as well as the doctrines and history of the church. But we need to do them in different ways. Theological education which is aloof and isolated from the reality of the world and people, their hopes and fears, is contrary to our understanding of theology, and our understanding of the nature of God.

Therefore theological education institutions and seminaries should take more seriously and give more emphasis to the theological study of reality, of God's people and God's whole creation than the study of confessional doctrines or the dogmas of the denominational churches.

### **3. The Current State of Theological Education and Our Past Experience.**

3.1 Reform and renewal of our theological education should be a natural outcome of the consciousness of the new era, the third millennium, which is dawning upon us. Most theological education in the world, including our theological colleges and seminaries in Asia has grown out of the need of the churches to provide leaders for their congregations, to minister to the members of the church. The church needs pastors who will minister the believers and help them to live as good Christians. They need pastors who can teach the Bible and make them understand the love of God through Jesus Christ, and help them to follow the teaching of the church. In Europe, with the development of higher education through the universities in the 13th century onward, theological education became very significant and even dominated the higher learning institutions. Theology sometimes was considered to be the "queen of sciences" replacing the role of philosophy. Until the mid 19th century, academic intellectuals in Europe especially in the British Isles were predominantly clerical, and the burning theoretical issues were between theologians and theologians, or between theologians and anti-theologians. "By the last decade or two of the 19th century, however, philosophical theology and anti-theology had lost popularity and by the 1920s all of this had gone. Almost all university teachers were laymen."

3.2 In the early 19th century, with the renewed missionary zeal, many missionaries from Europe went to Asia, Africa, the Pacific and to the Americas and the Caribbeans. Many also started some form of theological education such as Bible schools or institutes and eventually also theological schools or colleges according to the pattern which they knew in Europe. The curricula generally consisted of the teaching of the Bible, church history, doctrines of the church, and some practical courses, such as preaching, catechism, etc. This traditional pattern of theological curriculum remains until today, in most of our theological education institutions around the world. Many theological colleges and seminaries have become institutional elites, restricting the entrance to those select individuals who are called to the ordained ministry, or who would be able to 'survive' the rigorous academic study including the studies of biblical languages, through the medium of a second or even a third language of the students in most part of the third world. In many of the European countries, where a department or faculty of theology is a part of the state university educational system, it is almost impossible for theological education to be flexible and to be socially

interactive, because it is fundamentally part of the established structure of the economic, political and cultural system of the secular society.

Theological education becomes the study of the science of theology, which requires the same rigorous academic and intellectual discipline as any other scientific subject in the university system. Bible study becomes scientific study of biblical texts. Christian faith and the teaching of the church are studied as systematic theology and history of doctrines. Worship life and spiritual formation are secondary to the study of liturgies and homiletics. Pastoral counseling is not as popular as psychoanalysis and depth psychology. Christian education is not considered to be an important theological subject and is not even required for theological students.

3.3 But unlike the study of natural sciences which puts an important emphasis on the experimental testing both in the laboratory and in the field, and which highly values empirical verifications, theological education puts primary emphasis on the study of theological and biblical literature, where the library is the most important source of knowledge, second only to the professor. Theological praxis is hardly known. Students and their professors are not involved in the congregational or community life as part of their theological study and education, or as part of their teaching-learning process. Theological study becomes aloof and isolated from the world. It does not have anything to do with the problems of the people in the community, the hopes and fears of the younger generation, except as academic and intellectual issues to be discussed, analyzed and written about. Therefore, theological study is divorced from the actual mission of the church in society and the needs of the world. Thus, it becomes remote and loses its contextual value, because it lacks the ingredient of active involvement and therefore becomes evangelistically irrelevant.' Unfortunately, it was to these types of Western theological institutions that many of our third world churches and theological institutions in the 1950s through the 1980s sent their young pastors and theologians to undertake their graduate studies, up to the highest level of academic degrees. There is no doubt that many of them received the best academic and intellectual training they could receive in the West, and they have not been disappointing or disappointed. With their Ph.Ds and Th.Ds many have returned to their countries to become leaders in the churches or in the seminaries and theological colleges, including, I suppose, some of us who are gathered here today." It was no surprise to see that many of these younger leaders, who were fresh from "graduate study", found that the training they received in the West, was actually remote from life and less relevant to the concerns and issues of their own communities or societies. They see the need for a reform and renewal of theological education." Indeed reform and renewal of theological education is badly needed, not only in the third world countries, but also in the West and the East (Europe). After decades of experience in theological education according to the patterns adopted from the missionary era, most of the churches have not been able to prepare their members for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, and to attain the unity of faith and witness. Furthermore the churches today have not been able to witness to visible unity, and still remain divided along confessional lines. Most of the present theological education institutions are still carrying on with the same traditional patterns and methods of theological education inherited from the past century. The church and theological education institutions cannot afford to continue doing the same thing over and over again. The church must learn from this experience, and must not repeat the same mistakes in the new era of the 21st century.

#### **4. Anticipating the 21st Century : A Quest for New Paradigms for Theological Education.**

4.1 Now, after briefly looking at the current situation of theological education. what can we say about its future? What do we learn from the past and what can we learn from the future?

We have discussed some of the challenges that confront theological education and now we should look for the opportunities to open it. We need to look for new paradigms in theological education. The old paradigms are no longer adequate to meet the challenges of the 21st century. We need to be open to the new possibilities.

4.2 Although the economic recession lingers on, we can also see some signs of recovery. The economic boom of the 1990s which is predicted by MEGATRENDS 2000 may still yet come. In countries where the economy is improving, we see that the church also benefits from such favourable conditions. The opposite is also true, where the economy of the country is in a bad condition, the church also suffers from it. In countries where economic developments seem to take hold, the church needs to seize this opportunity by helping the members of the congregation and encouraging them to benefit from the economic development in the country by providing various programmes which would help them to increase their standard of living. Church leaders need to be "economically literate" and informed.

4.3 In the secular world we see more and more women taking the leadership roles, in politics as well as in business. We have also seen some indications that the ecumenical decade of the church's solidarity with women is beginning to bear some fruit. More and more women are studying theology and many are involved in the leadership and ministry of the church, at the local level as well as at the national or international level.

Churches and theological institutions, especially their leaders still need encouragement to do more in this regard. Theological education must seize the opportunity by opening widely its doors for women students as well as faculty members as the best human resource investment the church can make.

4.4 Furthermore, the development of modern science and technology, especially information technology, should open up various possibilities for theological education to be more creative and innovative. The ethical and moral issues surrounding the development of science and technology which challenges the church should be considered as opportunities for theological education because they provide a wealth of materials for theological reflections and praxis. These opportunities must be seriously considered in developing new paradigms for theological education in the next century.

4.5 It would be presumptuous to assume that at this point, we can develop the new paradigms for theological education which will meet the need of the churches in the 21st century. At best we can offer a possible paradigm, tentatively, while we are still searching for the most appropriate model. There are different needs of the churches in various situations of different countries. We cannot assume that one, single model of theological education will be possible or even desirable for the whole world. That would deny the principle of contextuality in doing theology and theological education. Therefore, we must continue to search for the most appropriate model, taking into consideration all of the challenges and the opportunities which the 21st century present to us. This does not mean however, that we should try to develop the perfect model first before we can make any change. We should begin with a self-study of our theological education enterprise involving all those who are concerned with the ministry of theological education, namely the leaders and members of the church, the students, the teaching staff or faculty members, the administrative staff and the members of the Board. Through such a self-study we should be able to evaluate whether our theological education is achieving the aims or goals and the purpose of its establishment, and whether our theological education is functioning effectively and efficiently to meet the need of the churches in the new era, the 21st century.



## ECUMENICAL THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION AND THE CHURCH IN AFRICA TODAY<sup>30</sup>

Nyambura J. Njoroge

*"The wretchedness of the African people dishonours their creator. Therefore every Christian has a moral responsibility to do their best to correct the situation. "* George Kinoti.<sup>31</sup>

The issues at hand are challenging and they not only require us to examine our journey of faith individually and collectively but also to dream of new ways of being church in Africa today. I hope my struggle with these issues will provoke questions and discussions which will lead us to see visions and dream dreams through the power of the Holy Spirit. I understand my task to be that of examining ministry or service of the church rather than the missionary nature of the church. The latter, I believe, is the task of another presentation.

Church is people and not buildings and structures. Buildings and structures are only tools which enable us to carry out our responsibilities. The church is called upon to be a witnessing, healing and caring community in a broken world but it cannot do so unless it clearly understands the message it witnesses to and has the right tools to use. In this paper we are searching for ways of doing ecumenical theological education which will equip the people of God, the body of Christ which is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom we are built together spiritually into a dwelling place for God.

Ecumenical theology, and theological education, among other things should help us understand how we travel with God our creator and source of life in a church and world full of strife and tensions. Fortunately we are not beginning from scratch, neither are we reflecting in a vacuum. We have a body of witnesses from ancient Israel, the apostolic and universal church, of which we have become part as people who have heard, believed and

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<sup>30</sup> Ministerial Formation 71, 1995, p. 20ff

<sup>31</sup> George Kinoti, *Hopem for Africa and What the Christian can do*, Nairobi, African Institute for Scientific Research and Development (AISERED), 1994, v.

who in turn are called to be witnesses. On the other hand, we have African cultures, traditions and religions which not only provide tools and styles for our theological education but also create critical challenges as we go about our faith in God.

First we will examine what it means to be a people of God, the body of Christ; the rationale for ecumenical theological education and what are the implications of ecumenical theological education on ministerial formation processes?

Second we shall explore some of the issues that should be at the heart of ecumenical theology and theological education in Africa today.

### **The people of God**

It is common practice in Africa to theological education only for men who are preparing for the minis and sacrament (a number of churches now accept women); even though in the Bible ministry and miss responsibility of the whole people of God (1 Peter 3: 15; 2:9). The present structures of theological education programmes have developed along denominational lines.<sup>32</sup> This practice has been inherited from western Christendom and impact on how we understand the meaning and role of the church, especially within the context of ecumenism unity. It is, therefore, imperative to reexamine the meaning of the church and its role in the world

In this section we shall reflect on the letters to the Galatians and Ephesians for our understanding of the people of God. Whereas New Testament scholars agree that St Paul was the author of Galatians, the authorship of Ephesians is disputed. In Ephesians we are provided with a summary of the first holy nation of God, the ancient Israel, chosen and adopted in Christ before the foundation of the world to be the people of God. (Eph 1: 3-14) But in the fullness of time, the same Christ through his life on earth, suffering and death on the cross, and resurrection extended the adoption to the Gentiles to become part of the holy nation, the people of God. (Eph. 2: 11-22) Through a revelation; Paul, a Jew, well-schooled in Judaism, and who persecuted the young Christian community was mandated by God to proclaim the crucified and risen Christ to the Gentiles. (Gal 1: 11-2: 21 and Acts 9 & 26). Through the coming of Christ in human form, the Word became flesh and lived among us (John 1: 14), the dividing wall, the hostility between Jew and Gentile was abolished, creating one humanity and making peace.

The two groups were reconciled into one body in Christ, thus proclaiming peace. In Eph 3: 1-6, we learn that the breaking down of the wall that divided the Jew and Gentile is the mystery of Christ and was only revealed to the apostles and prophets by the Holy Spirit. Hence both Jew and Gentile who heard and believed in this message narrated in the four gospels, became the new holy nation, the people of God who are called to one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism and one God, the Creator of all. (Eph 4: 4-5) Together the new holy nation, the church in Christ, is invited to **see** the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God, so that through the church the wisdom of God and its rich variety might now be made known to all. It is in this context and understanding that St Paul proclaims our oneness in Christ. through baptism that there is no longer Jew or Greek, slave or free, male or female and that we are heirs of God's promises. (Gal 3, especially 27-29)

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<sup>32</sup> There are seminaries where several denominations have formed united institutions. On the other hand the same denominations build other Bible schools and pastoral institutes which reduce the spirit of ecumenism in the united seminaries.

## Rationale for ecumenical theological education

In Africa through the faithfulness of the apostles and prophets who heard, believed and witnessed to the mystery of Christ throughout the centuries, we have become part of the holy, apostolic and catholic church. Like the Gentiles in Ephesus, all Africans who have heard and believed in Christ have been marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit and have become the people of God.<sup>33</sup> (Eph 1: 14) However, the writers of Galatians and Ephesians indicate that the new communities of faith were faced with false teachings and distortions of the gospel. As such besides praying for their strengthening in their inner being, they also prayed for deeper theological understanding and exhorted them to be footed and grounded in love.

*I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation as you come to know him, so that with the eyes of your heart enlightened, you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe, according to the working of his great power. ... I pray that, according to the riches of his glory, he may grant that you may be strengthened in your inner being with power through his Spirit, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love. I pray that you may have power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of W. Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than we can ask or imagine, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generation, forever and ever. (Ephesians 1: 17-19 & 3: 16-21, emphasis is mine)*

I have quoted these verses and highlighted some of them because I believe they provide the rationale for ecumenical theological education for the whole people of God. This is not to say we do not need technicians or the academically trained theologians who are equipped for particular functions in the church and its related institutions. Rather, we are saying that these specially trained theologians and ministers of word and sacrament need to recognize the great need to equip every Christian with basic knowledge of the riches of what we have inherited and the unfathomable treasure of Christ (to use the words in the Jerusalem Bible). The people of God need to understand what they believe in and that it is important to be properly rooted and grounded in God (who is love) before we can witness to the gospel of Christ. Just by reading the New Testament we realize how central ecumenical theological education is in the life of a Christian because much is required from us. In Acts 18, we read of Apollos, despite his eloquence and burning enthusiasm in teaching about Jesus, his colleagues Priscilla and Aquila realized that he needed greater understanding of what he taught in the synagogue. Profound understanding of our faith is crucial lest we teach false doctrine.

On the other hand, we are called to be partners with God in restoring God's reign in a world where evil forces rage from all directions. Witnessing to the kingdom of God i.e. for justice, truth, love, peace, reconciliation and righteousness is a fulltime responsibility whatever what we do for a living. It is the nature of being a Christian. Earlier on, Jesus himself had demonstrated the great need for ecumenical theological education. Like his followers, rather than teach about it, he also prayed:

<sup>33</sup> For more information on the early African Church in North Africa and Ethiopia see Harvey J. Sindima, *Drums of Redemption: An Introduction to African Christianity*. Westport CT, Greenwood Press, 1994, pp 3-47

*Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son so that the Son may glorify you, since you have given him authority over all people, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. And this eternal life, **that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.** ... I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. I am not asking you to take them out of the world, but I ask you to protect them from evil one .... Sanctify them [set them apart] in the truth, your word is truth. (John 17: 1-3, 14-15, 17)*

As much as John 17 is a prayer for unity which we shall deal with later. Jesus prayed that his followers, the people of God, the church, may know the true God, the eternal life and the word of God. When Christians engage in doing theology and theological education we are seeking to understand and know the core of our faith, the true God and Jesus Christ. We are searching for the truth about the things we have heard and experienced in life individually or collectively in our relationship with God. We are seeking for ways of living a faithful calling as the worshipping, witnessing and serving church through the ministry of all believers. Therefore we must be equipped for the work of ministry, for building up one another in the body of Christ until all of us come to the unity of the faith and knowledge of God.

The treasure of Christ is unfathomable, immeasurable and boundless. For the last twenty centuries, Christians have been digging into this treasure. Ecumenically we are called to labour together as we search for truth. We are not only expected to work together with other Christians of our time but we are also called to be united with all the saints who have gone before us who have faithfully laboured in their time to restore God's reign. In other words, ecumenical theology and theological education draw from the lived experience of all people of *God* including ancient Israel as we labour to face the - challenges that confront us today. In light of this discussion, the Bible is a central resource for our Christian faith and the basis of ecumenical theological education. Hence Bible study and biblical interpretation are at the heart of ecumenical theological education which should be available for all the people of God. This approach in ecumenical theological education for all people of God has direct impact on the ministerial formation processes. to which we now turn.

### **Ministerial formation**

The church has the responsibility to equip leaders who will guide the whole people of God in the ministries and mission of the church. In other words, the goal of ecumenical theological education for all the whole people of God is to equip the church for the two fold task of ministry and mission in all the spheres of life as prophets of hope and priests of reconciliation. That is, the ordination of ministers and priests important as it is in the life of the church should not be the object of ecumenical theological education. Taking the Scriptures seriously, especially Romans 12: 3-8, 1 Cor 12, Eph 4:7-16, we are reminded that there are varieties of gifts (charismata), services and activities from the same Spirit. Ecumenical theological education is at the service of the people of God and must take these diversities into account but also the context in which people are living. The service rendered by the whole people of God must be relevant to the needs of the people in the church and in society. Different ministries have to be created in accordance with the needs of the people. This we see happening in the New Testament especially with Jesus whose ministries included teaching, preaching, healing the sick, feeding the hungry, counseling the grieving (pastoral care) etc. Ministry has to take its orientation from the challenges that people face in their given context. If we fail to engage in ecumenical theological education and to take the human condition seriously, the people of God will remain darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of ignorance and hardness of heart.

People are bound to lose all sensitivity towards the suffering and needy and get greedy to engage in injustice and exploitation of others.

Critical awareness of the human condition, varieties of gifts, services and activities will affect the processes of ministerial formation. For instance, the process of equipping theologians and ministers must be evaluated periodically in order to meet the challenges confronting the church. Ministerial formation process must also take into account those who wish to share their God-given gifts who are otherwise excluded because they do not seek ministry of word and sacrament or because of their gender, ethnic background or physical disabilities. These God-given gifts need to be nurtured, improved and channeled into relevant services in any given situation.

However we should not lose sight of the centrality of prayer and guidance of the Holy Spirit in ecumenical theological education and ministerial formation. I do not just mean teaching doctrines on prayer and Holy Spirit, but serious engagement in prayer and searching the will of the Holy Spirit who discerns the gifts in the whole people of God. Doing this is following in the footsteps of Christ and his apostles from whom we have received the good news. Ecumenical theological education, prayer and guidance of the Holy Spirit will equip the people of God with renewed minds and *new* vision to be fully involved in the problems and battles of their world.

But we need leaders who are compassionate and have the vision of a better Africa. Quoting John Scott, George Kinoti reminds us: "Vision is a deep dissatisfaction with what is and a clear grasp of what could be. Vision begins with indignation over the status quo, and it grows into the earnest quest for an alternative. This combination we find in Jesus who was indignant over disease and death, and the hunger of the people, for he perceived these things as alien to the purpose of God."<sup>34</sup> The crisis of church leadership in many of our churches calls for a critical evaluation of ministerial formation processes in Africa today. In the Gikuyu language there is a saying: *Iguthua ndongoria itikinyagira nyeki* i.e. "if the leaders are limping the flock will not reach the green pastures".

### **The search for authentic ecumenical theological education**

We have already alluded to the dependence of African theological education and ministerial formation on inherited structures from western Christianity. Dissatisfaction with the methods of missionary evangelisation and its collaboration with colonial powers in some areas provoked African Christians to establish African Indigenous (Instituted) churches. These churches attempted to anchor Christianity in the African cosmos. According to Harvey J. Sindima: "The challenge that Indigenous Christianity has taken very seriously is to make Christianity authentically African. The process involves deep theological reflection. Indigenous churches have not only done this, but they have also put into practice the changes called forth by their theological reflection. Though unsophisticated in their approach, these Churches have posed a challenge to mission Churches to engage in the kind of theological thinking which will help to produce an authentic African Church".<sup>35</sup>

For a long time mission churches ignored the existence of the Indigenous churches and their struggle for independence from missionary mentality and colonial dominance. From the 1960s African theologians began to call and search for an authentic African theology and church. But this exercise has largely remained in the academic arena and the best it has

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<sup>34</sup> Kinoti op. Cited p. 68

<sup>35</sup> Sindima. op. cit., p 153

produced are cosmetic changes, for example, some hymns sung to traditional tunes and instruments but no fundamental changes to the liturgy and models of ministries. In the book we have quoted above, Sindima has demonstrated the great damage caused by missionary thought and practice which was rooted in the Enlightenment: "The aim of the Enlightenment was to rid Christianity of myth and remain with truth only, and truth was that which could be discerned by pure reason ... When Christianity was brought to Africa, missionaries brought this baggage of the Enlightenment with them. The baggage became a stumbling block in their attempt to understand African life and world. Anything that could not be proven or was not logical according to their way of reasoning was superstition and evil"<sup>36</sup>.

This approach towards the African way of life created the belief that anything African is inferior including the people themselves. Hence the need to hang on and look up to anything foreign especially if it comes from the North. Ecumenical theological education needs to address dependence which permeates all spheres of life in Africa today. During this process of developing ecumenical theological education for the whole people of *God*, we need to take seriously all the available resources beyond the God-given gifts that we bring to the church. Here I have in mind also the tools and methods of communicating the education we bring to the whole people of God. We should listen to the people and together search in their communities how best to share the information. Theologians, ministers and teachers should avoid imposing foreign tools and methods on the people.

I am reminded of the narrative story of David, King Saul and Goliath during the war between the Israelites and Philistines in 1 Samuel 17. David, a shepherd boy, was sent by his father to take provisions for his three brothers at the battle field. On arrival David got curious about Goliath, the Philistine giant whom no Israelite could dare approach. Despite his brother's anger and silencing, David got interested in fighting Goliath and word reached King Saul. Although he was young, David had the experience of fighting with lions and bears when they attacked his flock. King Saul allowed David to face Goliath but insisted on clothing David with his armour and strapped him with his sword. But David could not walk! In place of the armour and sword David pulled out his tools and with his boyish methods he killed the giant.

Another story in the Bible which is a challenge to us is the feeding of the five thousand men besides women and children (Mt 14: 13-21. Mk 6: 30-44, Jn 6: 1-14). The key issue in this story is what the disciples had at hand! It did not even need to belong to the disciples, but come from the people themselves. What do we have? These stories should challenge every African that we need to draw on our many resources, and that we need to have confidence in ourselves and in God. Likewise theologians and ministers should not dismiss anyone because of their age or level of education. Together we should identify tools and methods that will enable us to develop Christian faith that will reach the people. The objective is to act with power which "cuts people to the heart". (Acts 2: 6. 11) It is important to critically examine the way people communicate in their local communities which will enrich our learned skills and structures of theological education.

More important; theologians must develop ecumenical theological education together with the people in the pews. Elsewhere I have examined how theologians can work with local congregations to develop theology and ethics for the people, following the example of Ngugi wa Thiong'o, a leading Kenyan novelist and playwright who worked with a poor

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid. 99-101. On Enlightenment also see David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in nteology of Mission*. Maryknoll. New York. Orbis Books. 1991

community to develop a musical play.<sup>37</sup> The play *Ngaahika Ndeenda* (*I Will Marry When I Want*)<sup>38</sup>, was very powerful, the Kenyan government considered it subversive. Consequently, Ngugi wa Thiong'o was detained and the play was banned.

But the play taught many Kenyans how oppressive governments operate and how institutions including the church can become dominating and controlling. Wa Thiong'o used the local language of the people and later the play was translated into other languages. We have the skills and resources; all we need are creative and determined people.

The church (the whole people of God, not just the theologians) in Africa has to wrestle with the damage created by the negative image of the 'dark continent'. Africans have internalized this negative image which has nurtured dependence in many aspects of our lives. Dependence has caused a lot of hardships and misery in Africa, a thing that ecumenical theological education needs to address. Dependence has distorted the image of Africa and African humanity. We should be able to affirm our humanity which is created in God's image. Like the Psalmist we must shout with confidence:

*For it was you who formed my inward parts;  
You knit me together in my mother's womb.  
I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.  
Wonderful are your works;  
That I know very well (Ps. 139,13-14)*

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<sup>37</sup>N. J. Njoroge. "The Woman's Guild: The Institutional Locus for an African Woman's Christian Social Ethic". Ph.D. Dissertation. Princeton theological Seminary. USA. 1992

<sup>38</sup>Ngugi wa Thiong'o and Ngugi wa Mirii, *I Will Marry When I Want*. Translated from Gikuyu by authors. Nairobi.

Heinemann Educational Books Ltd., 1982



## **SOME FORTY YEARS OF ECUMENICAL THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION<sup>39</sup>**

**John S. Pobee**

The genesis of Programme on Ecumenical Theological Education of the World Council of Churches may be traced back to 1958. In December 1957 to early January 1958 the International Missionary Council (IMC), meeting in Accra resolved to set up Theological Education Fund (TEF) which later grew to become Programme on Theological Education (PTE) and now, Ecumenical Theological Education. 1957-58 was not accidental. March 6, 1957 was when Gold Coast became independent and assumed the name of Ghana. It will be recalled that before Ghana's independence India, Pakistan, Ceylon now Sri Lanka, had become independent from British colonialism. It was also clear that the "wind of change" was blowing through Africa and Asia, indeed the world was unstoppable. New and independent states were surely to be born. The colonial model was inadequate for the new world situation. In the church life, the churches of Africa and Asia and Latin America and Pacific had to take ownership of the projects of church and mission, if they were to be viable in the new times. TEF was set up to work towards the new project. TEF was set up then as an instrument for developing authentic churches and mission of each and every place in the developing world.<sup>40</sup>

Actually in 1938 the Madras, India meeting of the International Missionary Council did express concern for theological education on the churches of Asia, Africa and Latin America. Similarly in 1947 IMC's meeting in Whitby, England, initiated surveys of different parts of the world - Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Caribbean, the Near East and in South Africa. With this background and preparation TEF was established at the Accra meeting some forty years ago.

Let us draw some lessons from it. First, it was established by IMC. Though WCC was established in 1948, IMC was not incorporated into it. It was not until 1961 that IMC was incorporated into the WCC. When it was incorporated it was the Commission on World

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<sup>39</sup> In: Ministerial Formation **78**, 1997, p. 25ff

<sup>40</sup> Christian Perrin-Linnemann, *Training for a Relevant Ministry*. Madras: Christian Literature Society 1986

Mission and Evangelism (CWME). Two consequences flow from this. (a) TEF was initially located in New York and Bromley, Kent, England. It was not until 1970s that it moved to Geneva, to be physically located in the WCC. (b) TEF was initially a Commission of CWME, till its move to Geneva when it became a Programme. These origins make a declaration that theology and ministry must serve the mission of God through the church.

Second, TEF was set up to assist the churches of the so-called third world in the reform and renewal of theological education and ministerial formation practices. The role of ETE was secondary, it did not do programmes for the churches; it sought to travel with the principal actors, the churches of the third world. But that profile was not one of always reacting, in the sense of always waiting to respond to expressed needs of the churches; TEF's role was pro-active in the sense of offering them challenges too. It is for this reason that TEF-PTE-ETE over the years came up with "slogans" as entry points into organizing the work around the challenge. Thus in the third mandate of TEF, the key word was contextualization<sup>41</sup>, Theology by the People<sup>42</sup>, spirituality<sup>43</sup>, Financial Viability of Theological Education<sup>44</sup>. And so, in the post-Canberra Assembly period, the organizing phrase for ETE's work has been Viability of Ecumenical Theological Education<sup>45</sup>. These themes have been chosen as perceived cutting edges of formation and education, as handles on to the quest for renewal. Let me spend some time on this.

Contextualization was a handle on to the fact that the third world churches had theological institutions which had inherited modes of education, formation and training which were minted in the West, which did not exactly fit the third world situation. As such, the inherited patterns could not be renewing for churches of the South. It was, therefore, deemed necessary to search for a model of the incarnation for church and ministry and formation programmes. At first, it was oriented towards the third world. But it is gratifying to see that today's institutions in Europe are discussing contextualization for their context. As TEF pushed contextualization, it also pushed criteria of Quality, Authenticity and Creativity as tests of the creative development.

Theology by the People, crude as the phrase may sound, has its springs in the vibrant Basic Christian Communities of Latin America principally of the 1970's and the epoch-making convergence publication *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*<sup>46</sup> which was the work of Faith and Order. The baptism section had reiterated that baptism was a kind of "ordination" of all people of God for ministry and mission. To that intent it was not unlike Martin Luther's rediscovery of the priesthood of all believers. The spirituality focus was a plea that much as the academy was important, its work had to foster obedience to God. I will in a moment take up the issue of viability.

<sup>41</sup> William P. Russell, *Contextualization: Origins, Meanings and Implications*. Rome. 'Pontificia Universita' Gregoriana 1995

<sup>42</sup> Sam Amirtham and John S. Pobee (Eds.), *Theology by the People: Reflections on Doing Theology in Community* Geneva: WCC 1986

<sup>43</sup> Sam Amirtham and Robin Pryor (Eds.), *The Invitation to the Feast of life*. Resources for Spiritual Formation in Theological Education. Geneva: WCC 1989.

<sup>44</sup> Herbert M. Zorn, *Viability in Context: Theological Seminary in the Third World' Seedbed or Sheltered Garden?* Bromley : TEF 1975

<sup>45</sup> John S. Pobee ed. *Towards Viable Theological Education. Ecumenical Imperative, Catalyst of Renewal*. Geneva: WCC 1997

<sup>46</sup> *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*. Faith and Order Paper No. 111. Geneva: WC' Literature Society. 1986

## Changing Profile of ETE

There are some three changes in the profile which need to be identified. First is the transition from an exclusively third world orientation to a more global profile. Earlier on, it was an instrument to assist the third world churches. That was a demand of the new time. But it also had to be that, if the churches of the south were to be able to talk or dialogue with the long established institutes of the North and West. But gradually the TEF tradition came to see that there was a definite ministry to the institutions of the North which were stagnating, so to speak. The indices of that include the suspicion and lack of warmth to theology and theologies even in the churches. In any case, the change in the demography of World Christianity in which the churches of the south are growing by geometric progression demands a more global sense in our operations. As if that were not enough, there came the opening up of Eastern and Central Europe, which had to be engaged for the sake of the wholeness of theology everywhere. At the Oslo meeting of ETE in August 1995 representatives from the North argued that their interest in ETE was no longer to seek a channel for the transfer of resources from the North to the South, but more importantly to be engaged by it, the challenge it offers for the sake of their own health too.

Another significant measure of the changing profile is its relocation from Bromley to Geneva. The point was a better integration of TEF tradition with the WCC. This in not so many words proclaimed that WCC had a ministry also to the academy, whether as a university faculty or department of religious studies or a seminary. There is a sense in which WCC would not have immediate access to these constituencies, but for ETE especially.

The TEF tradition, once it moved to Geneva has had different homes. In the pre-Canberra period, it was located in Unit III on Education and Renewal. In the post Canberra period, it is located in Unit I on Unity and Renewal. These locations also indicate profile (s) of ETE. The TEF tradition has to do with theology (i.e. the academy), with the church, the people of God; with education, with renewal, with mission and with unity. The ministry of the TEF tradition is multifaced. It represents the reminder that there can be no renewal of theology without honouring the standards and demands of the academy and the church, without concern for mission, unity and viable education and formation and in a global context.

One more item - in the post-Canberra context , the TEF tradition was "integrated" with the Ecumenical Institute, Chateau de Bossey, Celigny, into one constellation of Ecumenical Theological Education. This reminds me that ETE does not have a monopoly on education. Once upon a time there was in the WCC a department responsible for the Patterns of Ministry and Theological Education.<sup>47</sup> So has there been since **1946** the Ecumenical Institute, Bossey<sup>48</sup>.

Personally, I accept the wisdom of that "marriage"; for both Bossey and ETE have been concerned with ecumenical formation, the former as a laboratory for living it and the other going out into the regions. But in the wisdom of the powers-that-be the marriage was dissolved only after two or three years. Being a participant in that story, I choose not to give a critique of that development - I leave it to posterity to judge.

Be that as it may, the issue is that there are several entry-points into the business of theological education and ministry. So as we define the profile of ETE now, we need to be mindful of what constitutes its distinctiveness. Will something be lacking if there did not

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<sup>47</sup> e.g. Stephen G. Mackie, *Patterns of Ministry: Theological Education in a Changing world*. London: Collins **1969**

<sup>48</sup> Hans-Ruedi Weber. *A Laboratory for Ecumenical Life. The Story of Bossey 1946 1996*. Geneva: WCC **1996**

exist an ETE? Its track record shows whatever the TEF tradition represented is not finished. The Oslo global consultation had this to say. "The Oslo Conference unanimously states that there is neither a need nor justification for a termination of ETE. Rather it affirms:

- That there is and remains a place in the WCC where the churches are constantly reminded of the crucial relationship between an ecumenical orientation and theological education and the renewal of the church as a whole;

- that there is and remains the need for a meeting place between donor agencies and regional associations of theological schools within the framework of the WCC;

- that there is the need for an unit in the WCC which is able to initiate the development of criteria and the evaluation of common experiences with inter-denominational colleges, ecumenical curricula and ecumenical theological institutes;

- that there is a need for a place within the WCC where the voices, particularly of minority churches, of theological education institutes with very little financial means and of institutes of theological education outside existing ecumenical associations are heard in order to make the global dialogue on theological education more inclusive".

The Conference further expressed the strong conviction "that the WCC a whole needs ETE in order to transmit its ecumenical vision to the future generations of leadership in the churches;

- and that the global network of theological education institutes will also need the WCC in order that not to become dissociated from this primary instrument of the ecumenical movement towards unity, mission and justice and the ecumenical vision of the church as articulated in the WCC"<sup>49</sup>

Permit me to highlight one item. ETE has been a resource to donors and agencies in Europe and America. ETE by virtue of its operation in the regions, with institutes and churches, has acquired some expertise on the regions which becomes a welcome resource to donors and partners in Europe when they have to deal with these institutions in the regions.

One more thing about the changing profile. It was first a fund. In the 1970s it became a Programme. This does not mean that funding is altogether outside ETE's work. Now, such funding is done is seen primarily as a tool to enable visions. In any case while its initial resources for work in the third world, amounted to four million US dollars, today's ETE's resources are much diminished. As a result, today we do strategic and symbolic giving but spend a lot more time in advocacy with richer institutions in other regions on behalf of the less well-endowed. ETE refuses the image of a donor agency even though it seeks to be an honest broker in mounting resources for institutions out there.

## **Areas of Support**

ETE's traditional funding activities was in principally five areas:

- (i) Faculty development and scholarships - This is because good staff is essential to the viability of programmes. In recent years we have developed a preferential, but not exclusive option for women, who after all are at least one half the community of faith.

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<sup>49</sup> *Towards a New Mandate and Structural Framework of ETE/WCC. Suggestions by the the Conference on Viability on Theological Education in Oslo, August 1996*

(ii) Associations - Associations of theological institutions have been seen as ways of pursuing support in the regions, where often staff and institutions are very isolated. Thus, for example, in Africa there are quite a number of associations which were established at ETE's motivation and with financial support from ETE e.g. West African Association of Theological Institutions (WAATI), Association of Theological Institutions in Eastern Africa (ATIEA), Association of Theological Institutions in Southern and Eastern Africa (ATISCA), Association des Institutions d'Enseignement Theologique en Afrique Occidentale (ASTHEOL West), Association of Theological Teachers of Madagascar (ATTM or in French FINPATEMA), Ecumenical African Association of Theological Education by Extension (EAATEE), Circle of African Women in Theology etc.

(iii) , Alternative or Innovative Patterns of Ministerial Formation and Theological Education e.g. programmes of TEE, which in my view gain added weight and significance if we are to make full mileage out of the insights of BEM.

(iv) Literature and library development - an example of this is the TEF Study Guides. As the cover of one of the volumes puts it, "TEF Study Guides are clearly and concisely written, being primarily intended for students for whom English is a second language. They are also valuable resource books for teachers of religious education and are very suitable for lay study and discussion books."<sup>50</sup>

Currently, at the instigation of ETE, the University of Ghana is home for an all-Africa series on African Theological Studies Series. The impetus from that is twofold:

a) ETE has sponsored many students to do further studies, the results of which are standing on shelves in Europe and North America and need to be funnelled back into the respective regions. (b) In the changed demography of world Christianity, it is vital to engage seriously the theological insights from those regions. Thus, hopefully, this will contribute towards a global sense.

(V) Exchange programmes, both of faculty and students - What a better way of fostering ecumenical consciousness and freeing peoples from the parochial captivities? In this regard, ETE is endeavouring to transcend the long standing North-South road to encourage also South-South development.

### Post-Canberra Period

The work of ETE in this period was organized around the theme Viability of Theological Education and Ministerial Formation. The word viability was already in TEF's store of vocabulary when in 1970s it hired Herbert Zorn to do the study on Viability of Theological Education, as was mentioned above. On that occasion, the sub-title was ***Viability in Context: A Study of the Financial Viability of Theological Education in the Third World - Seedbed or Sheltered Garden?***

On that process, finance was identified as an issue when we endeavour to pursue the seemingly esoteric area of theology and theological education as well as ministry. It could not be taken for granted or swept under the carpet as irrelevant. Indeed, in consonance with it, solidarity funds were established for some regions of the world. Once more ETE was offering a challenge to the oicumene. And it is still very relevant given the economic situations in the world today and the opening up of Eastern and Central Europe.

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<sup>50</sup>Louise Pirouet, *Christianity Worldwide. Church History: AD 1800 Onwards. TEF Study Guide 22*. London: SPCK 1989

However in the post-Canberra period, the emphasis in the viability quest was more than financial. It is about how ministry and theology and the formation for these can give life, renew and transform both the servant institutions themselves and the world. It was prosecuted through regional consultations which came to a global consultation in Oslo in August 1996 at which the regions touched base, thus moving the regional dialogue and stage further.

Permit me to signal some lessons we have taken from the process

(i) The process of regional consultations building up to a global consultation was a process of dialogue at various levels, through which the global agenda was set. That was conducive to all regions taking ownership of the project of viability; it was not a WCC/Geneva agenda - it was the agenda of each and every region.

(ii) It represented a collaboration between institutions which normally operated in isolation. In the global consultation and in varying degrees in the regional activities, Roman Catholics, EKD, EMW, Church of Norway and host Pastoral Institute of Oslo worked together. The participation of over 130 persons from regions of the world included persons who would otherwise not touch the WCC with a barge-pole, like some Pentecostals and Evangelicals.

iii) The consultation defined a new agenda for continuing ETE in the post-Assembly (1998)<sup>51</sup>

iv) It became clear Europe too was a mission field and was no longer self-sufficient.

All told, this consultation was attempting to give currency to the word 'ecumenical' in the description of ETE. Here I wish to draw attention to an experience made. TEF promoted the establishment of Joint Theological Colleges and Inter-denominational seminaries as a handle to forging ecumenical consciousness and structuring the ecumenical imperative. Now we see it has not succeeded in curbing denominationalism. So there is an abiding issue of giving currency to the ecumenical imperative and its structuring.

### **The Future - My Personal Reflections**

The next assembly of the WCC takes place in 1998. There new mandates will be given.

(i) If the voice of the global consultation is heard loud and clear, ETE must continue in some form to assist the churches and theological institutes in the reform and renewal of theology, theological education, ministry and ministerial formation.

(ii) In the light of BEM, formation of the people of God is first on the agenda. In this regard, I would hope TEE becomes a major issue - the Viability of TEE and this, not in antiposition to residential programmes.

(iii) Viability if it means renewal and transformation is not possible without the Holy Spirit. For that reason, the ecumenical imperative will not be complete without engagement with the traditions that represent the experiences of a new Pentecost.

It is my hope that these will be some of the elements of the renewed ETE.

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<sup>51</sup>See *Ministerial Formation* 76 January 1997: 2-4.



## **THE IMPORTANCE OF THE ECUMENICAL VISION FOR THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION AND MINISTERIAL FORMATION<sup>52</sup>**

### **Konrad Raiser**

Formalized processes of theological education and ministerial formation have been a characteristic of all churches that have developed an institutional structure. In the early church, and still today in many of the newly emerging Christian communities, leadership was and is being exercised on the basis of a recognized charisma. The inevitable processes of institutionalization, however, lead to the emergence of an order of ministry or ministries. The call to a particular form of ministry remains a matter of personal decision, but its recognition is now based on the acquisition of a certain competence through a process of education and training. The existence of an ordered ministry is the most tangible expression of the institutional identity of a given church. Periods of change or crisis in the self-understanding of a church are, therefore, immediately reflected in the ministry and the shape of ministerial formation.

The ecumenical movement of our century has been a major factor in transforming the inherited self-understanding of the churches, and their denominational and institutional identity. Increasingly, questions are being asked about the meaning and mutual recognition of traditional forms of ministry and the processes of education and formation in preparation for it. Thus the rediscovery of the comprehensive ministry of the whole people of God, to which all are called who have received baptism, has widened the perspective beyond the specialized forms of the ordained ministry. Ministerial formation is now understood as a particular expression of the ongoing task of theological education for the whole people of God in preparation for the multiple forms of ministry of and in the Christian community. As a consequence, fundamental changes have occurred in many places regarding the traditional ways of theological education. In addition, denominational and confessional divisions are gradually being overcome, and this has led to the emergence of interdenominational or non-denominational institutions of theological education and ministerial formation, where the future ministers of different churches are trained together. The term "ecumenical theological

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<sup>52</sup> in: John Pobee (ed), *Towards Viable Theological Education*, (Report of Oslo World Conference on Theological Education), Geneva 1997, 54f

education" would in most cases be associated with such examples of inter-denominational programmes or institutions of theological education.

However, following more recent social and cultural changes, the institutional identity of the churches and of their forms of ministry has been challenged and called into question in a more fundamental way. The issue now is: What does it mean to be the church today? Most of the historic churches, certainly in the Catholic and Protestant tradition, are experiencing this institutional uncertainty and self-questioning. This is the context in which the question of the viability of theological education and ministerial formation has arisen and which has led to the process of ecumenical reflection culminating in this global consultation.

Viability does not only refer to the ability to maintain and sustain the inherited institutional forms of ministry and education. "Viability is about the ability to give life, to renew, to transform society and peoples as well as congregations" (John Pobee). A viable form of theological education and ministerial formation will, therefore, aim at preparing leaders of Christian communities who are able to inspire new life, to renew and transform the institutional identity of the church. Obviously, such programmes of education and formation must be guided by a vision of a renewed church; they need to anticipate forms of ministry which respond to the present situation of uncertainty and can initiate processes of renewal.

The ecumenical movement has been an important force of church renewal in this century because it has been guided by a vision of the unity of all God's people for the sake of the renewal of human community. The question implied in the theme of this address is therefore whether the ecumenical vision can continue to inspire processes of theological education and ministerial formation so that they will be an adequate response in the present situation of institutional uncertainty of the churches. Is the ecumenical vision still viable?

### **Different expressions of the ecumenical vision**

The preparatory material for this conference says that the ecumenical vision is "rooted in the affirmation of God as the owner of the whole earth as well as the eschatological vision of a new heaven and a new earth (Rev. 21:1)" and that it "signals how ministry and formation processes can further the unity of the church (John 17:21ff.) for the sake of the unity and renewal of humankind and indeed all creation". It further adds in the explication of the theme of this session: "Ecumenism is a gospel imperative and not an option; unity of church is a gift as well as a calling and in the service of summing all things to God through Christ."

These affirmations summarize the well-known features of what is commonly being called the ecumenical vision, but they also indicate the problem of its viability. A vision, in order to be viable, in other words to inspire processes of renewal, must be more than a general restatement of biblical affirmations, and calling these an imperative does not make them more visionary. A vision should have the power to mobilize, to open a way, to inspire action. The ecumenical vision must, of course, be rooted in the biblical witness, and it should echo the tone of eschatological hope central to the gospel message. In that sense, one can say that the biblical vision of the fullness of life in communion with God, expressed either in the language of the parables of the kingdom of God or in terms of reconciliation and shalom or of the restoration of the wholeness of creation in a new heaven and a new earth, is also the ultimate horizon for the Ecumenical vision.

The specific focus of the ecumenical vision has been from the beginning the breaking down of the walls of separation and the manifestation of the unity of God's people for the sake of the well-being of the human community. The ecumenical vision responds to the common

calling of the churches and in that sense it is a gospel imperative and not an option. Yet it has found different expressions which have become embodied in distinct institutional histories. The "visible unity of the church" has been and is the focus. For those who locate the decisive and most divisive differences in the areas of "faith and order". "The evangelization of the world in this generation" has been the watchword for those who set out to cross 311 cultural barriers in order to take the gospel to the ends of the earth and to make one people of God out of many nations. "One human family in justice and peace" has been the ultimate interpretation of the ecumenical vision of those who have worked to overcome the barriers of race, class, gender, ethnicity, nation, etc. and to build a new human community.

All three thrusts are equally valid ways of responding to the common calling which energizes the ecumenical vision. None of them nor any other embodiment of the ecumenical vision should claim primary or exclusive validity. The ecumenical vision is always wider than our own conceptions. At the same time, it cannot be formulated definitely once and for all. To retain its viability, it has to be articulated afresh in response to changing circumstances and historical conditions. Otherwise, it is in danger of turning into an ideology. In fact, the ecumenical debate in the context of the WCC shows continuous refocusing of the ecumenical vision.

Today, we find ourselves in an historical situation where a new articulation of the ecumenical vision is urgently required. The traditional notions of the unity of the church, of Christian mission and of service in the world have become ambiguous and even stifling, rather than providing inspiration and direction. The new situation of the rapid globalization of markets, media and technologies, and the counter-reaction in the form of growing fundamentalism affirming exclusive and particular national, ethnic, cultural or religious identities, oblige us to rethink the relationship of unity and diversity as well as the interaction of the global and the local in expressing the ecumenical vision. The vision will have to affirm coherence in the face of fragmentation, inclusiveness to counteract exclusion, life in relationships rather than individual advancement.

The WCC has already been engaged for several years in a reflection process aiming at clarifying the common understanding of the Council and articulating afresh the ecumenical vision. The process is to culminate at the eighth assembly in 1998. In the course of the discussion, different approaches to finding appropriate expressions of the ecumenical vision have been considered. Some have started from biblical metaphors like the kingdom or the oikos/household of God; others have been focusing on a new consciousness of values, such as justice, peace and the integrity of creation, which could undergird an alternative culture and ethics of life, dialogue and tolerance, sharing and solidarity, non-violence and peace. Still others crystallize around concepts like *koinonia* or life.

The discussion still continues, but there are common features to all these approaches: a vision which affirms life and relationships/community; a vision which inspires rebuilding and reconstruction of community, inclusive of differences and diversities; a vision, finally, which reaches beyond the future of church and society and embraces God's entire creation. However this searching process eventually crystallizes, the decisive question will be whether it can be translated into a project for action and inspire renewed processes of education and learning.

## Ministries, community and competency

The assumption underlying these reflections is that the response to the question of what it means to be the church today, the structures of ministry, and the processes of theological education and ministerial formation are mutually interdependent. The efforts at renewal and transformation guided by an ecumenical vision need to embrace all three dimensions simultaneously. A defensive attitude on the part of the churches, trying at all costs to maintain their institutional integrity, will be reflected at the level of ministry by emphasizing the distinction between ordained and non-ordained ministries, and by imposing restrictive criteria for admission to the ministry. This in turn leads to highly formalized patterns of theological education and ministerial formation aimed at producing an institutional mentality among the candidates for the ministry. A renewal impulse in only one of these dimensions, for example, the forms of ministry, but which is not reflected in formation or institutional life of the churches, will soon be paralyzed. This has been the experience of many women who have entered the ministry of the church.

The ministries exist in order to serve and build up the Christian community, the church; and the church exists as the living embodiment of the gospel message. In the light of the ecumenical vision, the role of all ministries is to enable the churches to become viable communities of hope and healing, inclusive communities of sharing in solidarity, communities which build and sustain relationships of reconciliation and mutual empowerment. This vision cannot easily be reconciled with the reality of the churches as social bodies. All social relationships, especially within the framework of organizations and institutions, are shaped by power. Ministry as leadership in the community shares in the exercise of power, if only in the form of spiritual power. All those in positions of power are exposed to the temptation of dominating the community, and church hierarchies are no exception. Churches are not perfect communities, but in the person of Jesus Christ and in his gospel they have a means of opening a way to the fullness of life not on the basis of competitive success and dominating power, but through sharing, self-giving and forgiveness. The viability of the Christian community and indeed of its ministries will depend on whether they allow themselves, in their imperfection and brokenness, to be renewed and transformed by confession and forgiveness, and thus to be empowered to live as the body of Christ broken for the world.

How can theological education and ministerial formation prepare people for this task of enabling and building up the communities so that they can become living witnesses of the life-giving power of the gospel? Obviously, calling the people to and leading them in worship of word and sacrament requires a, *pastoral competence* which is acquired through training. However, where the tasks of ministry and ministerial formation remain limited to this pastoral model, they will fall short of building up a viable community.

One of the limitations of the traditional forms of theological education and ministerial formation is that they do not provide training for leadership in the sense of enabling, equipping and discerning the gifts of ministry in the community. For some, this *competence of leadership* which empowers rather than controls or dominates is a personal gift they offer to the community. For others, it requires self-denial and spiritual discipline which have to be learned. Leadership in this sense also includes the ability to mediate conflict and exercise the ministry of reconciliation. A theological education which places the emphasis on obedience and correct observance of the rules laid down by tradition will not prepare people adequately for this responsibility of shared leadership.

To these two criteria of pastoral and leadership competence, further elements have to be added for the sake of building up a viable community. I would call the ability to give language to the spiritual experience and to the faith insights of the members of the community *theological competence*. This requires the gift of discernment. What are the symbols in the context of the community which could become mediations of the gospel? This hermeneutical formation is usually neglected in the traditional form of theological education.

Each Christian community lives among and for the sake of a wider human community. It is called to be the "salt of the earth" and "light of the world". Encouraging the community to open itself up to the concerns of society refers to its missionary calling and requires on the part of the ministerial leadership *missionary competence*, which includes the ability to analyze and respond to the need for healing and wholeness, justice and reconciliation in society.

Finally, no local Christian community can be the church for itself alone. By virtue of the common baptism and confession of the same Lord Jesus Christ, it lives in a basic relatedness to all other Christian communities, especially those in the same place. To nurture this consciousness of the catholicity of the church requires *ecumenical competence*, i.e. the ability to appreciate and understand the other-ness of different church traditions, not as a threat but as an enrichment.

If the ecumenical vision can orient all ministries towards the basic task of upbuilding the Christian community (*oikodomé*), then this fivefold pattern of competences can help to reshape the processes of theological education and ministerial formation. It could also serve to formulate a new mandate for the continuing work of the World Council of Churches in the area of ecumenical theological education.



**Dietrich Werner**

## **Magna Charta on Ecumenical Formation in Theological Education in the 21st century - 10 key Convictions**

**ETE/WCC-Reference document  
for use in associations of theological schools and colleges,  
WOCATI and in the Edinburgh 2010 process**

### **1) Ecumenism as an urgent need in theological education**

The basis of the WCC affirms: “The World Council of Churches is a fellowship of churches which confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the scriptures and therefore seek to fulfill together their common calling to the glory of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.” In the constitution of WCC the concern for ecumenical theological education therefore receives a high priority: It is defined as one of the primary purposes and functions of the WCC to “nurture the growth of an ecumenical consciousness through processes of education and a vision of life in community rooted in each particular cultural context”(WCC constitution par III). The ecumenical movement from its very beginning and even before the founding of the WCC 1948 (comp. history of World Council of Christian Education) had a profound impact on the understanding of Christian education in general and ministerial formation for future ministers and priests in particular. If the ecumenical movement as a whole is about strengthening common witness and promoting new forms of the visible unity between churches of different denominational and confessional traditions then the scandal of churches remaining in disunity and using distorted images of sister churches in one’s own educational materials and publications needs to be overcome with foremost priority in the area of theological education and ministerial formation. The strengthening and pursuit of church unity in theological education is a Gospel imperative for any church joining in the affirmation of the church as being „one, holy, catholic and apostolic“in its essence (The Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed [381]) (*interdenominational or ecclesial dimension of ecumenical formation*). The emergence of interdenominational or non-denominational institutions of theological education in the 50’s and 60’s which was

intentionally supported by the Theological Education Fund (TEF) of the IMC as well as the introduction of distinct courses and curriculum models on ecumenism and the ecumenical movement was a consequence of this ecclesiological insight. The emphasize on interdenominational cooperation in theological education as well as the development of proper teaching materials on ecumenism remains an indispensable and in many places still lacking component of the theological education of pastors and ministers. There is no future for the ecumenical movement as a whole if there is no commitment to ecumenical formation processes in formal and non-formal theological education programmes of WCC member churches. If theological education fails to be guided by an ecumenical vision of a church renewed in mission and service to the whole of humankind there will be a serious shortage in terms of a new generation of Christian leaders, pastors and theological teachers carrying on the ecumenical vision and commitment into the 21st century and a widening gap and estrangement between the majority clergy and ever fewer experts on the ecumenical movement and ecumenical theological discourse which can already be observed in a number of member churches.

## **2) Contextualization of theological education**

Ecumenical formation in theological education is guided by the vision of the church truly united and serving the renewal of the human community. Therefore, ecumenical formation reaches beyond the realm of issues of inner church unity in addressing fundamental questions of the human family and the survival of the whole earth. Being inspired by the ecumenical vision of God as the owner of the whole earth (oikumene) as well as the eschatological vision of a new heaven and a new earth, theological education in ecumenical understanding will always try to respond to the pressing needs of social contexts and to be related to issues of human survival both in global and in local environments. Relating theological education to the realities of particular social and cultural contexts, liberating theological education from any captivity of certain social milieus, cultural one-sidedness and spiritual blindness to religious values existing in certain indigenous traditions has been a major emphasis of the WCC in the programme on theological education (PTE) since the sixties (*social or contextual dimension in ecumenical formation of theological education*). The demand for contextualization of theological education in terms of opening its agenda to the realities and challenges of different church contexts, cultural identities and living situations both in the global South as well as in churches in the West facing consequences of globalization and pluralization of life-styles and religious orientations in their own midst remains an ongoing task for theological education worldwide. Some of the areas in which contextualization of curriculum designs were most prominent and successful for ETE in recent past was the development of HIV/AIDS curriculum and doing theology from disability perspective.

## **3) Theological education for the whole people of God**

Ecumenical formation in theological education since the rediscovery of the importance of the laity and their missionary role in church and society (Evanston Assembly 1954) is also guided by the rediscovery of the comprehensive character of the ministry of the whole people of God, to which all are called who have received baptism. Ministerial formation in the ecumenical debate on theological education since the 70's was understood as a particular expression and a specific part of the more comprehensive task of equipping the whole people of God for the multiple forms of ministries of and in the Christian community. New forms of lay theological formation, non-residential forms of theological education both for lay people as well as for future ministers have been a fundamental contribution to broadening theological education for the whole people of God which is an essential demand for a holistic and participatory understanding of the mission of the church as a body of Christ (*missionary or participatory dimension of ecumenical formation in theological*

*education*). What has changed theological education most dramatically in the past decades is also the growing participation of women in teaching, research and theological networking in many regions of the world. Feminist and womanist theological networks, the deepening of feminist hermeneutics as well as the promotion of women in leadership positions of theological teaching and research is an indispensable part of ecumenical formation in theological education today. How to support women in theological education and theological research and how to maintain a proper balance between lay formation programmes and ministerial formation programmes (and to secure sufficient interaction between both) remain two major concerns in the work towards theological education for the whole people of God. Talking about theological education for the whole people of God in recent years also involves inventing and strengthening new models of academic ecumenical theological training for migrants and churches with migration background (for instance African churches in Europe) as often established systems of theological education cannot easily adapt to their needs.

#### **4) Interfaith dialogue in theological education**

Ecumenical formation in theological education fourthly is guided by a vision of sharing and mutual discoveries reaching beyond the realm of Christianity to the human community in the whole inhabited earth (*oikumene*) and taking into account the challenges of Christians living in close neighbourhoods and experiencing mutual sharing and solidarity with people of other faith traditions in many church contexts. Thus interfaith encounter and learning about what can be affirmed in common action for peace, justice and human dignity with people of other living faith traditions is an integral component of ecumenical formation (*interfaith dimension of ecumenical formation*) which is not endangering one's own Christian identity but rather deepening it in processes of communication and sharing with people of different faiths. With the recent Letter of some 140 Muslim Leaders ("A Common Word between Us and You,") to Leaders of Christian Churches around the world at the feast of "Eid al-Fitr al-Mubarak" 2007, which marks the end of Ramadan, and the answer from WCC this whole dimension again becomes an urgent priority also for institutions of theological education.

#### **5) Spiritual formation in theological education**

Very often ecumenical formation processes have been described as having a profound spiritual basis and character referring back to the very biblical understanding as the church as learning community (*spiritual dimension of ecumenical formation*). "Learning in the Bible is a process by which people relate to God and God's way of truth, righteousness and peace, that they may in obedience practice that way in relation to each other and extending to the nations...Learning does not simply mean acquiring knowledge or skills, or being intellectually equipped, or just memorizing some catechism of faith. Rather it means so entering with our whole being and with all the people into a relationship with God through God's self-revelation, that our horizons are widened and our wills are strengthened to be right with God and with one another in word and deed"(Philip Potter in Vancouver 1983). If ecumenical formation is about becoming open and responsive to the will of God in the whole of our own existence, ecumenical formation is not just a cheap way of adding some additional pieces of information to the theological curriculum, but involves a certain aspect of deep and spiritual conversion and metanoia in the understanding of both one's own Christian existence as well as one's own confessional identity, a conversion from denominational self-centredness and cultural captivities to the realities of God's mission in the whole of the inhabited earth. „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.”( Study document on

„Ecumenical Formation“ of the Joint Working Group between the Roman Catholic Church and the WCC Geneva, 1993).

#### **6) ecumenical formation as informed participation in the ecumenical movement**

There finally is a certain methodological principle at work in the understanding of ecumenical formation which is due to the appropriation and integration of much of the didactical and catechetical revolutions and fundamental paradigm changes occurring in the ‚pedagogy of the oppressed‘, methods of conscientization and the methods of learning by involvement in common action which have come up strongly in the ecumenical debate of learning during the 70’s and 80’s (*didactical, practical or liberational dimension in ecumenical formation in theological education*). Already in the early and first statement of WCC in 1957 on ecumenical education the emphasize was put on concrete practical involvement as a prerogative of proper ecumenical learning: „Ecumenical education can no longer be limited to the history of attempts to reunite churches or the growth of ecumenical organizations. Ecumenical education essentially means fostering understanding of, commitment to and informed participation in this whole ecumenical process“ (Central Committee 1957). Ecumenical formation is not possible without a didactical and pedagogical approach which fosters practical involvement in both local, regional and global projects of ecumenical cooperation and human struggles for dignity, reconciliation and social justice. What in certain areas is referred to as “globalization in theological education” (though this term is not without ambivalence) can be understood in terms of equipping both future ministers, church workers and lay people for informed and theologically reflected participation in the global ecumenical movement by deepening their formation in intercultural theology, ecumenical biblical hermeneutics, interreligious dialogue, history of ecumenism, ecumenical Missiology and ecumenical social ethics while at the same time remaining faithful to their own contextual demands for relating the Gospel to a given culture and situation.

#### **7) Major goals and principles of ecumenical formation**

What follows from these six fundamental dimensions of ecumenical formation for understanding the *goals and principles of ecumenical formation* has been spelled out in the 1989 key WCC document on „Alive together – a practical guide to Ecumenical Learning“ in certain alternative key formulations for principles of ecumenical learning, namely:

- a) Learning which enables people, while remaining rooted in one tradition of the church, to become open and responsive to the richness and perspectives of other churches, so that they may become more active in seeking unity, openness and collaboration between churches;
- b) Learning which enables people of one country, language, ethnic group, class or political and economic system, to become sensitive and responsive to those of other countries, ethnic groups, political and economic situations, so that they may become active participants in action for a more just world;
- c) ecumenical learning is what happens when diverse persons, rooted in their own faith traditions and complex experiences of culture, gender, nationality, race, call etc. become open and responsive to the richness of perspectives in the struggle of others, together seeking to know God and to be faithful to God’s intention for them in their world.
- d) ecumenical learning is a process by which
  - diverse groups and individuals
  - well rooted in their own faith, traditions, cultures and contexts,
  - are enabled to risk honest encounters with one another before God,
  - as they study and struggle together in community,
  - with personally relevant issues,
  - in the light of the Scriptures, the traditions of their faith, worship and global realities,
  - resulting in communal action in faithfulness to God’s intention for the unity of the church and humankind, and for justice, peace and integrity of creation.“

Or, to recall a formulation which was used during the Vancouver Assembly in 1983: Ecumenical learning both in theological education as well as in Christian education as whole is characterised by the essential marks that

„a) it *transcends barriers* – of origin and biography, individual as well as community limitations, because it responds to the exhortation of the word of God and the far-reaching horizons of God’s promise

b) it is *action-oriented*, not satisfied with information but seeking to enable Christians to act in order to learn, to be right with God and with one another, in word and deed

c) it is *done in community*, in which people are asked to establish relationships with one another and also with those who are far away and with what is unfamiliar

d) it means *learning together*, detecting the global in the local, the unfamiliar in the context of one’s own environment, in order to become aware of one’s own limited horizons and implications

e) it is *inter-cultural*, promoting the encounter of different cultures, traditions and forms of life because only a widening of perspectives will bring about experiences of the riches in creation in nature, in history and culture

f) it is a *total process*, *social and religious learning are not separated from each other* but constitute a unity“.

### **8) Theological competence redefined for an ecumenical age of global Christianity**

This can be summarized: theological education of the church as a whole cannot be complete without unfolding itself and being directed towards equipping a future generation of both ordained and non-ordained partakers of the manifold ministries of the church with

a) a *pastoral competence* which is about enabling and building up individuals as well as Christian communities so as to become living witnesses of the life-giving power of the Gospel and the transforming power of the Holy Spirit in word, liturgy and sacrament;

b) a *competence of leadership* which empowers rather than controls the manifold gifts of a given Christian community and helps to enable, equip and discern these gifts and charismata for the benefit of both the upbuilding the local congregation (oikodome) as well as peace and justice for the whole of the human community;

c) a *theological competence* which is about the ability to give a voice to the spiritual experiences of a Christian community, interpreting both biblical and church tradition in ways meaningful to contemporaries and to relate the faith insights of a local community to the treasures and challenges of the church universal and the contemporary discourse in culture and society;

d) a *missionary competence* which is about the ability to discern and to give shape to the demands and promises of the Gospel in relation to the missionary and evangelizing vocation of the church and the longing for healing and wholeness, peace and reconciliation in the human community;

e) an *ecumenical competence* which while including the other dimensions emphasises particularly that no church can be the church for itself alone and each church is becoming truly the church in the full sense of the word if and so far it is related to the fellowship of Christian churches truly united both locally and globally in prayer, witness and service. This means that theological education is taking seriously the basic nature of both the catholicity and apostolicity, oneness and holiness of the church universal.

In essence, what is at stake therefore in ecumenical formation in theological education today is nothing less than rediscovering and adjusting to the truly global and ecumenical nature of the church, existing within the manifold forms of global Christianity which has become a new reality only after the gradual shift of centre of gravity from the North to the South and meanwhile presents itself as a multi-centered global Christianity of the South or the „two-

thirds-world“. For most of the past centuries of the history of Christianity, theological reflection, interpretation of Christian tradition and the perception of cultures and living conditions in the „peripheries“ was heavily influenced and carried out from the viewpoint of one or several dominating centres of global Christianity (Jerusalem in the first century, Rome up to the fourth century and much beyond, Western Christianity over against Eastern Christianity in the Middle Ages, North Atlantic Christianity over against Christianity in the South for some 200-300 years during colonial expansion and domination). While dominance and cultural and economic ethnocentrism are still continuing with regard to American and/or Western culture and life-styles at many levels in theology and theological education, global Christianity of the South for the last 30 years or so (comp. the role of the Bangkok world mission conference in the ecumenical debate on mission 1974) has entered into a stage in which a truly multi-centered understanding of Christianity has emerged and an unprecedented genuine plurality of Christian of interpretations has been developed and is promoted. Ecumenical formation (or globalization in theological education) is the unfinished theological and didactical process by which churches worldwide are aligning and opening up themselves to the realities of a truly multi-centered and multi-faceted global Christianity in the 21st century thereby challenging any attitude, hidden prejudices or overt practices of cultural, theological and interpretative domination by any assumed majority culture within global Christianity. This means that ecumenical formation is about reappropriating the ecumenical nature of the church as confessed in the creed (one, holy, catholic and apostolic) though under new and unprecedented historical conditions.

#### **9) New challenges for ecumenical formation in the beginning 21st century**

In the beginning of the 21st century we find ourselves in a new historical situation where we both need a fresh articulation of the ecumenical vision (which has lost some of its momentum and support in the local levels) as well as a significant and relevant new commitment for ecumenical education and formation in the member churches of WCC as a whole if the ecumenical movement is to remain a vital force of renewal and conversion in global Christianity. The new situation is particularly marked by the fact that the rapid globalization of markets, media and technologies has given rise to counter-reactions in terms of different forms of growing fundamentalism affirming exclusive and closed national, ethnic, cultural and religious identities. These factors of increased fragmentation and fundamentalist trends in the midst of globalization oblige us to renew and rethink our commitment to ecumenical formation as an urgent necessity and priority for safeguarding the continuation of the ecumenical movement and ecumenical witness as a whole. To promote an ecumenical orientation in theological education is the only possible option to maintain an „alternative and ecumenically responsible vision of globalization“ over against growing trends towards either withdrawing Christian faith from public responsibility and dialogue altogether (privatization), or turn to denominational provincialism and ecclesial self-centredness (confessionalization) or to seek refuge in religious fundamentalism (simplification) within the christian family or in relation to other religions. Thus ecumenical formation is not only a „constitutive mark of the church being the church“(Vancouver 1983) but also an essential priority of new urgency at the beginning of the 21st century.

#### **10) Costly ecumenical learning – suggestions for practical implementation in theological education**

There is no cheap way of adding ecumenical formation into existing schemes of theological education and curriculum plans. Rather introducing ecumenical formation has a certain price as it can entail a reordering of priorities in theological education in terms of both contents, methods and working principles applied – but the costly way of integrating ecumenical formation is rewarded by a profound process of truly broadening and deepening theological education:

- a) powerful and dominant cultures as well as theological perceptions are called to give up their sense of control, allow for more inclusivity and processes of reorientation by minority cultures and theological perceptions which contribute to the holistic character of the body of Christ truly united;
- b) majority denominational traditions of a certain region are challenged to include proper presentations and truly participation of Christian minority traditions within their own context as well as from other contexts in their theological curriculum and theological teaching materials (handbooks);
- c) theological education institutions of one context and denominational background are challenged to develop long-term partnership and exchange programmes with theological education institutions from a different context and church background;
- d) students are challenged to learn at least one language different from their own native language and the dominant language of their context to be immersed and introduced into the challenges and dynamics of proper intercultural communication (for instance with immigrant cultures in their context);
- e) crossing cultural and denominational boundaries for a certain period within a certain period of one's own theological education programme becomes an obligatory component of any programme of theological education;
- f) participating in ecumenical stewardship and ecumenical sharing of financial resources for theological education worldwide in the context of grave and persistent inequalities in terms of financial means for theological education becomes a structural component for each theological colleges/faculty/university (either by giving scholarships to a college in another context or extending ecumenical journal subscriptions for other colleges, providing placements for international students and lectures in one's own college);
- g) ecumenism, intercultural theology and ecumenical missiology are both necessary dimensions and horizons within the classical five disciplines of theological science as well as deserve and demand for a distinct place and realm of study and research in the composition of theological faculties;
- h) individualism, voluntarism and onesided denominationalism in college life are challenged by the deliberate introduction of ecumenical elements into the regular worship life of any given college (e.g. intercessions for other churches; statements of faith from other traditions; music and hymns from global Christianity);
- i) mutuality and reciprocity are supported in the partnership relations between colleges/faculties in one context to colleges/faculties of another context (in order to avoid onesided dependency, one-directional giving mentalities; lack of respect and mutuality in processes of sharing between contexts of inequality);
- j) churches are challenged to strengthen their sense of responsibility and ownership for institutions of theological education as a vital source for their own renewal by accompanying theological education institutions properly, making provisions in church budgets for relevant and appropriate financial support for institutions of theological education, creating scholarship endowment funds particularly for Master and PhD-programmes and embarking on proper regional development plans for the future of theological education.
- k) support and enhancement of bilateral and multilateral initiatives for the recognition and accreditation of institutions of theological education in the global South in other countries (both in the South as well as in the North) is an urgent task for mutual cooperation between associations of theological schools in WOCATI and beyond.

The WCC assembly in Porto Alegre has highlighted the centrality of ecumenical formation for all aspects of the work of the WCC as well as for theological education in its member churches. The process to unfold the concrete implications of this overarching and manifold task has only just begun.

## APPENDIX I

### **PTE/ETE - Historical survey on important major consultations or study processes on ecumenical theological education**

- Consultation on orthodox theological education, Basel Switzerland, 4-7 July 1978, in: MF 2, 1978, p. 16ff and in: MF 4, 1978, p. 18ff
- The Meaning of Ministerial Formation, 7-10 July 1979, Manila, in: MF 5, 1979, p. 20ff, report in: MF 8, 1979, p. 6ff
- Study of the community of Women and Men in the Church, in: MF 7, 1979, p. 12ff and theme issue on Women, Theological Education and Ministry in: MF 33, 1986, p. 4ff, also in: MF 38, 1987, 4ff
- Theological education in the 80's, MF 9, 1980, p. 3ff
- Theological Education for Ministerial Formation: First All-European Consultation on Theological Education, in: MF 11, 1980, p. 3ff, reports in: MF 12, 1980, p. 3ff
- US/Canadian Consultation on Global Solidarity on Theological Education, 12-15 July 1981, in: MF 14, 1981, 34ff; reports in: MF 16, 1981, p. 3ff
- Learning in community. Preparatory paper for Vancouver Assembly, MF 19, 1982, p. 6ff; reports from Vancouver in: MF 21, 1983, p. 3ff
- Theology by the people, Consultation on theological education in Manila, 15-18 April 1985, in: MF 28, 1984, p. 3ff and MF29, 1985, p.3ff, and MF 31, 1985, p. 4ff
- Spiritual Formation in theological education, in: Consultation in Iona, Scotland 24-27 April 1987, materials in MF 30, 1985, p. 4ff, reports in: MF 39, 1987, p. 4ff
- Theological Education in Africa: Quo Vadimus?, consultation 21-27 July Accra, Ghana, 1986, in: MF 35, 1986
- Popular Theological Education, Consultation with ALIET, June 1986 in Antigua, Guatemala, in: MF 37, 1987, p. 5ff
- Doing Theology in Different contexts. Consultation held with participants from Eastern Europe and Latin America, in Comenius Seminary in Prague, June 21-25, 1988, in: MF 43, 1988, p. 4ff
- Ministerial Formation for Mission today, Global consultation on theological education, 3-8 January 1989 at Limuru Conference and Training Centre, in: MF 45, 1989, p. 3ff
- Spiritual Formation in Theological Education, Global consultation in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, June 20-26, 1989, in: MF 46, 1989, p. 3ff; report in: MF 47, 1989, 4ff

- Evaluation of Theological Education by Extension (TEE), Costa Rica, May 8-12, 1990, in MF 51, 1990, p. 4ff
  
- Come, Holy Spirit, Renew the whole Creation, PTE/Bossey consultation prior to Canberra, April 19-26, 1990, in: MF 50, 1990, 4ff
- The Challenges of Canberra for Theological Education, in: MF 54, 1991, p. 7ff
  
- Theological Education in Survival Situations, 14-18 July 1991, Nicaragua, in: MF 55, 1991, 44ff
  
- Seminar on Communication Education in Ministerial Formation, joint seminar with ETE, WACC and Bossey, held in Bossey April 30-May 6, 1992, in: MF 58, 1992, p. 10ff
  
- Theological Education in Abya-Yala, held in San José, Costa Rica, July 19-24, 1992, in: MF 59, 1992, 4ff
  
- The Spectrum of Ministry, 1-11 July 1992, consultation in Bossey, MF 60, 1993, 4ff
  
- Viability of Ministerial's Formation in today's world, A global study process: in: MF 62, 1993, p. 41ff; 9); John Pobee, The first Gospel of Viability of ministerial formation, in: MF 64, 1994, p. 5ff;  
Regional contributions to the study process on Viability of theological education: MF 66-69, 1994; Seminar report on consultation on theological education, Bossey: MF 67, 1994, p. 50
  
- Toward a New Vision of Ministerial Formation: Contextualization, Globalization and Viability, Consultation of ATS/ETE in Nashville, US, 12-14 May 1995, in: MF 1995, 3ff
  
- Global consultation on Ecumenical Theological education, Its Viability today: contributions and reports: MF 72, 1996, 2ff and MF 75, 1996, p. 3ff and MF 76, 1997, p. 2ff; and MF 77 1997, p. 3ff. bibliography on publications concerning the global study on viability of theological education, in: MF 75, 1996, 54ff

## APPENDIX II

### LIST OF SOME TEF-PTE-ETE INITIATED PUBLICATIONS

- Steven Mackie, *Patterns of Ministry. Theological Education in a Changing World*. With a foreword by Dr. W.A. Visser't Hooft, Collins, London 1969
- *Ministry in Context. The Third Mandate Programme of the Theological Education Fund*(IP70177,e d. Staff of TEF, Bromley, England: TEF 1972
- *Learning in Context - The Search for Innovative Pattern of Theological Education*, Bromley: England, Life Press, 1973
- H. M. Zorn, *Viability in Context. The Theological Seminary in the Third World – Seedbed or Sheltered Garden?*, Bromley : TEF 1975
- Christine Lienemann-Perrin, *Training for a relevant ministry : a study of the contribution of the Theological Education Fund* / by Geneva : World Council of Churches ; Madras : Christian Literature Society, 1981
- *Orthodox Theological Education for the Life and Witness of the Church* (Report on the Consultation at Basel, Switzerland, July 4-8 1978), Geneva: PTE/WCC 1978
- *Ministerial Formation* (Report of the Consultation on Ministerial Formation, Tagaytay City, Manila, Philippines July 7-10 1979) Geneva: PTE/WCC 1979
- *Theological Education in Europe* (Report on the Consultation at Herrnhut, October 1980) Geneva: PTE/WCC
- *Global Solidarity in Theological Education* (Report on the US/Canadian Consultation, Toronto, July 1981) Geneva: PTE/WCC 1981
- *Ministry by the People: Theological Education by Extension*, ed. F. Ross Kinsler, Geneva: WCC, New York: Orbis 1983
- *Ministerial Formation in a Multi-faith Milieu*, ed. S. Amirtham and S. Wesley Ariarajah, Geneva: WCC 1986
- *Theology by the People. Reflections on Doing Theology in Community*, eds. S. Amirtham and John S. Pobee, Geneva: WCC 1986
- *The Teaching of Ecumenics*, eds. Samuel Amirtham and Cyris H. S. Moon, Geneva: WCC 1987
- *The Search for New Community* (Consultation on Models of Renewed Community), ed. Thomas F. Best, Geneva: WCC 1987
- *Doing Theology in Different Contexts. A Latin American Central-Eastern European Dialogue* (A Report of a Programme on Theological Education Consultation in Prague, June 1988). Eds. Ofelia Ortega and Diana Chabloz, Geneva: WCC 1988

- *Stories Make People. Examples of Theological Work in Community*, ed. Sam Amirtham, Geneva: WCC 1989
- *The Invitation to the Feast of Life. Resources for Spiritual Formation in Theological Education*. Eds. Sam Amirtham and Robin Pryor, Geneva: WCC 1989
- *Que Fornacao espirituvel*, ed. Jaci Maraschin, Sao Paulo: ASTE 1990.
- *Theological Education in Africa. Quo Vadis?* Eds. John S. Pobee and J. N. Kudadjie, Accra: Asempa 1990
- *Oekumenische Perspektiven theologischer Ausbildung*, Hrag : Lothar Engel/Dietrich Werner, Beiheft zur ökumenischen Rundschau Nr. 60, Frankfurt 1990
- Holistic Education Resource Book. *Learning and Teaching in an Ecumenical Context*. Ed. by Peter Schreiner, Ester Bauer, Simon Oxley, Waxmann, Münster/New York 2005
- Simon Oxley, Creative Ecumenical Education. *Learning from One Another*, WCC Publications 2002
- *Encounter of Religions in African Cultures*, Eds. John S. Pobee, Ulrich Schoen and J. Paul Rajashekar, Geneva: LWF 1991
- *Educacion Teologica en Situaciones de Sobrevivencia* (Una Consulta Latinoamericano 14-18 Julio 1991, Managua, Nicaragua) San Jose: WCC and SBL 1991
- *Opting for Change. A Handbook on Evaluation and Planning for Theological Education by Edemion*, eds. F. Ross Kinsler and James H. Emery, Pasadena: William Carey Library Geneva: WCC 1991
- Also in Spanish - *Opcion por el Gunbio. Manual de Evaluacion y Plan@cion par la Educacion Teologica por Extension*. San Jose, Costa Rica: WCC and SBL 1991
- *Educacion Teologica en Abya-Yala* (Una consulta internacional 10-24 Julio 1992) San Jose: WCC, SBL and CETELA 1992
- *Ministerial Formation for Mission Today*, ed. John S. Pobee, Accra: Asempa 1993
- *Construction of a Common European Home*, ed. John S. Pobee, Geneva: WCC 1993
- Judo Poerwowidagdo, *Towards the 21st Century. Challenges and Opportunities for Theological Education*, Geneva: WCC-Unit I 1994
- *God has Called Us* (A Report from the Ecumenical Workshop for Women Theological Educators, Bossey, Switzerland May 7-17 1991). Eds. Linda Katsuno, Kathy Keay and Ofelia Ortega, Singapore: Viva Lithographers 1994
- John Pobee, *Towards Viable Theological Education. Ecumenical Imperative, Catalyst of Renewal*, WCC Publications Geneva 1997