ministerial formation

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World Council of Churches
Education and Ecumenical Formation

January 2007

Wati Longchar (right) on 18th October 2006 with Beijing Theological Seminary students in the newly constructed chapelalong with Henry S Wilson (center), the new FTESEA Executive Director .

This biannual journal aims to encourage sharing and cooperation among all who are working for the renewal of the churches through programmes of ministeral 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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LETTER FROM STAFF

Transforming theological education and ministerial formation in this era of multiple pandemics and crises in different parts of the world is an urgent matter in the life and mission of theological educators. In high demand is ecumenical theological curriculum that meets the needs and challenges of informal settlement sectors in the big cities commonly known as slums. In China there is a growing need for ecumenical theological education to meet the demands of rapidly growing Christianity in one of the most populous countries in our time.

Providentially there is a growing community of theological educators the world over who have risen to the occasion but there remains much more to be done. In the process, we encounter a wide variety of different ways of doing theological education and providing ministerial formation. We are grateful to Prof. Ross Kinsler ─ a long time ecumenical theological educator ─ who is currently preparing a collection of case studies on diversified theological education.

There is also great demand for networking among theological institutions and programs of theological education by extension (TEE). At this juncture, I would like to congratulate the community of theological educators by extension in Africa who created All Africa Theological Education by Extension Association (AATEEA) in October 2006. During the same occasion the educators launched the HIV and AIDS Theological Curriculum Modules for TEE programs in Africa, which will soon be available in CD-ROM and can be translated to other languages.

Finally, time has come for me to say goodbye to the global community of theological educators who have read correspondences from my office since March 1999. This is the last issue of *Ministerial Formation* I am compiling. From 1st April 2007, I have assumed the responsibility of coordinating Ecumenical HIV and AIDS Initiative in Africa (EHAIA), based in Geneva, but has a team of seven professionals located in six different countries in Africa. However because EHAIA has seriously taken mainstreaming theological curriculum on HIV and AIDS in theological institutions and TEE programs, I will continue to relate closely to the community of theological educators in Africa. Eventually, you will be notified of my replacement.

I am gratefully to God for this opportunity to continue serving the ecumenical movement and the churches in a variety of ways. Thank you for your cooperation and support.

Nyambura Njoroge

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DOING MINISTRY FOR A CHANGE?

THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION FOR THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY[1]

Ross Kinsler

May I, first and foremost, express, for myself and for many others in the worldwide ecumenical family of theological educators and church leaders, our deep gratitude and profound congratulations for the Thirtieth Anniversary Celebration of the Theological Education by Extension College and all that it represents in terms of creative vision, dedicated service, and hard work over the years.

Thirty-one years ago the Theology Department of the South African Council of Churches and the Association of Southern African Theological Institutions organized an international consultation here in Johannesburg to consider the proposal to launch the Theological Education by Extension College. Desmond Tutu, then Assistant Director of the Theological Education Fund, a dependency of the World Council of Churches, played a key role, and he invited me to come from Guatemala in Central America to share our experience with and vision for TEE, which was beginning to spread like wildfire in many places around the world. The next year TEEC was launched under the most capable leadership of Louis Peters. Then Desmond moved to Johannesburg, and I was called to Geneva to replace him in what was renamed as the Programme on Theological Education of the WCC.

From that vantage point I was able to follow the TEE movement as it spread and adapted to very diverse contexts and resources, especially in Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa, Asia, and the Pacific, but also in Europe and North America. During the 30 years that followed, the TEEC has remained as one of the most important expressions of the TEE movement, with connections to programs in other parts of the world, contributing to and learning from their efforts.

I have been asked to share today some reflections on the global challenges we face today as theological educators, new possibilities and models of theological education that are emerging, and critical issues for personal, ecclesial, and social transformation through TEEC and sister programs around the world.

GLOBAL CHALLENGES TO THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

1. From the struggle with Apartheid in South Africa to a worldwide call for justice

Thirty-one years ago, when I first visited South Africa, the primary challenge you all faced was Apartheid. The consultation that gave birth to the TEEC was itself, I believe, illegal, because it was inter-racial. Radical change has taken place since then, with much to be grateful for and no doubt with deep, enduring problems.

I would like to focus briefly upon today's global challenge of racial-economic-gender-ecological injustice from the perspective of a recent experience within one of our church families, the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC). That body, which embraces 218 Reformed, Presbyterian,

[1] This paper was published in *The TEE Journal Volume 6* (2006) and is reproduced here with permission.

Congregational, and United denominations with 75 million members in 107 countries, chose for its 2004 General Council meeting in Accra, Ghana the text John 10:10: "...that all may have life in fullness." Something powerful happened at that meeting, which led the participants to call upon their own and other churches and ecumenical bodies to covenant for justice in the economy and the Earth. The Letter from Accra begins with these paragraphs.

> *Our most moving and memorable moments came from our visit to Elmina and Cape Coast, two "castles" on the Coast of Ghana that held those who had been captured into slavery, as they suffered in dungeons waiting for slave ships that would take them to unknown lands and destinies. Over brutal centuries, 15 million African slaves were transported to the Americas, and millions more were captured and died. On this trade in humans as commodities, wealth in Europe was built. Through their labor, sweat, suffering, intelligence and creativity, the wealth of the Americas was developed..*
>
> *At the Elmina Castle, the Dutch merchants, soldiers, and governor lived on the upper level, while the slaves were held in captivity one level below. We entered a room used as a church, with words from Psalm 132 on a sign still hanging above the door ("For the Lord has chosen Zion . . ."). And we imagined Reformed Christians worshipping their God while directly below them, right under their feet, those being sold into slavery languished in the chains and horror of those dungeons. For more than two centuries in that place this went on.*
>
> *In angry bewilderment we thought, "How could their faith be so divided from life? How could they separate their spiritual experience from the torturous physical suffering directly beneath their feet? How could their faith be so blind?" Some of us are descended from those slave traders and slave owners, and others of us are descendants of those who were enslaved. We shared responses of tears, silence, anger, and lamentation. Those who are Reformed Christians have always declared God's sovereignty over all life and all the Earth. So how could these forbears of Reformed faith deny so blatantly what they believed so clearly? Yet, as we listened to the voices today from our global fellowship, we discovered the mortal danger of repeating the same sin of those whose blindness we decried. For today's world is divided between those who worship in comfortable contentment and those enslaved by the world's economic injustice and ecological destruction who still suffer and die.*

The Letter from Accra goes on to affirm, "the world today lives under the shadow of an oppressive empire," i.e., "the gathered power of pervasive economic and political forces throughout the globe that reinforce the division between the rich and the poor." "This is not just another 'issue' to be 'addressed.' Rather, it goes to the heart of our confession of faith. . . . How can we say that we believe that Jesus Christ is the Lord over all life and not stand against all that denies the promise of fullness of life to the world?" (For other WARC documents, especially "Covenanting for Justice in the Economy and the Earth," see *www.warc.ch*)

Those who participated in the Accra meetings and many others who have joined them to covenant for justice in the global economy and in the Earth believe that this calling is as urgent as was the call of the Confessing Church in Germany in the 1930s and 40s against National Socialism (Nazis) and the call to denounce the ideology of Apartheid in South Africa as heresy and its practice as sin in the 1970s and 80s. I believe that we must invite every theological education program, beginning with the wealthy countries but also right here with the TEEC, to clarify its vision and prioritize its curriculum in these same terms. We hear that 30,000 people die every day of hunger, perhaps twice that number die daily if we add curable diseases, contaminated water, and other effects of extreme poverty, especially in Africa. (We have to remind our friends in the U.S. that the daily global toll of death by hunger is ten times the loss of life in the U.S. on that one fateful day, September 11th, 2001.)

2. From ecological destruction to "the Great Work" for this generation

Ecologist Wendell Berry explains in his book, *The Art of the Commonplace*, that Christianity has been for over 500 years largely complicit with or indifferent to "the rape and plunder of the world."

Another ecologist, Thomas Berry, expresses the extraordinary challenge faced by our generation in passionate terms in his book, *Our Way into the Future*.

> *We find ourselves ethically destitute just when, for the first time, we are faced with ultimacy, the irreversible closing down of the Earth's functioning in its major life systems. . . . with biocide, the extinction of the vulnerable life systems of the Earth, and geocide, the devastation of the Earth itself.* (104)
>
> *The labor and care expended over some billions of years and untold billions of experiments to bring forth such a gorgeous Earth is all being negated within less than a century for what we consider "progress" toward a better life in a better world.* (164)
>
> *The Great Work now . . . is to carry out the transition from a period of human devastation of the Earth to a period when humans would be present to the planet in a mutually beneficial manner.* (3)

To bring this eloquent, lofty challenge down to earth and to people like us, we turn to Kenyan Wangari Maathai, Nobel Peace Prize laureate for 2004. Her trajectory began in 1977 with a tree-planting campaign in response to devastating deforestation and widespread unemployment. Her work later became known around the world as the Green Belt Movement. Then she won a seat in Kenya's Parliament with an unprecedented 98% of the vote and also became Assistant Minister for the Environment. On receiving the Nobel Peace Prize she commented, "Protecting the global environment is directly related to securing peace." She articulates for all of us the integral relationship between peace, justice, and creation in a brief article for the September 2005 *National Geographic* magazine entitled "My Seven" concerns for Africa: Environment, Empowerment, Education, Good Government, Sustainable Development, Employment, and The Future--"to create a world that honors and rewards women."

Surely theological education must carry major responsibility for taking up this challenge among and beyond the churches, which will require a paradigm shift for many, from an almost exclusively personalized and individualized concept of salvation to a collective, ecological understanding of the Reign of God--before it is too late. An important resource comes to us from the indigenous peoples of Africa, Latin America, and elsewhere, whose cultural and spiritual heritage values the integrity and integration of all life--person, family, community, the land, and nature as a whole. Our churches and theological institutions will want to work, locally and regionally, with projects such as the Green Belt Movement, of which there are many, as we all struggle for peace, justice, and the integrity of creation.

3. From individualized and privatized healing to integral and systemic wholeness

No one can ignore the historic role of the Christian movement in the development of scientific medical resources with amazing achievements among those who have access to these resources. At the same time all of us must be astounded at the failure to provide basic, appropriate healthcare among the vast majority right here in Africa and other Three-Fourths World countries and even among significant poor populations in the so-called First World. Not too long ago it was said that a mere one billion dollars would have been sufficient to permanently eliminate the scourge of malaria, but it did not happen. Studies indicate that the great pharmaceutical companies have developed thousands of medicines in recent years, but those related to tropical diseases are just a handful. Retroviral drugs are still inaccessible for most AIDS patients in many countries.

British Chancellor of the Exchequer, Gordon Brown, notes that thousands of African children die unnecessarily every day, that 25% of those deaths could be prevented by providing a $4 mosquito net for each child, that half of all malaria deaths could be prevented by providing diagnosis and drugs costing $0.12 per person. The disease underlying all the others is, of course, poverty. So Brown calls on the rich countries to complete debt relief for the poorest countries, to increase development aid to achieve the Millennium Development Goals for health and education, and to

reduce global poverty by half by the year 2015. But he notes that these goals adopted by the rich countries in 1999 have already fallen behind miserably.

> *On present progress in Sub Saharan Africa, primary education for all will, at best, be delivered not in 2015 but 2130, 115 years too late; poverty will be halved by 2150, 135 years too late; and avoidable infant deaths will be eliminated by 2165, 150 years too late. This is too long to wait for justice, too long to wait when infants are dying in Africa while the rest of the world has the medicines to heal them. ("What is Morally Unjust Cannot be Economically Correct,"* envio*, March 2005, 50)*

> *What began as the greatest bond between rich and poor of our time is at risk of ending as the greatest betrayal of the poor by the rich of all time. As a global community we are at risk of being remembered not for what we promised to do but for what we failed to deliver, yet another set of broken hopes that break the trust of the world's people in the world's governments. (50)*

Top-down solutions, locally and globally, are most likely to fail. Even within many poor countries unjust distribution of economic and healthcare resources prevails. So we must turn, sooner or later, to grassroots, community-based movements, which is where our churches can offer a mission and a message of integral wholeness, *shalom*, real human development. And we must ask our theological formation programs what resources and models and curricula they can offer in response to these vital and urgent challenges of our time.

GOOD NEWS FOR THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

We turn now from critical analysis of today's world to the biblical roots of our faith in order to find Good News for our time and for our people, i.e., for all God's people. We know that the two great threats to life in the 21st Century are economic injustice and ecological destruction, both of which are driven by the corporate-led, imperial, global economy, both of which bring immeasurable threats to the life of this and future generations. When we read the Bible with a concern for economics, we discover a vital thread for life running through the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures. It has been called Sabbath Economics or Jubilee Spirituality. Following is a brief introduction to this economic-spiritual paradigm, which offers Good News for the 21st Century and which may provide a new vision for theological education in our time.

1. Jubilee and justice

Let's begin by re-reading some biblical texts that have often been spiritualized so that their economic message is lost.

> First, we observe that Jesus himself, after fasting for 40 days, was tempted (tested) to make stones into bread, and he responded to the devil, "One does not live by bread alone but by every word that comes from the mouth of God." (Mt. 4:4) It almost seems that he places "spiritual" matters or "spiritual" bread above "physical" bread and "physical" hunger. Then we find that Jesus is quoting Dt. 8:3, which refers back to the manna story (Ex. 16), which is the first lesson for the former slaves about how to live in freedom. They must take only what is needed, no more, no less, and this is what the **Sabbath Day**, which is first introduced in this very passage, is meant to teach God's people. This is in direct rejection of "free enterprise," which encourages and enables some to take more than they need and forces many into poverty and even slavery. In Mt. 4:4 Jesus makes this connection in order to show us, not that bread is unimportant, but that we are to ensure that all have enough bread and none of us has more than enough.

> Next, we turn to the story of Jesus' anointing in preparation for his crucifixion and burial. The disciples complain that the ointment should have been sold and the money given to the poor, but Jesus challenges them with these enigmatic words, "You always have the poor with you." (Mt. 26:11) It seems as if Jesus discounts or minimizes their concern for the poor. But then we note that he is quoting Dt. 15:11, which says that "there will never cease to be some in need on

the earth," but it also says in v. 4 that "There will be no one in need among you" if you obey the **Sabbath Year** mandates to cancel debts and free slaves every seventh year. So in Mt. 26:11 Jesus affirms that beyond charity there is a more fundamental responsibility to break the chains of poverty by reversing the economic mechanisms that produce wealth for a few and increase poverty for many, most notably the debt/slavery system.

Lk. 4:16-21 is a key passage, located at the outset of Jesus' ministry. Here Jesus identifies himself and his mission with Is. 61:1-2a: Good News to the poor, release to the captives, sight to the blind, and liberation of the oppressed, ending with the proclamation of the year of the Lord's favor, which seems to be a reference to the **Jubilee Year** (Lv. 25), which called for not only the cancellation of debts and liberation of slaves but the return of mortgaged lands, i.e., the redistribution or restitution of lands and homes to all the families of Israel in the 50th Year, a "super Sabbath Year." It is remarkable that Luke's narration of Jesus' ministry begins not with a reference to the Kingdom of God, as do Matthew and Mark, but with this Nazareth synagogue story and its reference to "the year of the Lord's favor." Luke's Gospel does refer frequently to the Kingdom of God, but at this critical point in his narrative he chooses to identify that Kingdom with the Sabbath-Jubilee call to radical economic justice.

From this point we cannot but go on to the Book of Acts, which was also authored by Luke, for we find that the key passage in Acts, parallel to the Nazareth sermon in Luke, is the story of the coming of the Holy Spirit, which includes sharing in worship and table fellowship "day by day" and the distribution of the believers' possessions "as any had need" so that "there was not a needy person among them." (Ac. 2:43-47, 4:32-35) Empowered by the Spirit, they practiced the **Sabbath Day** mandate to share equitably, as in the manna story, "day by day," the **Sabbath Year** mandate to overcome the mechanisms of poverty by canceling debts and freeing slaves (no doubt the believers who were debt slaves were being released), and the **Jubilee** mandate to redistribute their possessions so all could have life in fullness. This is an essential clue to the mission of the early church throughout the Book of Acts, for Jesus' followers down through history, and for us today in our unprecedentedly unjust and unequal world.

2. Jubilee and creation

If we were to trace the Torah passages (Covenant Code, Deuteronomic Code, Holiness Code) dealing with the Sabbath Day, the Sabbath Year, and the Jubilee Year, we would find that many of these passages include the mandate to give rest to the land and those who work the land, humans and laboring beasts, and even to provide for the landless poor, aliens, and wild animals in the fallow years.

For six years you shall sow your land and gather in its yield; but the seventh year you shall let it rest and lie fallow, so that the poor of your people may eat. You shall do the same with your vineyard, and with your olive orchard. Six days you shall do your work, but on the seventh day you shall rest, so that your ox and your donkey may have relief, and your homeborn slave and the resident alien may be refreshed. Be attentive to all that I have said to you. Do not invoke the names of other gods, do not let them be heard on your lips. Ex. 23:10-13

Remember the Sabbath Day, and keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work. But the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God; you shall not do any work--you, your son or your daughter, your male or female slave, your livestock, or the alien resident in your towns. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but rested the seventh day; therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath Day and consecrated it. Ex. 20:5-11

On the seventh day God finished the work that God had done, and God rested on the seventh day from all the work that God had done. So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all the work that God had done in creation. Gn. 2:2-3

God rested the seventh day of creation, blessed it, and hallowed it. And the Sabbath Day became a permanent memorial and covenant for God's people, who are to regard that day and all of creation as a holy responsibility. We are to serve and worship God through the preservation of planet Earth for the life of all its inhabitants.

3. Jubilee and *shalom*

In response to the devastating state of the poor in our world, we again turn to the Jubilee message of Jesus. What we find is not only healing for individuals who are sick, paralyzed, blind, possessed of demons, even dead, but the formation of a healing, caring, sharing community. This dimension of Jubilee has not often been taught, even less practiced.

> Consider first the man with paralysis in Mk. 2:1-12. He was disabled not only by the paralysis but also by the social marginalization that came with his physical limitations, by the prejudices of the Purity Code of the Pharisees that identified his disability as the result of sin, by the poverty and debts that came from his inability to work and from spending on ineffectual cures, and above all that came from the Temple monopoly on purification rites. So when Jesus told him (three times), "Your sins are forgiven," he revealed to this man and to all who were there that the coming of God's Reign meant that he and they could be released from the sins of popular prejudice, the Purity Code, family debts, and Temple rites. The term "release" (*afiemi*) which is used here appears in other Sabbath-Jubilee texts such as Lk. 4:18-19 (twice) to refer to the release from prison and oppression as well as illness and sin.
>
> The story of the rich man, who apparently was very religious and who ran to Jesus in order to be sure of his eternal life, ends on a tragic note, for he rejects Jesus' call to sell his possessions, give the money to the poor, and follow him. (Mk, 10:17-22) But then Jesus tells his disciples two times, "How hard it will be for those who have wealth to enter God's Reign." Then he adds the analogy of the camel and the eye of a needle, and the disciples, utterly astounded, respond, "Then who can be saved?" Jesus says, "For mortals it is impossible, but not for God; for God all things are possible." The story then takes a surprising turn. Peter, no doubt out of desperation, cries out, "Look, we have left (released=*afiemi*) everything and followed you." And Jesus responds, "Truly I tell you, there is no one who has left (released=*afiemi*) house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields, for my sake and for the sake of the Good News, who will not receive a hundredfold now in this age . . . and in the age to come eternal life." For most of us this is a mystery, simply because we have never really understood or practiced Jubilee, for if we "release" into the community our possessions, as Jesus asked of the rich man, not just abandon them, we will in effect have access to a hundred times more of family and possessions--as the disciples were just beginning to experience and as they understood more fully at Pentecost. (Mk. 10:23-31)
>
> The problem of the rich man is explained in a series of sayings in Mt. 6:19-34, which deal with economic-spiritual issues in Jubilee terms. Laying up treasure in heaven rather than on earth means to release them for the work of God's Reign, not "in heaven" but precisely here on earth. The healthy eye sees and desires God's Reign rather than selfish gain. The rich man thought he could have eternal life and keep his possessions (his god), but Jesus says, "You cannot serve God and wealth." Perhaps most difficult to imagine is the final, longer saying about living like the birds of the air or the lilies of the field with no concern for the morrow. The only way that could happen amidst the awful poverty of Jesus' day--or in our time--is to become part of a community in which all care for all mutually, as Sabbath economics teaches us, i.e., to seek first God's Reign and God's Justice.

NEW POSSIBILITIES FOR THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

It is my understanding that South African theologians, faced with the perversion and atrocities of Apartheid in the 1970s and 80s, came to the conclusion that their traditional theological tools and frameworks were totally inadequate and set out on a new hermeneutical path which focused on their oppressive context, rediscovered the biblical roots of liberation, and led to work for holistic

freedom. The reality of economic injustice and ecological destruction in 21st Century Africa may likewise call theologians and theological educators to set out on new hermeneutical paths. The following paragraphs offer some possibilities for new, more diverse models of theological education, and these in turn open up possibilities for more effective ways to respond to the Sabbath-Jubilee call to economic justice, the care of creation, and *shalom*.

1. From Theological Education by Extension to Diversified Theological Education

The Theological Education by Extension movement began in the 1960s with the primary purpose of giving access to a much wider circle of clergy, laity, and ministerial candidates for theological education and ministry. More precisely, it affirmed that theological education should give priority to local leaders who demonstrate their calling and dedication through their service and should not require them to be uprooted from their diverse cultural contexts, extended families, economic base, and ecclesial communities and responsibilities. More fundamentally, it was founded upon the belief that ministry is commended to the people of God through baptism and discipleship, not to a professional or clerical class through schooling, credentials, and ordination. This movement soon demonstrated that large numbers of people, especially the natural leaders, women as well as men, who had been largely excluded from formal theological studies, can and will respond to the TEE challenge and pursue serious theological studies, largely at their own expense and under often difficult circumstances. That story is told through the book, *Ministry by the People: Theological Education by Extension*, which was published in 1983 by the WCC and Orbis Books.

In July 2004 a small group of theological educators, the Steering Committee of TEENET, met at the Vancouver School of Theology and approved the proposal to gather a new collection of analytical reports of what we have been calling Diversified Theological Education. We believe that there has been a significant shift away from the polarization between TEE and residential programs and concepts of theological education toward an increasingly diverse use of methods, models, and concepts of theological education. You have before you the outstanding example of the TEE College. The following examples come primarily from Latin America and North America.

> The Latin American Biblical University (UBL), based in San Jose, Costa Rica, started out as a residential Bible school in 1923, offering a three-year program of Bible, Theology, and Ministry courses. Later correspondence courses were added in order to reach a wider range of church leaders throughout the region, laity and clergy of many traditions. Then, as the institution moved up the educational ladder and became a seminary, a more rigorous program called Diversified Distance Program was added at the university academic level, but it still functioned basically by correspondence with little or no personal contact. In time it became evident that both the residential program and the distance program had fundamental flaws--the residential students were becoming divorced from their churches and cultures and basic economic realities by long (up to 6 years) periods on campus, which was far too expensive, and the distance students needed at least brief opportunities to escape from the demands of family, work, and church in order to concentrate on their theological studies, to gain access to mentors and greater library resources, and to enter into dialogue with a wide diversity of students from throughout the region. In 1988 the two models, residence and distance education, were combined. All students are now expected to take a major part of their studies in their own countries; all are required to spend one or more two-month terms at the Costa Rica campus. Both residence and distance dimensions were strengthened so that the institution was able to gain government recognition as a university and offer an M.Th. degree in addition to its B.Th. and Lic.Th. The UBL now has ties to some 15 theological centers in 10 countries and offers, in addition to self-study modules, intensive courses led by visiting professors from Costa Rica or qualified local adjunct professors, TEE networks, and links with other institutions and resources. Student enrollment at the university levels has risen to about 2000. Few are able to advance at the old rhythm, but their studies are far more contextual and meaningful. The UBL catalog now lists some 14 methods of study available to students in its residential and/or distance options. Personal options include: self-study modules, reading courses designed by faculty or proposed by students, research courses designed by students, credit by examination,

individual tutorial courses, self-evaluation of experience (a detailed guide is provided), credits transferred from other institutions, action/reflection projects, professional practice in relation to an ecclesial or social group. Group study options include: regular courses on campus or at one of the UBL centers, group tutorial courses, intensive courses, interdisciplinary courses, thesis (required for most degrees).

This story is far from complete. When the faculty of the UBL moved toward university status and advanced degrees, it also decided to move more decisively into basic theological education among local church and community leaders whose schooling is more limited. The Pastoral Bible Institute (IBP) was created, offering accessible study materials and some training for local administrators and educators--with or without an existing institutional base. Before long this program, which is led by one fulltime staff person, was serving another 2000 students throughout the region. In Guatemala a sister institution, the Evangelical Center for Pastoral Studies in Central America (CEDEPCA), offers the UBL and IBP courses and also responds to critical pastoral needs throughout Central America. One department reaches about 500 women each year with basic biblical-pastoral courses that enhance their self-esteem and deal with their struggles in the churches and in society. Other centers in Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, Chile, Costa Rica, Honduras, Cuba, Haiti, and Dominican Republic offer a variety of programs and resources in conjunction with the UBL and the IBP.

This whole development of diversified theological education in Latin America (and elsewhere) takes on real meaning when we consider its potential, at all levels, for theological-biblical-pastoral formation with a Sabbath-Jubilee perspective. In recent years these countries have emerged from a period of deadly military oppression only to find themselves overwhelmed by the global and regional domination of corporate, "free trade" capitalism, otherwise known as re-colonization, the new imperialism. The heritage of Catholic and Protestant missions has left their churches somewhat ill-equipped for critical social analysis, relevant biblical understanding, and effective pastoral guidance--with the notable exception of base communities, liberation theology, and some of the ecumenical and Pentecostal movements in the region. The contribution of programs such as those mentioned above must be measured in terms of their ability to mobilize hearts and minds and hands, throughout the ecclesial movements, for socio-economic, ecological, gender, and racial justice.

2. From the periphery to the main stream

Fuller Theological Seminary is "the largest and most diverse theological seminary in North America" with well over 4000 students representing over 100 denominations and 67 countries. "Fuller produces more Ph.D.s than any other seminary in the world," and its Doctor of Ministry program, with 600 students in the U.S., Canada, Korea, and Australia, "is the largest program of its kind in the world." The home campus for all of Fuller's programs is in Pasadena, California, but diverse programming and links with other institutions enable many of its students to carry out their studies, usually on a part-time basis, from other locations. The Master of.Divinity program, which provides the basic training for ministry in most North American denominations, enrolls some 900 students each year at nearly 20 sites in 4 regions throughout the Western states. The fastest growth at Fuller is now in the use of information technology for "individualized distance learning" and the use of electronic networks for group participation. Up to half of the required courses for degrees at the School of Intercultural Studies may be taken by Distance Learning through Fuller Online.

The critical question is mission intention and outcome. According to the promotional flyer, *Fuller at a Glimpse*, which we have quoted above, "The mission of Fuller Theological Seminary is to equip men and women for the manifold ministries of Christ and his Church in all of its activities, including instruction, nurture, research and publication, and worship and service," based on a traditional, evangelical understanding of God's mission. One cannot help but wonder how this great institution deals with the two primary threats to life in the 21st Century--economic injustice and ecological destruction. What might be its contribution to the transformation of U.S. churches, culture, and socio-economic-military empire if it were to shift its primary mission focus toward Sabbath Economics/Jubilee Spirituality in all its programs? What would the curricula for the School of Theology, the School of Psychology, and the School of Intercultural Studies look like? What kinds

of research and writing, faculty, libraries, and other resources would be required? How might Fuller's diverse educational models and methods be directed toward the primary challenges of the Gospel in today's world? One of the newer distance programs at Fuller, the Master of Arts in Global Leadership, evokes the possibility that this growing, wide flung network--through electronic media, independent study, and periodic "cohort" gatherings--might take on the challenges expressed repeatedly in this paper.

There is no question that TEE and Diversified Theological Education offer enormous possibilities for widespread programs of theological education, now that alternatives to the schooling model have attained recognition and accreditation within the mainstream. The SEAN materials developed in South America have been adapted, translated, and adopted in several regions of the world, including the International Faculty of Theological Studies (FIET), which in recent years has enrolled some 20,000 students throughout Latin America. The Latin American Doctoral Program (PRODOLA), launched just three years ago, offers doctoral studies in theology for leading theological educators and church leaders by means of periodic, intensive seminars--with extensive reading, projects, and writing before and after each seminar--led by outstanding theologians in the region. In 2003 the Senate of Serampore College, which provides accreditation for all recognized theological institutions in India, inaugurated the Senate Center for Extension and Pastoral Theological Research, with a mandate "to promote diversified theological education and practice of ministry" among and beyond its 50 member seminaries and theological colleges. The TEE College, with close to 3000 students has become the leading theological education program for Southern Africa and serves as inspiration and resource for many programs elsewhere. The persistent question is, however, Will these programs redirect their efforts toward the urgent need for economic justice and ecological integrity?

3. Radical alternatives

Recent political developments might be interpreted as a massive failure of the U.S. churches--and their theological institutions--to resist and reverse the march into war in the Middle East, the imposition of "free market" ideology and schemes on the entire world, the growth and intensity and devastating results of poverty in Africa and elsewhere, and the loss of welfare, healthcare, and other possibilities for the poor and middle class in the U.S. itself. So we need to explore alternative possibilities for theological education in North America, where so much investment has been made in theological education, and elsewhere, where resources are so much more limited.

> "The Center for Christian Studies is a theological school of the United and Anglican Churches of Canada which prepares and supports women and men in educational, pastoral and social justice ministry in the church and in the world." Whether they go into volunteer or professional ministries, ordained or unordained, their formation takes place in the midst of social and ecclesial service that combines action and reflection in an integral and on-going fashion. Students maintain their roots in local communities, gather from around the country for intensive one to two week intensive courses at different locations, undertake field assignments and field seminars in congregational and social ministries, take additional courses at local institutions, and share at least one two-week immersion experience in a foreign setting--over a five year period. The curriculum includes basic theological courses, but the focus throughout is diaconal service and justice. "The life and work of the Center for Christian Studies, as a learning community of faith, proceeds from an understanding that God is acting in our lives and that we are called to be co-workers with the Divine, engaged in the struggle for justice and peace. . . . The Spirit inspires us to seek wholeness for ourselves and to share that search in company with others for healing of the world, that all may experience abundance of life." The slogan that captures the spirit and intention of this program is: "Living a Theology of Justice."
>
> An even more radical expression of alternative theological education is called Word and World. It has emerged in the last five years as a movement among theologically oriented social activists to bring together the seminary, the sanctuary, and the street in ways that are "radically biblical and biblically radical." Many of those who have given birth to this movement have

experienced or even continue to teach in traditional seminaries, but they acknowledge the inadequacy of these institutions to generate commitment to and skills for justice and peace work. The new model offers one or two one-week "schools" each year, modeled on Dietrich Bonhoeffer's underground seminary (Finkenwald), anti-war Bible-study weekends with William Stringfellow and Daniel Berrigan, the Freedom Schools of the civil rights movement, base communities animated by liberation theology, and women-church experiments and other movements for gender justice and inclusion. Each school brings together local as well as national practitioners in the struggles of our time. The first one-week school was held in Greensboro, North Carolina and built on the witness of the 1960 martyrs of the civil rights movement and the on-going struggle for racial integrity there. The second school was held in Tucson, Arizona and focused on the struggles of indigenous peoples, the U.S.-Mexico border, sanctuary for undocumented immigrants, and the global economy. The third school was held in Philadelphia and dealt with what Martin Luther King, Jr. called "the giant triplets of militarism, racism, and materialism." And the fourth school was held in Rochester, New York and focused on gender and sexuality: the struggle for justice and inclusion. Each school has brought together many social and spiritual threads of teaching and experience with enormous impact on the participants. It is transformational theological education such as may never happen in traditional seminaries.

Conclusion

This has been a very limited survey of Diversified Theological Education in and for the 21st Century. It simply shows that the emerging possibilities are numerous. So each program of theological education is encouraged to gather available resources and build the learning system that offers greatest possibilities for reaching its goals and objectives. In a country like South Africa many highly motivated church leaders are being reached through correspondence courses, but their formation might be greatly enhanced through the addition of self-directed or facilitator accompanied nuclei meeting regularly in remote areas. The key to TEE's success is weekly or bi-monthly or even monthly gatherings to debate and deepen and apply what has already been studied individually, and this process can be enhanced through an annual or semi-annual gathering at the regional or national level to share more widely critical issues and challenges of ministry and mission. Partner ecclesial and educational institutions can contribute enormously through intensive one week to one month courses--at one or more locations--dedicated to social and ecological or even historical and scientific matters. If computers and the Internet are available, they can provide access to enormous resources and to interpersonal and group communication. Each of the components of the learning system should add to the essential processes of action/reflection, to the hermeneutical circle of social analysis/biblical foundation/concrete action, to personal/ecclesial/social transformation, to growth in knowledge/abilities/attitudes.

Our world is being run by a complex convergence of corporate economic globalization, U.S. imperialism bent on policing and controlling the countries and resources of the world, and increasing concentration of wealth among the Group of Seven/Eight--with concomitant intensification of poverty in the South, with terrible physical and spiritual consequences for both poor and rich, with the emergence of what has been called global Apartheid. The good news is that there is an increasing clamor for alternatives, an insistence that "Another World is Possible!" While the world we know is ruled from the top-down, by the rich and powerful, this other world is emerging from the bottom, among the poor and weak. The challenge we face at the present crossroads is to make our option, as theological educators and students, for that other world. Historically, theological institutions have tried to compete in resources and prestige with other institutions of higher learning, which is the model that 19th Century missionaries took with them to the far corners of the world. It may now be time to reconsider that model, however successful it may have been, and prioritize an emerging model of Diversified Theological Education that works--at all levels--with the marginalized peoples of all our countries and to commit ourselves to Sabbath-Jubilee spirituality in the struggle for the other world that God makes possible. Toward that end we celebrate here today thirty years of TEE College on the frontiers of "Doing Ministry for Change."

DE-SUBURBANISING THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION IN NAIROBI

Colin Smith

Introduction

Nairobi known as the "City in the Sun" is gateway to East Africa, home to the United Nations, and regional hub for aid, trade and commerce. Nairobi is home to over two million people, more than half living in slums or informal settlements, often in conditions of abject squalor and poverty.[2] How does this diverse context inform a theological college committed to mission? Can such a school develop a program addressing the unique missiological questions facing churches in these communities? This paper is the story of one college currently seeking to meet this challenge.

The College, the Church and the City

Carlile College is an Anglican mission training institution, situated on the East side of Nairobi adjacent to the industrial area of the city. Established by Church Army United Kingdom in the 1950s, when Nairobi was still an apartheid city[3], it was intentionally located in an area of high urban deprivation in one of the few areas of the city designated for African settlement. However, as the city developed, post independence, with rampant urban migration, the locus of high density housing and urban poverty shifted, resulting in the rapid growth of slums. The college was no longer at the heart of the city's greatest needs.

Today 60% of the population of Nairobi, about two million people, occupies just 5% of the residential land.[4] Most of these 2 million live in communities of makeshift housing -- no infrastructure, roads, water, power or sanitation. They rent mud, wattle and iron sheet housing, rooms ten foot by ten foot with quasi-legal rights of occupation. The largest is Kibera, a community of over 500,000[5] located on 550 acres of land running alongside the Nairobi to Kisumu railway line. What was once a settlement for Nubian (Sudanese) soldiers after the first World War has, in its ninety year history become the most densely populated settlement in sub – Saharan Africa.[6]
Church life within Kibera and other slums remains vibrant, mainly through the presence of African Pentecostal[7] and African Instituted Churches. "Mainline"[8] churches are less visibly present, with the exception of the Roman Catholic Church, particularly through the work of its missionary orders.

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[2] Although the terms slum and informal settlement are often used interchangeably, as will be the case in this paper, informal settlement is a more technical term for temporary housing constructed on land in which residents have only quasi legal rights of occupation. For aa more detailed definition see USAID 1993 *Nairobi's informal Settlements Inventory. Working paper of the office of housing and Urban programmes.*

[3] The term to describe Nairobi is used by Alex Zanotelli, a Catholic priest formally working in Korogocho slum. Zanotelli, Alex in Pierli, Francesco and Abeledo, Yago Eds. 2002 *The Slums: The Challenge of Evangelization* Nairobi: Pauline Publications: 13

[4] United Nations Human Settlement Programme 2003. *The Challenge of Slums: Global Report on Human Settlements 2003.* London: Earthscan: P.219

[5] This figure is taken from a Nairobi City Council Ministry of Local Government report 2002 *Kibera urban and Sanitation Project: Diagnosis and Situation Analysis Final Report* P.10 Other findings place the population levels at higher, between 600 – 700, 000 people. See Bodewes, Christine 2005 *Parish Transformation in Urban Slums: Voices of Kibera.* Nairobi*:* Pauline Press P 31

[6] For a history of Nubian residence in Kibera see Parsons, Timothy 1997 "Kibera is our blood": The Sudanese Military Legacy in nairobi's Kibera location 1902 – 1968 International Journal of African Historical Studies, Vol. 30 No 1, (1997)

[7] The term African Pentecostal Churches is a much debated one which is discussed in some detail in Anderson, Allan 2000. Zion and Pentecost*: The Spirituality and Experience of Pentecostal and Zionist/Apostolic Churches in South Africa.* Pretoria: University of South Africa Press: 8 ff. I will use it here to describe churches which identify themselves as Pentecostal and which are initiated and governed by Africans.

[8] The term "mainline" is also employed by Anderson. It provides a category for describing older protestant churches and the Roman Catholic Church.

Yet the numerous congregations and gatherings appear to have little impact on the material conditions of the slums.
This poses significant questions for those seeking to equip the church to minister in the city. Can theological training institutions help re-establish and redirect the ministry of the Church by responding to the needs of urban poor communities? Is there a process of theological education which intentionally engages with communities that may be marginal not only to the city, but also to the church?

In response to this challenge, in 2001, Carlile College began developing a course in urban mission designed to address the training needs of pastors living and working in Nairobi's slums. Launched in September 2002, the course was taught entirely on the college's main campus. Although an Anglican college, the initial intake of students included only one Anglican. That reality reflected the situation on the ground where the presence of the Anglican Church, along with other mainline churches, is far more evident in the city's middle class estates than in its informal Settlements.
Early experience teaching the program in the college raised fundamental questions about our philosophy and methodology. Can we offer a genuinely contextual model of theological education when all the teaching and learning takes place in the detached atmosphere of a theological college? The students' reaction to the training confirmed our doubts about the process. Yes, they agreed, the course was more suited to their context than the regular theology program the other students were engaged in, but no, it still did not engage nearly enough with the realities of their ministry. Another model was required, which would facilitate an interaction between theological education and ministry in a slum.

We felt we had no choice. In May 2003 we opened the Centre for Urban Mission, an iron sheet structure in the heart of Kibera. This was to become the home of an ongoing experiment in developing a contextual model of theological education. The rest of this paper explores the lessons still being learned in this process. It is a journey that seeks to respond to the One who walks in the city in the heat of the day, and addresses the church from its iron sheet skyline, ever pressing the eternal question, "Where are you?"
A Vision

We had observed that the "mainline" churches frequently establish themselves on the outer edges of the slums but struggle to engage with the realities within. The African Instituted Churches and African Pentecostal Churches have a significant presence within the slums,[9] but with a leadership which generally has had no formal theological training.[10] Very intentionally we determined to make the location of ministry the defining point of entry into our program rather than denominational connection. Our vision was, and remains, the transformation of the informal settlements through the ministry of the local church. In identifying that vision we sought to place the transformation of the community at the heart of our training process. We therefore set about to work with churches and pastors who were ready to pursue that goal. We therefore work both with the Anglican Church, as our primary partners, to develop leadership that is indigenous to the slums, but we also provide training to church leaders from a wide range of churches who share the common experience of living and working in this context. Our conviction is that the key agent of transformation should be the local church in all its various forms. Our mission therefore is to equip the churches of the informal settlements in transformational ministry through training local Pastors, Evangelists and Church leaders.

Nine key principles

Our mission statement committed the college to focus beyond the education of individual students to the transforming churches and communities in the city. It became essential for us to implement a training program which was outcome based. By this we mean that the inclusion and the content of

[9] A survey of churches in Gatwikira, identified found that out of over 60 churches of which only 4 were from "mainline" churches.
[10] A recent questionnaire in the same survey, conducted amongst 28 churches in the vicinity of the Centre for Urban Mission, found 17 pastors had had no theological education and training what so ever and a further 5 had not received training other than seminars and short courses of less than two weeks.

courses became contingent upon their capacity to promote transformation through the local church. Each course is therefore developed with a key question in mind: What is the desired outcome of this training, and how will that outcome contribute to the transformation of slum communities? The effectiveness of the course is to be measured by its impact on the communities where students live and work.

As we continue to develop the program we must find content and methods that direct us towards the process of transformation. Our initial search for a basic educational philosophy was greatly assisted by some of the work done by Eldin Villafane at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. The following principles have guided us in process of developing our present practice and the first five of these are drawn from Villafane's work.[11]

Contextualization

Contextualization, Villafane argues, is the *sine qua non* of all faithful and effective theological education.[12] But what does it mean to contextualize theological education? Are we suggesting that theological education can in some sense be "acontextual?" Surely not! Theological education is always at some level contextual, for the very reason that theology is always contextual.[13] The first question, therefore, in assessing contextualization in any program is not, "Is this contextual?" but, "What is the context underlying and shaping the educational content and process?"

Our primary concern in moving the urban mission course out of the College and into Kibera was to be intentional about the context we were seeking to engage. Our desire was not merely to deliver training in Kibera but to find ways in which this Good News of Jesus Christ could be expressed through the realities of this context. Kibera becomes the environment in which we develop training. It is our interrogator, posing the questions our theological education must address.

Our understanding and motivation towards contextualization is rooted in the incarnation. Pobee,[14] describes the tabernacling of the eternal and non-negotiable gospel of Christ within a specific cultural context. It is the process by which the gospel enters into the time and situation of a particular people.[15] In theological education it will also represent the way the educational process itself provides a model for the ministry it is seeking to promote. Incarnation models of ministry require incarnational models of training.

A costly self-emptying lies at the heart of the incarnation. Incarnational models of training likewise require a kenotic movement. To contextualize involves loss. For us that kenosis involved leaving behind reasonable facilities, permanent class rooms, electricity, and a central location which didn't involve a ten minute walk through the mud and sewage for staff and students alike.[16] However, a more profound kenosis is required if we are truly to contextualize the program. It requires much more than a change of venue. There is a fundamental need for a self emptying of the hegemony of often elitist models of institutional theological education. The theological educator is challenged to abandon some of the role security that comes with being the perceived source of essential knowledge. Instead a different dynamic emerges in which the strict demarcation between the teacher and the taught breaks down into one of more mutual learning and growth.[17] Borsa notes:

[11] The first five principles are taken from Villafane, Eldin et al 2002. *Transforming the City: Reframing Education for Urban Ministry*. Grand Rapids Michigan: Eerdmans: 5 - 7

[12] Villafane, Eldin P. 192

[13] Note Bevans' observation that "there is no such thing as theology, only there is only contextual theology" Bevans, Stephen 2002 *Models of Contextual Theology (revised)* New York: Orbis

[14] Pobee, John 1992. *Skenosis: Christian Faith in an African Context.* Gweru, Zimbabwe: Mambo Press: 39

[15] Jackson, Bruce 1993. *Urban Theological Education for Church Leadership.* Urban Mission December 1993

[16] Students living outside Nairobi who wish to come on the course are accommodated within the slum and join the ministry of the local church as part of the training process.

[17] Freire, Paulo 1972 *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. London: Penguin: 53

Teachers have to take leave of the cultural, theoretical and ideological borders that enclose him or her within the safety of "those places and spaces we inherit and occupy, which frame our lives in very specific and concrete ways."[18]

A truly contextualized model of theological education in Kibera will ultimately be the product of a methodology which is not understood as an act of depositing information in students.[19] Instead a new model emerges from a dynamic process of learning, an engagement between the gospel and the context of the slum. Relocating to Kibera gave expression to the reality that sources of knowledge in urban mission were not to be found exclusively or even largely within the confines of a theological college. Insertion of the centre within the community came with the knowledge that in this new context Carlile College must be both learner and educator. Future courses would need not simply to be taught here but developed from the faith, struggles and experience of churches and communities living beneath its iron sheet skyline.

Developing a model of theological education within an informal settlement represents a radical alternative to the suburbanization of theological education. Within Nairobi, as with many other cities, the most renowned theological institutions are inevitably situated within the city's affluent suburbs and its peri-urban hinterland. The physical context and social environment so often mirror the cultural horizons and aspirations of students and faculty. This suburban captivity of most "mainline" churches, which are also the sponsors of most theological education, means that theological colleges seldom engage with the realities of life in a slum. While much theological education in Africa rightly seeks to engage with the context of African tradition and the traditional values, cosmology, and belief systems of rural communities there remains a gap in the theological process if those at the socio-economic margins of rapidly expanding urban societies find their voices and experiences are unheard in the process of theological education

Constituency

From the outset the urban mission course was designed primarily for pastors and church leaders currently engaged in ministry within the informal settlements. The student body is made up of men and women from a variety of churches across the city. Students share a context of urban poverty as the locus of ministry. The college specifically seeks and administers funding for the program in such a way as to provide access to training for pastors whose context of ministry often excludes them from formal theological education. It is this constituency which has to be held in mind in the development of the program.

Unlike other courses offered through the college, students in the urban course all remain in ministry whist in the program. The course must therefore cater for the pressures pastors are under as they minister and study at the same time. The insistence on remaining in full time ministry is a key criterion for admission to the course. Whilst this places great demands on the students it does mean that theological education is not dislocated from the realities of ministry. Students have the opportunity to reflect on their practice of ministry, implement training and begin to evaluate outcomes within the course of the training. Students are encouraged both to apply their learning within their ministry and to bring their experience of ministry to the program.

Community

Theological colleges often resemble Erving Goffman's total institution.20 Community in such places generally means the community of the college. Here students can study in peace almost hermetically sealed from the local neighborhood, apart from the odd foray over the college walls for pastoral experience. Lonergan's dictum "There must be withdrawal from practicality for the sake of practicality" may be correct but how far should that withdrawal go?

[18] Borsa, quoted in Richardson, Jenny 2001. *Educators with Attitude: A discovery of the expertise of radical theological educators with the UK's urban poor.* MA dissertation, University of Liverpool: 20
[19] Freire, Paulo 1972 *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. London: Penguin: 45 - 54
[20] Goffman, Erving 1961 *Asylums: Essays on the Social Situation of Mental Patients and other Inmates.* Middlesex: Penguin Books

By locating the Centre for Urban Mission in Kibera places it directly in a relationship with the local community which can be negotiated but not ignored. Our distance from an informal primary school with over 250 children can be measured by the thickness of the old metal drums used to construct the wall. When conflict and clashes break out in the community, as happened in our first month, we share in the insecurities and uncertainties of the neighborhood.

Our presence in Kibera is something discussed and negotiated with local community leaders and has involved visits to numerous churches in the neighborhood. It is important that the centre develops a network of relationships within Kibera in such a way that it is to some degree "owned" by the local community. In doing this the centre needs to model community relationships in a way that provides a model of best practice for churches operating in similar contexts.

Although most of our students live and work in slums in the city they come from many different parts of Nairobi, each with its own character, identity and ethnic mix. Many students were initially uncertain about entering Kibera to study there. Early anxiety was overcome by involving the students in small scale research and gathering impressions of Kibera from the local community. The process began the building of relations with the community which continue to develop. The community of Gatwikira, the village within the settlement where the centre is set, is now becoming a key resource in the development of training. Students spend some of their time talking and engaging with the local community and later reflecting on that experience. Students approach the community as learners[21] and this relationship forms a model for their practice of ministry. We seek to develop servant learner-ship[22] whereby the servant learner goes into a context with the goal of understanding the culture, needs, agendas and issues of the community. This process, within the community, of developing skills in what may be termed urban exegesis, is an essential prerequisite to the formation of an urban hermeneutic.[23]

Curriculum

Cheryl Bridges – Jones notes that theological education has for the most part been captive to Enlightenment ideals.[24] Modernity posits the uniformity and universality of human nature as axiomatic.[25] People are deemed to share the same conditions and characteristics by virtue of their possession of reason. This leads to a "one size fits all" model of theological education. Many established theological institutions in Kenya, as elsewhere in the world, are yet to grapple with the specific challenge of urbanization. This is despite the region having the highest percentage rate of urban population growth in the developing world.[26] Even the newer theological institutions may not fare any better in engaging with the experience of the urban poor. Often they still closely resemble the overseas parent churches and institutions which initially developed their curricula.

Whilst contemporary feminists have begun to question whose interests the discourse of enlightenment and modernity actually serves,[27] similar questions must now be asked of theological education in relation to the interests of the vast urban underclass in many parts of the world. In developing an urban mission curriculum we need to be clear whom we are training, what are we training people for, and how the specifics of a given context shape the formation and development of the curriculum. It is critical to consider whose are the voices in the theological discourse from which the program will emerge. In the city we have to ask whether the urban poor form part of that conversation. Theological education is always in danger of inviting students to become observers of a theological discourse which took place at another time and on another continent. If there is

[21] Bakke, Raymond 1987. *The Urban Christian.* Eastbourne: Monarch Publications Ltd: 114
[22] Hertig, Paul *Transforming theological education through experiential learning in urban contexts* Mission Studies Vol X1X, No. 2-38, 2002
[23] See Tavanti, Marco 1996. *For God So Loves the City* MA dissertation, Catholic University of Chicago: 8
[24] Bridges – Jones, Cheryl 1997 *Bable to Pentecost: The Renewal of Theological Education* in Pobee, John 1997. *Towards Viable Theological Education.* Geneva: WCC Publications. P. 135
[25] Graham, Elaine 1996. *Transforming Practice: Pastoral Theology in an Age of Uncertainty*. London: Mowbray: 27
[26] Potter, Robert & Lloyd Evans, Sally 1998. *The City in the developing World*. Harlow: Longman: 18
[27] Graham, Elaine: 19

ambivalence among African Pentecostals towards theological education, this, in addition to economic exclusion, may be part of the reason.

In developing a curriculum in urban mission we need to hear the hopes and aspirations, joys, sufferings and needs of slum dwellers, who form the heart of our context. Hearing these voices requires a process of curriculum development which involves an active engagement with local churches and the local community. Developing a curriculum in context therefore leads us into a process of sitting with the community, with pastors and church leaders and hearing the stories and experiences which define reality in this community.

This journey into the heart of a community, into the experience of marginalized, disempowered urban communities requires time and commitment. It is a journey from which questions emerge that Enlightenment based traditional theological education and training may not be prepared to answer, but which cannot be ignored. Inevitably courses developed in this way will begin to engage with the concrete realities of the slums addressing such critical issues as poverty, injustice and land rights. Courses relating to peace building, micro enterprise, HIV and AIDS, community health, and alcohol and substance abuse are finding their way into the curriculum as part of this process.

Yet, we must also ask, is it possible or indeed appropriate for a missiology curriculum to be driven entirely by context? To some degree curricula are driven by either context or content. A content driven curriculum, somewhat akin to Freire's banking model of education[28] will define its purpose in terms of delivering to the student a defined body of knowledge. The curriculum content will have much in common with other institutions around the world, particularly those of the same denominational affiliation. However, there is a danger here of creating too sharp a contrast between the models and engineering false dichotomies. As noted earlier, content driven curricula are contextual even if the dominant context that has defined the program is not acknowledged. But neither do intentionally contextual models of theological education approach a context empty handed.

Christian Theology is a reflection on and participation in the Good News of Jesus Christ to humanity in different cultures.[29] Contextual models of theological education come to the context bearing the news of the redemptive work of God in Christ, and reflecting upon the whole work of salvation history. Therefore, the model we seek is essentially an engagement between content and context. We seek to equip pastoral agents to reflect both on scripture and on their experience, and that of their community, and thereby give shape and place into words and action the response of faith in a given context.[30]

The Urban Mission course in its present form utilizes core modules from the college's existing theology program, mainly in missiology and biblical studies, and adds modules specifically developed for the urban program. In this sense it forms a unity of two curricula developed in different ways. It may be argued that what we have created thus far is two parallel models, based in two different locations, without achieving integration between the two. More positively what we have discovered is an evolving discourse, a creative tension, between two programs which ask serious questions of each other. Ultimately we look towards a curriculum which, in every aspect, will represent the outcome of a transforming engagement between the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the context of an African city.

In developing the curriculum for the Centre we have set out to *inform* students about their faith and the application of that faith in life and ministry in the realities of their context; to *form* church leaders who will minister effectively in the slums; and to develop ministries which will *transform* churches and communities.[31] Within that process the course seeks to foster a high degree of theological reflection amongst the students and encourage the making of connections between the

[28] Freire, Paulo :45
[29] Pobee, John. 1992 *Skenosos: Christian faith in an African Context.* Gweru, Zimbabwe: Mambo Press: 130
[30] Reader, John 1994. Local Theologies. London: SPCK: 16
[31] see Villifane Edin et al: P. 7

theoretical and practical components of the training and the practice of their ministry. Within the curriculum the course places a major emphasis on praxis, utilizing action-reflection models of learning. The aim is that students develop skills in what Schon describes as research in the practice of context.[32] Students' research in the community forms the basis for theological reflection, creating space to explore alternative and hopefully more creative patterns of ministry.

One of the main avenues for this process is a course in Situation Analysis requiring students, in collaboration with both their fellows and members of their church and community, to work through process of reflecting upon themselves, their ministry, their churches and their communities. This very conscious, methodical process of reflection seeks to address the chasms which so often seem to exist between classroom and the community, between faith and action, between ministry and learning. Within the process the students are encouraged to act in a way that brings about transformation in their communities whilst engaging in a process of theological reflection that comprehends and shapes their actions.

Collaboration

From the beginning we sought to develop the urban mission course through a process of collaboration, and to deliver the course in a way that promotes collaborative models of ministry in the city. The development of the urban mission course began within a collaborative process involving a local urban ministry, Urban Ministries Serving God (UMSG),[33] along with members of other institutions and churches in the city. The Centre now provides training to other theological colleges and draws on the resources and expertise from faculty of other institutions. Over time, links and in some instances more formal partnerships have been formed with institutions within and outside Africa. As we explore the process of collaboration we are looking to ways of developing, around the area of training and the sharing of experience, a wider network of pastors from the slums within the city.

Continuity

Theological education and ministerial formation together form a process which cannot be prescribed by the restricted parameters of theological college programs. The purpose of training is to develop tools, skills and knowledge which the student can hone and develop in the practice of ministry. A commitment to continuity recognizes that the process of learning continues beyond the formal relationship with the college and that this process also requires encouragement and is best promoted in community rather than isolation. For this reason the college continues to offer students learning opportunities after completing their course. Short courses and informal training programs are offered to past students and continuing education forms the basis for a growing network of pastors working in the slums.

Commitment

Frequently commitment in theological colleges is expressed in terms of values, ideologies, theological perspectives and denominational allegiance. Seldom is it expressed in relation to a neighborhood. We need an understanding of commitment in theological education that extends beyond dogma. Zorn[34]suggests that theological education is theological in that it involves people in a commitment to mission and ministry and a commitment to the study of the revelation of God in Jesus Christ and the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit. He states that "Theological education that produces people without commitment has failed whatever its academic and technical excellence may be."[35] It is the commitment to praxis that makes for authentic theological education.

[32] Schon, Donald 1991. *The Reflective Practitioner: How professionals think in action.* Aldershot Hants: Ashgate Publishing Ltd: 68
[33] Urban Ministries Serving God (Formerly the Urban Ministry Support Group)
[34] In Pobee, John 1992. 128
[35] Ibid: 129

How then do we promote a commitment to mission in marginalized urban communities that encourages pastors to remain in the slums rather than precipitating their departure to situations which appear to more readily reflect their new found educational status? This remains a critical question for us. Most theological education in Africa finds its roots in Western models of education which are at some level individualist and elitist, providing opportunities for individual upward mobility. We should therefore not be surprised, although certainly disturbed, if in the realm of theological education, academic achievement is inversely proportional to commitment to, and involvement in, marginalized communities. One need only follow graduate and post graduate students into their ministries to see this reality. As one student from a visiting college commented, "The whole point of theological education is that you don't have to end up working in a place like Kibera." Traditional African education by contrast was more communal, a preparation for life within, not outside the community. We have yet to see whether the process we have begun provides an exit strategy to lift pastors out of the slums or generates an increasing commitment to these communities.

Commitment is perhaps more caught than taught. It therefore requires a faculty who themselves, in their own ministries, model a commitment to slum communities. Part of strategy has been to recruit faculty who, like the students, remain in ministry, and whose ministries model the values and ethos of the course. Secondly we continually seek to affirm the informal settlement context and challenge the de-valorization and stigma associated with these areas of the city.[36] Thirdly we seek to integrate the study of mission with the practice of mission instituting processes which require students to engage in mission in their own communities and other similar communities. This has now come to include cross cultural experiences of urban mission with one group of students experiencing working alongside a local church in a slum in Addis Ababa. The course also encourages students to work with their congregations in developing and implementing a holistic mission strategy within their local church and community.

Finally, we return again to the notion that theological education must model that which it seeks to promote. One outcome of inserting part of a theological college into an informal settlement is that it poses the question of how committed the institution itself is to the community. The community needs, rightly, to see that in a context of scarce and contested space, our presence contributes to the life of that neighborhood. Our presence in a slum is an expression of commitment to a particular community and to similar communities across the city. That commitment is expressed through theological education and through a desire to articulate the gospel in a way which listens to, engages with, and empowers churches in the informal settlements. However, very quickly we find ourselves challenged to demonstrate that commitment in other ways which express our belonging to this neighborhood.

In response to requests from the community the centre now finds itself providing an adult literacy program for women with the aim of enabling some women to complete their primary education. Many of them are the street vendors who our students pass each day on their way into the Centre. The program will eventually move to a local church. However, increasingly we are challenged to explore how, within our resources and within the specific focus of our work, we can both encourage churches in the transformation of communities and make our own small, but direct contribution to that process.

Contingent

There must be an eschatological dimension to theological education**.**[37] The writer to the Hebrews reminds us that here we do not have an enduring city, but we are looking for the city that is to come. (Hebrews13:14). Till then our theological enterprise is but an imperfect process. Whilst retaining that eschatological dimension however, the process of theological reflection takes place in an ever changing present context. A sense of the contingent nature of the training process reflects both the

[36] For a discussion of the concept of de-valorization in urban communities see Sassen, Saskia 2000 Cities in the Global economy (2nd Edition) London:Pine Forge Press

[37] Comment made by Prof. John Pobee at a seminar at the Centre for Urban Mission in November 2003

eschatological dimension of faith and also the highly dynamic nature of city. Theological education and training needs to acknowledge these two dimensions if it is to present a dynamic engagement between gospel and city.

Contingency in our urban mission program is also manifest in a physical sense by basing the Centre for Urban Mission in a temporary structure. A critical issue facing theological education in many parts of the world, not least in Africa, is economic sustainability. Western models, often replicating a combination of the university and the monastery, tend towards large expensive institutions which appear dislocated from local contexts and are unaffordable for the poorest sections of society. Can new models of theological institutions emerge which are not dependent on large scale capital expenditure?

Our commitment is to remain in temporary structures rather than to build any form of permanent building as a means of staying "in context". Our presence in these communities will not be permanent but contingent upon the realities that exist within that community. Where community transformation begins to occur then the Centre must then take upon itself the model of the sojourner institution, flexible enough to begin again in a new situation, journeying towards the promise, not grasping at title to the turf.[38] In this model capital investment remains low, freeing greater investment in personnel. The model of a core institution, with faculty and library facilities serving small satellite centers, offering highly contextualized training programs, may represent one means of bringing theological education and training into the heart of marginalized communities.

Credible

What does it mean to offer a credible program of theological education and ministerial formation? The question that is perhaps seldom asked is "What is the product of this educational process? What are the expected outcomes?" The temptation is to measure outcome purely in terms of academic attainment or in the satisfactory production of qualified pastoral agents for particular denomination. Little attention seems to be given to assessing the effectiveness of that training in terms of its transforming impact upon a community. Schon, writing from within an American context, describes a skeptical reassessment of the actual contribution that the professions make to society's well-being through the delivery of competent services based on specialist knowledge.[39] Theological education which simply delivers specialist knowledge and creates clerical professionals is unlikely to create credible ministries within marginalized communities, urban or otherwise. When attainment of academic qualifications is inversely proportional to a presence in marginalized communities, then theological education has to recognize that somewhere it has taken a wrong turn.

What therefore makes for credible training? We return again to the conviction that the gospel has the power to transform both individuals and communities and the church is God's agent of transformation in the local community. Credible training will promote both church and community transformation. Ascertaining the credibility of our program must ultimately come through a process of assessment involving the very communities in which the students minister. Whilst the college can oversee the important process of academic assessment it is local communities and local congregations which should be able to assess where the outcome of training has brought faith, hope and love into the very heart of the community.

Conclusion

When we first approached the owner of a kerosene business in Gatwikira, in the heart of Kibera, to ask permission to rent his building as part of a theological college, we were perhaps little aware of the implications of that decision. Today we have small centre from where we are developing and delivering training in urban mission. Our context invites or perhaps cajoles us into developing a model of training which can engage with the realities of Nairobi's slums, equipping pastors for

[38] An excellent study of the concept of the Sojourner is found in Brueggemann, Walter 1977 *The Land: Place as Gift, promise and challenge in Biblical Faith* Philadelphia: Fortress Press
[39] Schon, Donald 1991 : 13

ministries which look for and anticipate God's work of transformation. Our quest must take us into the heart of the question of what it means to live out the gospel of Christ at the very margins of the city. We are perhaps still a long way from finding answers, yet we believe we are in the place and among the people with whom that journey of faith can be made.

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THEOLOGICAL EQUIPPING OF ECCLESIA:

AN ASIAN REFLECTION ON THE ALL AFRICA TEE CONFERENCE

Roger Gaikwad

Theological Education by Extension (TEE) Program in Africa received the much needed motivation and empowerment at the conference that was held in Livingstone, Zambia from October 25-30, 2006. This conference brought together about 34 participants from Zambia, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Democratic Republic of Congo, South Africa, Angola, Malawi, Ghana, Uganda, Burundi, Madagascar, Mauritius, India, Netherlands and United States of America.

The conference had four objectives[40] that were set by the organizers:

- To consolidate the efforts of initiating a network of TEE Program in Africa leading to the formation of the All Africa Theological Education by Extension Association (AATEEA).

- To formally launch HIV and AIDS Theological Curriculum on HIV and AIDS Modules and to explore ways of popularizing and effectively using these tools in all TEE and related programs in Africa.

- To collectively evaluate and access the progress on the publication of the book "*Mission by the People of God*" which is a follow up of the book "*Ministry by the People of God"* published by WCC in 1975.

- To initiate collaboration between TEE Programs in Africa and those of other continents through TEENET (TEE Network)

Following are a few reflections on the Livingstone Conference coming from an Asian who has been engaged in the extension education program of the Senate of Serampore College[41] in India since 2002 and who has also participated in theological training programs in Nepal[42] and Cambodia[43].

TEE: Significant Contribution yet Still Elementary*!*

In Africa TEE has played a very foundational role in developing the current cadre of leaders. The extension programs have trained Sunday School teachers, Bible study leaders, lay preachers, lay leaders, elders, ministers, priests and pastors. Some persons have started with TEE and then gone on to become scholars teaching in theological institutions. Yet as Prince Dibeela indicated in his keynote address there is a perspective about, and a general tendency (with a few exceptions) to keep TEE as an elementary Christian education program.[44]

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[40] "All Africa TEE Conference", Background paper for the All Africa TEE Conference held in Livingstone, Zambia from October 25-30, 2006, p.2.

[41] The Senate of Serampore College is a theological university, which has its roots in the founding of Serampore College by William Carey, Joshua Marshman and William Ward in 1818 during the colonial era, the college being granted university rights and immunities and the power of conferring degrees in 1827 through a Royal Charter issued by King Frederick VI of Denmark.

[42] "Theological Education and the Churches in the Changing Context of Nepal", Consultation held in Kathmandu, Nepal during August 28-31, 2005.

[43] "Theological Teachers Training" a program organized in Sihanoukville City, Cambodia during November 25-29, 2006

[44] Prince Dibeela, "The Challenge of a Diversified Theological Education", unpublished text of Key-note Address delivered at the All Africa TEE Conference, Livingstone , Zambia, p.1.

In India where the Christian population as per the government census is said to be around 3% (though some may hold that it is in reality around 6%) of the total population of more than one billion people, one may wonder how significant the contribution of TEE has been. Keeping in mind that 40% of the population is still illiterate, any TEE program which depends upon the reading and writing method, would not cater to the needs of a significant section of the church. Moreover since the majority of the Indian Christians come from Dalits and tribal communities, among whom the level of illiteracy is higher than the national average, any TEE program, which requires reading and writing skills, would be catering to only about 40% of the Indian church.

The situation in Nepal and Cambodia is quite similar to that of India. While literature is important as a resource what should be kept in mind is that extension education through the oral method still holds a very important place in countries where illiteracy is still high. Moreover in Asian cultures the spoken word has authoritative significance in the lives of tribal and indigenous people. Proverbs, words of advice, moral ethical injunctions, sacred stories, etc., are best communicated through the spoken, enacted or symbolized word. It integrally impacts the heart, head and hand. In fact even literate people would in general be more deeply impressed by the audio-enacted-symbolized word than by merely reading about it from a book. Therefore this methodology of communication needs to be used and encouraged in TEE. It is in no way inferior to the methodology of the written word.

Even among the 40% of the Christians in India who can read and write one wonders how much of a role does TEE in the written literature mode play. The only theological education, which a large number of adult Indian Christians have, is through the children's Sunday School, through Confirmation classes (if their churches have that practice) and through the Sunday service sermons. Only about 20% of them would have done some Bible Correspondence Courses and another 10% may have done diploma or degree courses of TEE. A good number of Sunday School Teachers, Lay Preachers, Lay Leaders, Deacons and Elders render their services on the basis of their own Sunday School learning when they were children, and/or their conversion (new birth) experience, their family tradition of offering some service to the church, their zeal for rendering some Christian ministry, participation in some seminars and conferences, and their own private reading. Some churches do provide weekly training for Sunday School teachers and short courses for deacons, elders, evangelists and preachers prior to their appointment/ordination. However the theological training thus imparted tends to be based on denominational theology and doctrines and operates largely on the principle of literal interpretation.

Not only is the literature-reading-and-comprehension based TEE program limited to a small section of the Christian community, but it is also considered to be something "elementary". In other words the general understanding is that persons who have undergone full-time residential theological training and are serving as pastors or ordained ministers are the ones with "higher" theological training. Only with the exception of a few churches particularly in North India, persons holding a graduate TEE degree are not usually ordained for full-time ministry. The implication thereby is that ordained ministry is higher than other ministries and that TEE does not equip one for ordained ministry. While there are practical ecclesial reasons why these kinds of distinctions are promulgated, such perspectives miss the vision of theological edification of all God's people and do not give due attention to the importance of facilitating diversified theological education as envisaged in Ephesians 5:11-13 "The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastor and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry for building up the body of Christ until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ."

It also needs to be kept in mind that residential theological training is becoming increasingly an expensive proposition. Therefore theological education by extension seems a better option from the financial perspective for training people for the diversified ministries of the church. Hence the hierarchical distinction between residential training and training by extension should be done away with. There should be a greater interpenetration of residential and external study methodologies of theological education. Each of the methodologies has its merits. One of the issues emphasized by the

participants at the Livingstone Conference was 'increasing and encouraging collaboration between the TEE programs and the residential theological training programs.'[45]

In countries like Nepal and Cambodia where residential theological education has not yet been institutionalized in a big way, there is the opportunity for utilizing both residential and external study methodologies for diversified theological education. Mission-minded 'partners' are encouraged to refrain from establishing replicas of their own theological education programs in such countries. Let not theological schools in these countries be trapped in the traditional framework of producing pastors and evangelists only. Let them be inspired to think of diverse kinds and so new titles of ministries. The churches in Nepal and Cambodia need to be encouraged to evolve their own curriculum of diversified theological education. However care will have be taken to see that such education does not get enmeshed in fanciful theologizing which may give rise to conflicting spiritualities and controversial ministries, adversely affecting the church and society. Hence the Livingstone Conference emphasized the importance of standardizing of curricula in Africa while recognizing that TEE programs would differ from country to country in terms of target group, course format and specific course content.[46]

Re-programming TEE for Diversified Theological Education

The keynote address at the Conference was entitled "The Challenges of Diversified Theological Education." While the method is that of extension in terms of being with the people (beyond the seminary walls) and learning, articulating and doing theology along with them, the concern is that of diversified theological education.

Perhaps the emphasis on the word "Extension" in TEE gives the impression to many people in India that that what is taught in the residential training programs of theological institutions is being extended to the church members at large, the "lay" people in particular.[47] The earlier external Bachelor of Divinity (B.D.) programme of the Senate of Serampore College seemed to emphasize such a perspective. It was precisely to avoid this "confusion" that the Senate of Serampore College did away with the External B.D. program and introduced the Degree of Bachelor of Christian Studies (BCS) program as well as the Diploma in Christian Studies (Dip. C.S.) program. However the papers taught in these programs are more or less echoes of the courses done by candidates undertaking Bachelor of Theology (B.Th.) and B.D. studies in residential theological institutions. The framework of the examinations is also a replica of the B.Th. and B.D. examination pattern. Some of the extension program candidates even read the class notes and essays of B.Th. and B.D. students in preparing for their external course examinations. The problem is further intensified because the resource persons helping out in TEE programs are usually residential theological education teachers. (During the Livingstone Conference mention was made by quite a good number of participants that due attention was being given in their respective countries to training tutors for TEE programs.) So what is eventually achieved is the production of diploma and degree holders who have acquired some theological knowledge in accordance with the curricula of residential theological education (in that sense they are being given some sort of a training for ordained ministry, and yet TEE graduates are not considered fit for ordination!); the programs do not adequately equip the laity to carry out the different ministries of the church.

The laity would do well if they had programs/courses in planning and leading Christian education programs in the church, motivating and guiding youth activities, strengthening and upgrading women's participation, drawing up and introducing meaningful orders of worship, understanding and practicing responsible evangelism, knowing and maturely relating to people of other faiths and dispositions, discussing about and acting upon relevant social involvement, learning and cultivating ecumenism, studying church constitutions and enhancing the participation of the laity in functioning

[45] "Key Issues emanating from the All Africa TEE Conference held in Livingstone from the 25th-30th of October 2006" (unpublished) Statement of the Participants, p.1.
[46] Ibid. , p.1.
[47] Roger Gaikwad, "Reflections on Programs conducted from the Senate Centre for Extension and Pastoral Theological Research", (unpublished) paper presented at the Consultation on Curriculum Revision held in Kolkata, India during September 7-8, 2006, p.1.

of the church, understanding and counseling drug addicts, persons living with AIDS, and so on. Thus academic information needs to be integrally related to ministerial formation of the laity. Such a program of diversified theological education would also require resource persons with the appropriate pedagogical skills.

What and Whose Theology does TEE articulate?

Like any other continent Africa has its problems of patriarchy, racism, ethnic communalism, economic exploitation, control of globalizing forces, corruption in governance, political manipulations, wars, natural calamities, HIV and AIDS, etc. It is within such a context that theological education is being facilitated. Therefore TEE has to address such concerns. It must have 'emancipatory intent' as Prince Dibeela puts it.[48] TEE has to maintain its character of being a grass roots program taking the social location seriously and doing theology from the perspective of those who have few resources and are deemed powerless, voiceless and insignificant. This does not mean that issues of doctrine are not important; however presently the concerns of ministry and mission need to be given priority. Even the TEE Course Materials should be written in such a way that people become increasingly involved in socio-economic issues in their own communities.[49] It is in such a context that the formal launching at the Livingstone Conference of the HIV and AIDS Theological Curriculum Modules through TEE is indeed a laudable venture. So also the participants at the conference have reiterated the importance of contextualization of TEE programs and of strengthening the work on gender awareness.[50]

The extension programs under the Senate of Serampore College also address contextual concerns as done by TEE programs in Africa. For example the objectives of the BCS Degree progam are to: "(a) develop 'Kingdom of God' values (with special reference to justice, peace and integrity of all creation); (b) create critical consciousness and openness, to analyze cultural, social, economic, political, and ecclesiastical values; (c) provide tools for interpreting the Word of God in different contexts in society;(d) enable persons to become effective witnesses in the context of their varied and diversified vocations; provide theological education as a transforming influence in personal, ecclesial and societal life."[51] Laudable as these objectives are, one has to ask this question of theological education in general and of TEE in particular: "What and whose theology are we articulating?" In India people registering for TEE programs mainly come from middle class backgrounds. While patriarchy does affect them all they are not really part of the economically marginalized and oppressed groups. While people have caste backgrounds not all of them are actively involved in the struggles of the Dalits. TEE programs should provoke conscientization that could be translated into solidarity with the suffering and partnering with them in their struggles for justice. This would call for changes in the values and life-styles of the TEE students themselves.

Theological education in many Asian countries is done rather 'privately'. It tends to be an education operating out of a dichotomous framework of the world below and heaven above, of not much involvement in the movements of the people for freedom from political tyranny, economic exploitation and social marginalization but of being obsessed with the salvation of the soul. In relatively small and ethnically homogeneous countries the political events during the past forty years have been quite traumatic that Christians seem to have thought it best not to discuss the events and to leave earthy happenings to God's hands. While residential theological institutions might find it difficult to address the issues of justice, peace and growth under the watchful eyes of the ruling forces, theological education by extension could help in cultivating the needed ferment of commitment towards the desired change.

[48]Dibeela, "The Challenge of a Diversified Theological Education", p. 2. The TEE Journal, Vol.6, July 2006, published by the Theological Education by Extension College of Southern Africa focuses on a timely theme, "Doing Ministry for a Change"; TEE has to address the issues of economic justice, ecology, HIV and AIDS, etc. Similar concerns are also expressed in the Communique of the All Africa Conference of Churches and the Conference of African Theological Institutions, which got together in Nairobi during August 7-12, 2006.

[49] "Key Issues emanating from the All Africa TEE Conference", p. 2.

[50] Ibid. , p.2.

[51] Regulations Relating to the Bachelor of Christian Studies Degree Course, Serampore: Senate of Serampore College, 2001, p.5.

A note of caution has also to be sounded in contemporary times about so-called Christian movements, which advocate a prosperity ideology, a self-obsessed spirituality and a consumer culture.[52] New Church groups are emerging, who with all the contemporary technological resources at their disposal, are promoting theological perspectives which do not question structural injustices. Poverty being a grim reality in Asia, people very easily embraces theological teaching which assures them of miracles and prosperity. Therefore contextual TEE programs are important, which could be an instrument of change among all God's people.

How ecumenical is TEE?

It is to the credit of the participants at Livingstone that they resolved to set up the All Africa Theological Education by Extension Association (AATEEA). This association brings together not only different African countries, but also different people communities of different languages, cultures and Christian denominations (traditions). One could indeed call it an ecumenical association. Among their future action points mention is also made about holding dialogues and collaborating with Pentecostal and Charismatic churches in TEE programs. So also they plan to translate TEE materials from Anglophone to Francophone and Lusophone and vice-versa.

The Senate of Serampore College is also an ecumenical institution. Its members range from the Orthodox churches to the Pentecostals. So also the teachers and the students registered for its programs come from different cultures, languages and church traditions. The question however is whether representation through people of different church traditions, cultures and races makes the institution ecumenical. What needs to be done is to encourage the study of different church traditions, cultures and backgrounds, to facilitate dialogue between them and to lead them to a deeper understanding of the church and mission. This ecumenical spirit would have to be further widened so that Christians are enabled to relate meaningfully with people of different religious traditions and ideologies and work together for just-peace and holistic growth.

Similarly the Church in Nepal, Cambodia and elsewhere has to address the issue of ecumenism. While it is heartening to see indigenous church groups emerging in such countries, these groups should not become pawns in the hands of outsiders, nor should they indulge in doctrinal debates and spiritual warfare to prove the truthfulness or superiority of their respective traditions. What is essential is a healthy dialogue among the churches. It should also be realized that ecumenism is a coming together of churches and not an association of individual church leaders who remain in the association so long as it suits their interests. So also they need to relate their faith and practices to those who are adherents of Hinduism, Marxism, Buddhism and other important traditions and movements in their respective countries.

TEE in the Present and Future

At a time when the cost of residential theological education is rising sharply, TEE promises to become one good supplementary or even alternative. At a time when Information Communication Technology is making swift and vast strides, TEE could be greatly strengthened as a means of enabling theological edification right at home. At a time when people are realizing the importance of diversified theological education, TEE could become a multi-faceted instrument of faith and ministerial formation. At a time when we are emphasizing the importance of theological education for all God's people, TEE has indeed to become the means of Theological Equipping of the Ecclesia.

[52] Dibeela, "The Challenge of a Diversified Theological Education", p. 6.

THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION IN CHINA: A VISITOR'S IMPRESSION

Wati Longchar

If we are to run the church well, we must first run theological education well. The body can only be strengthened if the foundation is solid.
- Wu Bing

I am not an expert to talk about the church and theological education in China. My experience and knowledge about China is very shallow and limited. Before I visited China, my imagination about church and theological education in China was rather one-sided. I was misinformed that Christians are not allowed to worship openly; people worship in underground churches secretly and those who profess Christian faith are persecuted, the bibles are banned and no one is allowed to read the bible, and so forth. In such a place, I could not imagine having formal theological seminaries and colleges. However, when I visited Nanjing Theological Seminary and a few other emerging theological schools in northeast China in 2004, I found it totally amazing to see the new modern seminary campuses with lot of innovative and multifaceted ministerial formation programs. The visits to China and listening to Chinese theological educators have been a great learning process.

Since the China Christian Council (CCC) and Three-Self Patriotic Movement (TSPM) renewed its membership with the World Council of Churches (WCC) at the Canberra Assembly in 1991, several visits and consultations have been organized to strengthen the relationship and cooperation between the WCC, ecumenical partners and CCC/TSPM. The importance of exploring a closer coordination between the Department of Training of the CCC/TSPM and ecumenical partners in training future church leaders has also been under discussion. In connection to this Ecumenical Theological Education program of WCC was able to organize a number of ecumenical exchange visits between China and other Asian theological educators with the view to -

- share, learn and exchange ideas about theological education program in China and other Asian countries;
- promote more exchange opportunities and understanding between Asian churches;
- mutually strengthen the development of theology responsive to the Asian context;
- explore ways and means of working together and share each other's experience in training future leaders in the churches.

What amazes many visitors is the rapid growth of the Chinese church. There are many factors for this growth, but one important factor is due to personal relationship; not because of the presence of foreign missionaries and evangelistic campaign. Chinese society is bound by the traditional culture that emphasizes personal relationships. The Chinese church develops its Missiology on the basis of this cultural character. They carry on their mission in accordance with the Reformation leaders' belief that every Christian is a priest, and thus strongly emphasis that every Christian is a missionary. This kind of personal evangelism has been proved to be the most effective way in China. There is no doubt that China will soon have the highest number of Christians in the world. There are many exciting things happening both in China and in other Asian countries. Mutual learning and cooperation needs to be promoted. Therefore, this reflection attempts to suggest some of the areas where mutual theological learning and cooperation can be promoted between China and other Asian countries.

Theological Schools in China

Like most Asian countries, theological education began to develop in China with the entry of Christianity. From the church schools set up by missionaries in the early period to Chinese Christian theological education today, Christian education in China has experienced several periods of change

and renewal. It is said that before 1949 in China, there were several independent seminaries and Bible schools, and also Christian study institutes in universities such as the Yanjing Institute of Religious Studies of Yanjing University in Beijing. In 1950s, with the policy of separation between school education and religion, those university-affiliated Christian institutes became independent seminaries. However, during the Cultural Revolution, all seminaries and bible schools were closed. Many seminaries lost valuable books and archive collections.

Since 1980, theological education in China has entered a new phase. Along with the rapid growth of churches, demand for trained pastor and development of new China, with the deepening of the Three-Self Patriotic Movement and theological reconstruction, theological education has become more prominent and important. Infrastructures of theological schools have been much improved. Since the 1990s, many seminaries have begun to move their premises, construct new dormitories, for example, Guandong, Yanjing and East China. Nanjing Union Theological Seminary will move to a new campus in Nanjing's Jiangning university district. Presently there are 18 seminaries and bible schools with a relatively formal setup. Of these, one is operated by the CCC; the rest either by a provincial Christian council or by the cooperation of several Christian councils. The first round of new campus construction is almost finished. All the 18 schools have either moved into new campuses or new buildings, or are in the process of construction. We were told that just in the year 2000, four schools dedicated new campuses. Wu Bing categorizes theological/bible schools and training centers as follows:

1. Correspondence courses (from Nanjing Seminary), completed by nearly a million students.
2. Local Lay training courses and centers; examples are the Inner Mongolia Lay Training Center; Qianghai Province Lay Training Center, etc.
3. Bible Schools; among the better-equipped are the Jiangzi Bible School and the Jiangsu Bible School.
4. Regional seminaries offering the Bachelor of Divinity degree, such as Northeastern Seminary, Sichuan seminary and Guangdong Union Theological Seminary.
5. Regional seminaries and Nanjing Seminary offering Masters of Divinity degrees: East China, Yanjing and Zhongnan.
6. The post-graduate program at Nanjing Union Theological Seminary sponsored by CCC.[53]

The Commission on Theological Education (CTE) continues to play a key role in setting up libraries and enlarge their book collections. The Nanjing Union Theological Seminary in Nanjing, the only national seminary with degree programs, has the largest library, with about fifty thousand volumes, including about twenty thousand in English. In addition to those 18 seminaries, there are innumerable training centers managed by municipal Christian councils and local congregations.

About 2000 students are presently enrolled in various seminaries and more than 4000 students have completed their programs in the 18 schools in the past year, with more than 90 per cent of graduates serving either in local congregations or at different seminaries and Bible schools. To meet the needs of more than sixteen million Christians, a number that is constantly growing, there is a great challenge for trained leaders. There is a great need for qualified pastors and teachers.

Personally, I was very impressed by the theological education programs in China, especially the close relationship between theological colleges and churches in training future church leaders. In many parts of Asia, the relationship between the colleges and churches are not so encouraging; theological colleges are often left alone or churches extend very little support for theological education programs. The Chinese model of three levels of theological education program (National, Regional and Provincial sponsored seminaries) and the supportive relationship between churches and seminaries is something we need to promote in Asia. Mutual support system among seminaries can promote quality theological education.

One of the most significant changes in theological education in the last twenty years has been the dramatic increase in the number of women students. Most seminaries I visited, women students

[53] Wu Bing, "Grow in Stature and Wisdom: On Chinese Theological Education", in *Chinese Theological Review 19,* p. 2

slightly outnumber male candidates. It is also encouraging to see more than 400 women ordained ministers actively involved in various ministries of the churches. The seminaries have started discussing about the importance of Women's studies among other emerging social issues. The integration of the perspective of women in theological education will create awareness of discriminatory gender realities and help people to do something concrete to change the oppressive structures. Redoing theology from the women's perspective will certainly widen the horizon of theological reconstruction discourse in China.

The fast growth of training centers also poses many problems and challenges. First of all, most of the schools currently face a shortage of qualified teaching staff. Another problem is mushrooming of theological schools and overlapping programs. Because of the lack of qualified staff and the absence of school management skills, one may not find much difference between a seminary and a bible school. There is also lack of mutual cooperation between the schools. The local churches prefer to send their students to their own local training programs rather than better equipped and higher quality schools. Moreover, there are many fundamentalist groups setting up their own schools. If this trend is not taken seriously and thoroughly scrutinized, it can become a source of division in the church.

Support mechanism is another problem to be dealt with. In principle, the regional and provincial schools are to be financed by local churches. The mushrooming of local training centers run by the local congregation is causing financial crisis in the regional schools and provincial schools. The local training centers cater to the needs of training lay leadership, grass-root evangelists, and prepare candidates for higher theological studies. But proper coordination and mechanism needs to be worked out so that the regional and provincial schools are not affected.

Contextual Theological Education

Like many Asian countries, China was heavily affected by the imperial power of other countries. For example, during the colonial period the city of Shanghai was governed by France, Great Britain and the United States of America. Over 30,000 foreigners lived in the city of 1,500,000. Priests and bishops primarily from other countries served the million Catholics in China. Protestants numbered only about 100,000, with only 300 Chinese clergy and 3,500 foreign missionaries. In the midst of the growth of wealth, the streets of China were full of impoverished men, women, and children. Some people were forced to prostitution in order to survive. It is in this context that Bishop Ting and others initiated "Theology of Reconstruction". It is a theology of resistance against the forces of "foreignization" and an attempt to contextualize Christian faith appropriate to Chinese situation. Since the Jinan Meeting in 1998, the "self-theologizing", which is theological reconstruction has struck root in people's hearts. The call to strengthen and advance theological reconstruction and to run the church well has made tremendous impact. This has also brought new vision and impetus to theological education. From the beginning of theological reconstruction, seminaries have been at the forefront and much theological reconstructions have found its way into the teaching at seminaries. There is a growing interest and commitment to continue the agenda of "Theology of Reconstruction", indigenization and contextualization, and the promotion of research in those areas. Many seminaries have their own theological journals or other publications focusing on theological reconstruction, some appearing only occasionally. Nanjing, Guandong and Yanjing have theological journals, while Yunnan Seminary has its magazine. Another positive development is that the seminaries are recruiting younger leadership and there is an effort now to expand and contextualize theological curriculum addressing various issues like globalization, gender justice, mission in pluralistic context, etc. Integration of cultural studies, psychology and history in theological colleges in collaboration with secular universities is a positive development.[54] This development has promoted faculty exchange between seminaries and universities in China.

[54] I had an impression that most theological seminaries do not address the pertinent issues like HIV/AIDS, poverty, gender justice, disability concerns, etc.

Importance of Ecumenical Cooperation

The historical context of Asia has changed. Communication system, globalization and liberalization of market continue to make much more convenient for religious studies and cooperation among different countries. We have reached an era where no one can live in isolation. In this beneficial environment in and outside the church, every effort should be made to strengthen the relationship between Chinese and other Asian partners.

China and other Asian seminaries face similar problems and challenges. Some of our common problems such as financial viability, lack of qualified faculty, library development, joint ecumenical work, contextual theological education, etc. can be easily sort out by strengthening ecumenical cooperation.

1. Resources sharing between China and other Asian countries need to be strengthened. There are many exchange programs taking place between Asian seminaries and North America or Western seminaries in terms of human and resource sharing. However, there is hardly such interaction taking place among seminaries and scholars between China and other Asian countries. We are still ignorant of one another. For example, when ETE initiated a "Chinese Delegation Team visit to Hong Kong and Philippines" in 2005, we were able to organize two "informal dialogue" in the Philippines. The dialogue was found to be very enriching and an eye opener for many people. In the process of sharing and interaction, we got the impression that many people in Asia knew very little about the life and witness of churches in China after the Cultural Revolution. Likewise, the neighboring countries like Thailand, Vietnam do not know much about the history of Christianity and theological challenges in Myanmar and Laos. We need to explore and encourage short term teaching, sabbatical opportunity, faculty exchange, student's exchange program within the region. This will encourage and promote better relationship, wider ecumenism and mutual theological learning among Asian churches.

2. Keeping in mind those Asian theological degrees granted by universities in Asia or by accrediting body such as Association of Theological Education in South East Asia (ATESEA) need to have a global credibility and acceptability, the theological schools in China and Asian countries need to work on the equivalency among the theological awards and degrees. This will promote quality theological education and help students to pursue higher theological studies in the region.

3. Faculty is the main strength of seminaries, but many seminaries do not have qualified teachers. In some seminaries, the ratio of the gap between the students and faculty is not in balance. Moreover, the majority of teachers are not trained teachers though the largest part of their work is teaching. Because of the lack of teaching skills and tools, many fail to communicate the message effectively. "Teacher's Institutes" on pedagogy and other related issues need to be given priority. This will enhance their teaching ability. For the effective management of the school, the leadership teams in theological institutions also need to be facilitated with management skill training. In most schools in Asia, the head of the institutions are mostly trained theologians with little management skills when they take up leadership responsibilities in the colleges/seminaries. Faculty development, teacher's institute on various contemporary issues and management training can be strengthened through regional theological cooperation.

4. There is a great need to strengthen libraries. Libraries play an important role in developing and promoting contextual theology and ecumenical formation. The new digital convergent technology enables us to convert, collect, preserve and makes resources available in digital text, including their availability online. A better mechanism of resource sharing, especially library resources among colleges will facilitate Asian scholars to access Asian resources in different parts of the world at a reasonable cost and help to promote quality theological education in Asia.

ASIAN ECUMENICAL THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION UNDER THE CHALLENGE OF GLOBALIZATION

David B. Alexander

This paper seeks to address the manner in which Asian churches and institutions of theological education are to respond to the impacts of historical division and contemporary globalization from their rootedness in the gospel, in Asia and within the *oikos.* The word "ecumenical" is derived from the Greek word "o*ikos*" implying a house or household. Its impetus is to build up the household of God.[55] But where the household is raven by ethnic, political, class and supposed theological distinctiveness which are rooted in a continent far away in times long past, that which is unifying is eclipsed by that which divides.

At the 1961 World Council of Churches (WCC) General Assembly in Delhi, U Ba Hymin of Burma said, "No theology will deserve to be called ecumenical in the coming days which ignore Asian structures. It may use the term ecumenical, but it will really be parochial and Western only."[56] Twelve years later, Philip Potter, then secretary general of WCC, defined "ecumenical" to stretch beyond the Euro-centric model of coming and being together of churches, and beyond the requirement of U Ba Hymin that it include Asian structures. Potter called for nothing less than the biblical o*ikos* of "the whole inhabited earth of men and women struggling to become what they were intended to be in the purpose of God."[57]

For the 21st century, no theology will deserve to be called "ecumenical" which ignores any portion of the whole inhabited earth and the ecology of same in its scope of consideration. Since God's purpose is for the *oikos* in its entirety, theological education must take into account the entire purpose of God as it seeks to shape and form believers.

A Brief Introduction to Theological Education

At its most basic level, theological education (the formation of believers through the transfer of information about and testimony to the action of the divine from one person to another) can be said to have existed ever since any one believer of any religion or system of belief shared with any other person or persons his or her basic understandings of things divine. One might easily speculate that this was passed from mother to child at the earliest stages, making women the first theological educators.

The Hebrew Bible's narrative sections are replete with accounts of a teacher with a student or students. Samuel taught the prophets at Ramah[58] and Elisha conducted Theological Education by Extension courses at Gilgal.[59] Insofar as Christian theological education might be concerned, the teachings gathered by the writer of the gospel according to Matthew into the Sermon on the Mount and attributed to Jesus[60] might be seen as giving witness to formal dominical utterance along the lines of what has come to be considered as theological education. Certainly the time that Jesus spent with his disciples between his more public preaching and performance of signs and wonders can be considered as theological education.[61] In Acts 4 & 5 the Apostles' utterances in the temple are

[55] Virginia Fabella, "Ecumenism Beyond Vatican II" in *Living in Oikumene,* Hope S. Antone, ed. (Hong Kong: CCA, 2003) p. 89.
[56] Hans Reudi Weber, *Asia and the Ecumenical Movement 1895-1961*, (London: SCM Press, 1966) p. 15 quoted in Preman Niles, "Theological and Mission Concerns in the Ecumenical Movement in Asia" in *A History of the Ecumenical Movement in Asia, Volume 2*, Ninan Koshy, ed. (Hong Kong: WSCF/AP, APAYMCA & CCA, 2003) p. 76.
[57] Philip Potter, "Report of the General Secretary", *Ecumenical Review*, Vol 25, No. 4 (1973) p. 416.
[58] I Samuel 19:20
[59] II Kings 4:38-42.
[60] Matthew 5, 6 & 7
[61] See, for example, Mark 9:30-50 for several examples.

variously characterized as "speaking" and "teaching'. At the end of the chapter it is clearly stated that in the temple and in homes they "did not cease to teach and proclaim Jesus as the Messiah."[62]

From the contemporary situation of Christians and churches, especially Protestant Christians and churches, in Asia, such examples as given above are both distant and casual. Religious faith and knowledge are still passed from mother to child and from pastor to member of the church body in the context of preaching or teaching. But that which has come to be known under the formal title of "Theological Education" as it pertains to the preparing of leaders of Christian communities who will be able to inspire new life, renew and transform society and peoples as well as congregations[63] has been taken and held captive in free-standing theological colleges or in university linked divinity schools or departments of religious studies. Theological education in Asia in these early years of the 21st century is generally about preparing professional ministers, but it is slowly and painstakingly finding a home among believers who plan no "professional" ministerial status at all. Theological education is for the whole people of God.

Contemporary Protestant theological education in Asia can trace its roots back to the modern missionary movement that began in the late 18th century. Serampore College is a living memorial to William Carey, Joshua Marshman and William Ward who founded it in 1818 to impart training to Indian Christians in order to create a truly indigenous Church. This school is the "grandfather" of Protestant theological schools in the region. Most of the others, whether in operation for over a hundred years or founded in recent decades, are also rooted in the work of foreign missionaries and mission societies with the aim of imparting training to local Christians and creating churches, though zeal for the indigeneity of said churches varies.[64]

When the ecumenical movement "gelled" in post-Second-World-War Europe it aspired to many things, one of which was to heal the many breaches between Protestant churches rooted in the Reformation. Those divided churches had engaged in missionary outreach to the farthest corners of the earth, including most of Asia. Each had gone to spread the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ. But, to a certain extent, each also spread the particularistic version of that glorious gospel as held and preached in its own homeland and from its own denominational perspective. As mission work "bore fruit" and the need arose for local people to receive training and to take up such leadership positions in the new churches as the missionaries would yield to them, theological education that reflected the patterns of the homelands of missionaries, mission societies and "mother churches" was instituted. The resulting theological colleges, bible colleges and training centres were tied financially to the denominations and missionary societies of their founders.[65] The result can be seen today in the plethora of institutes of theological education across Asia that bear the names of denominations, or of missionary founders, or whose boards of directors are appointed wholly or in part by single denominations of Christians. Whether or not the particular denominational slant on theology taught in a school or institute is fitting for the Asian context is less important than those local political and ethnic divisions or ancient Euro-American antipathies prevent the formation of Christians who can inspire, renew and transform societies, peoples and congregations.

Globalization and the Churches of Asia

The homogenizing trends of globalization impact the church as a whole and churches separately. Can the dynamic of globalization be harnessed for the good of the *oikos*, bringing about a sense of common identity and mission between churches that would otherwise perpetuate ethnic, political, class and theological distinctions? Can globalization be harnessed to turn the attention of people and churches to the entire inhabited world? If globalization were a neutral thing, like a screwdriver

[62] Acts 4:18 and Acts 5: 21, 28, 40, 42
[63] Wati Longchar, "The Ecumenical Theological Education in Asia and Pacific" *Ministerial Formation 101*,(July 2003).
[64] …in Korea, theological seminaries are established with a view to the outreach of the church. Pastors are trained to become missionaries and to found new congregations. Theological schools in Korea have been the source and centre of several separate Presbyterian churches. Korean missionaries often apply the same method abroad… Often, little attention is paid to the relationship with existing educational institutions. Lukas Visscher,. "Theological schools - a dividing force?" *Reformed World*, Vol.52, No.2, July 2002
[65] Wati Longchar, op. cit.

or a postage stamp, its dynamic force could be uncritically harnessed for the good of the household of God.[66] But globalization is neither morally nor religiously neutral. Ideally globalization is about the realization of mutuality and equality of all the world's inhabitants before God. It is the sense that no one group can go through it alone.[67]

Globalization **can** mean the worldwide development of technology that facilitates a global village. It **can** mean international networking in all fields between people who dwell at great distances from each other. In both of the above senses, it **can** be seen as a neutral to positive tool for the *oikos*.[68] But globalization has more than these two aspects. The issue is not whether to globalize or not, it is not an option; it is a given reality. The real issue is the model of ideology by which the world is being organized today. Like all things in theology, what is human should be the measure of globalization.[69]

In its economic sense globalization means "the integration of the economies of the whole world to the liberal capitalist market economy that is controlled by the Group of Seven."[70] In the Philippine context, for example, this means: 1) giving free play to market forces without restraint by national borders; 2) the death of local manufacturing and agriculture when people choose to purchase imports rather than domestically produced goods; 3) the exaltation of profit and market demand to the position of supreme values; 4) the transfer of productive enterprises into private ownership, frequently foreign; and 5) economic activity built more around speculation than production.[71] In different locations and contexts, globalization will manifest itself in differing particularities, but some of the 5 points of the Philippine experience listed above will be common to all places to a certain extent.

These five factors demonstrate the impact of globalization on humanity, the people of God, the household of God, the *oikos*. The impacts are clearly seen in Asia.

…confessing Christ in the global village means being aware of the challenges modernization and secularization bring to our churches. It does not mean Asian Christians have to resist the tide of history. Rather it is for us both to be prophetic in welcoming the breakdown of isolationism of the past and to be alert to the indiscriminate fusion of values for the sake of superficial consensus. [72]

Ecumenical Theological Education in Asia at the Beginning of the 21st Century

There are many rungs on the ladder to fulfillment of a truly ecumenical vision. Church union may be one of them, but its achievement presupposes cooperation at more basic levels. Though the meaning of "ecumenical" is not limited to the single aspect of cooperation by different churches in joint ministerial formation at a single site, nonetheless, joint education is one aspect of ecumenical life. United theological education is not an end goal, but disunited theological education can hinder ecumenical understanding and ecumenicity. The schools described below stand as positive examples of this one aspect of life in oikumene in Asia. The three examples present visions of what steps might be taken in regions not so blessed with unity.

India

The heritage of United Theological College (UTC) in Bangalore bears the cross-denominational face of the ecumenical movement. It was established in 1910 through the co-operation of the

[66] The printing press, postal services, radio, film, television and even the internet can be argued to be morally neutral tools which have been harnessed for the good of the *oikos*. Argument that they have been harmful to humans and the *oikos* can be made likewise.
[67] John S. Pobee "Theology in the Context of Globalization", *Ministerial Formation 79* (October 1997) p. 20
[68] Sr. Mary John Mananzan, "Building Women's Alternative to Globalization" *Theologies and Cultures*, vol. 1, No. 3, November 2004. p 52.
[69] Pobee, op. cit.
[70] Manazan, op. cit. P. 52.
[71] Ibid.
[72] Kyaw Than, "Confessing Christ in the Asian Context" *Theology and the Church,* Vol. 22. No. 1, (January 1997)Tainan Theological College and Seminary, Tainan, Taiwan.

London Missionary Society, the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society, The United Free Church of Scotland, the Arcot Mission of the Reformed Church in America and the Trustees of the Jaffna College Funds. The S.P.C.K. in Scotland also gave their support. Between 1951 and 1979 it incorporated British Anglicans, Danes, Swiss, indigenous Indian (Orthodox and Mar Thoma), Lutheran and Syrian church traditions. The combination of Protestants of varied confessions with Anglicans and Orthodox makes UTC, at least in appearance, one of the most ecumenical of theological colleges in Asia.

Philippines

Union Theological Seminary (UTS) in the Philippines was founded in 1907 by the merger of Methodist and Presbyterian schools. By 1919 the United Brethren, Disciples of Christ and Congregationalists had come on board.[73]

Japan

The Tokyo School of Theology was established as an independent Japanese seminary in 1904. During World War II, its name was changed to Tokyo Union Theological Seminary. It cherishes its relationship with both Presbyterian/Reformed and Methodist church traditions, while remaining evangelical and committed to the highest standards of scholarship. It is the only seminary that is accredited by the Japanese Ministry of Education.[74]

These three schools have made some effort to be, if not "ecumenical" then certainly "mutual." In most cases though, theological education around the world looks much like the Western paradigm of Christian higher education with little change in purpose, structure, content, or methodology in spite of vast cultural and contextual differences inherent with location, language and class.[75]

An Ecumenical Perspective on Theological Education in Asia

Theology and the Christian life viewed through Asian eyes will increasingly shape the nature of the church.[76] The Association of Theological Schools (ATS) in North America began addressing issues presented by globalization as early as 1986. Its committee on Global Theological Education then stated:

…the leadership of the Association is concerned that globalization represents a highly significant issue that must be seriously addressed. Globalization is a complex concept involving content and structure, 'a prismatic combination of human relationships, ways of thinking, ways of learning and ways of Christian living.' Minimally it involves escaping from ignorance and provincialism; in its most serious consideration it involves us in questions regarding the church's mission to the entire inhabited earth.[77]

Theological education must strive to inter-connect the plurality of contextual theologies abroad in the world in order to foster a truly global dialogue. If this can be accomplished, as sense of 'universality' in theology can be approached in a legitimate way that will eclipse the false universality which for many generations identified that which was Western with what might be called universal.[78] Ecumenical Theological Education (ETE) is about more than inter-denominational programs or institutions of theological education. It is not about attempting to

[73] http://www.users.drew.edu/loconer/books/deats/deats18.htm accessed 23 September 2005
[74] http://www2.gol.com/users/pcusajmo/jmoinfo/tuts.html accessed 23 September 2005
[75] Larry McKinney, *"Evangelical Theological Education: Implementing our Own Agenda"*. Paper delivered at the ICETE International Consultation, High Wycombe, UK, August 18-22, 2003.
[76] Lee C. Wanak Theological Education and the Role of Teaching in the 21st Century: a look at the Asia Pacific Region" *Journal of Asian Mission,* Vol. 2, No. 1 (March 2000) p. 7
[77] David S. Schuller, "Editorial Intorduction" *Theological Education,* Vol XXII, No. 2 (Spring 1986) p. 5. Quoted in Pobee, op. cit.
[78] Sturla J. Stalsett, "Learning to Learn Slowly: Vocation, Transformation and Theological Education in the Context of Globalization" *Ministerial Formation 94,* July 2001, p. 47.

reunite churches or growing ecumenical organizations. But attempts to create and conduct ETE face certain hazards.

1) English has become a global language and a medium of literature as diverse cultures mix with the West. The dominance of English allows Asians to understand each other but in theological education it perpetuates the categories of the West. Asian theological educators will need to increasingly develop their own literature base addressing contextual issues.[79]

2) Many churches in Asia and Pacific do not have resources to support theological education. Many churches do not want to invest resources on theological education, so the role of principals/presidents at many theological schools in Asia and Pacific has been reduced to that of fund raising.[80]

3) Asian traditions of patriarchal social organization, perpetuated in *ecclesia* and *academie*, have insured that, to date, the structure of theological education is male dominated.[81] Whether the increased funding through international ecumenical organizations making the highest levels of theological training more open to women will result in the redressing of this imbalance in faculty numbers, school officers (deans and presidents) and membership of governing boards remains to be seen.

4) In increasing measure diverse peoples are living in close vicinity of each other. As Christians become more cosmopolitan they will need to learn to mix evangelization with a ministry of reconciliation and an appreciation for tolerance. Global communications, environmental and biomedical concerns, and market trends will raise a host of ethical and cultural issues. In the global environment the elusive value of ecumenical and contextualized theological education can easily be overshadowed.[82]

5) Pedagogy in Asian theological institutions remains "traditional," what Paulo Freire referred to as "banking."[83] Writing notes on a blackboard for students to copy into notebooks for memorization in preparation for examinations has little to do with actual learning. The lecture method of teaching is inadequate for ministerial training and must be supplemented by internships, simulations, case studies, small group discussions and project development. 21st century students must develop basic competencies in doing theology to confront the issues of the day. The 21st century theological educator must nurture skills of application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation to develop critical thinking in students. Theological education must go beyond filling heads with knowledge or hearts with devotion—it must prepare the whole person.[84]

An emancipatory approach develops in students: 1) the traits of efficacy (ability to control and regulate one's world), creativity, and conscientization (critical reflection and action); and 2) the skills of problem solving, decision making, human relations, and leadership. Schools that are strong in these areas tend to emphasize their progressive function in bringing change. Those weak in these areas tend to maintain a subservient traditionalistic role.[85]

James E. Plueddemann proposed the metaphor of a "dual rail fence"[86] to describe education. Lee C. Wanak used it to analyze theological education in the Philippines, looking principally at Pentecostal

[79] Wanak, p. 4.
[80] Longchar, op. cit
[81] Ibid.
[82] Wanak p.4
[83] Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed,* Translated by Myra Bergman Ramos. (New York: Continuum Publishing, 19??) pp. 59-60.
[84] Lee C. Wanak "Emancipatory Theological Education; Preparing Leaders for the 21st Century" in *Theological Education in the Philippine Context,* Lee C. Wanak, ed. (Manila, PABATS and OMF Literature, 1993) p. 21.
[85] Ibid.
[86] Plueddemann, James E. 1989. "The Challenge of Excellence in Theological Education." in *Excellence and Renewal: Goals for the Accreditation of Theological Education.* Ed. Robert L. Youngblood. Flemington Markets, NSW, Australia: Paternoster: 1-14.

schools. In his application the upper rail typifies historic Protestant and Roman Catholic churches and the lower rail the Pentecostal and Evangelical churches found in Asia. Of course, it is not an exact fit. Many Evangelical and Pentecostal schools and churches can be more traditional than the Roman Catholics, and some mainline schools lay greater emphasis on contextuality than do the ecstatic Pentecostals.

Plueddemann's Upper and Lower Rail Systems Applied to Theological Education and Ecclesia

Upper Rail System	Lower Rail System
Philosophy	
Idealism-Ideas	Realism-Practice
Theology	
Begins with attributes of God	Begins with needs of man (sic?)
Transcendence of God	Immanence of God
Absolute truth	Contextual truth
Special revelation, Original Scripture	General revelation, Holy Spirit
Orthodox but can neglect needs	Relevant but can be heretical
Historical faith	Doing theology in the present
Religious Style	
Logical, organized, expository sermons	Testimonies, topical sermons
Emphasis on Bible	Emphasis on Holy Spirit
Great hymns	Gospel songs, choruses
Order and reason in worship	Mystical, relational, emotional worship
Preaching and teaching	Fellowship and worship
Authors write commentaries	Authors write devotional books
Evangelists emphasize logical steps	Evangelists emphasize testimonies
Educational Theory	
Liberal education, develop intellect	Professional education, relevance
Subject centered	Student, society centered
Academic curricula	Behaviorist, social reconstructionist
Unchanging ideas of humanities	Social science to solve problems
Logic, develop mind	Experimentation, study of the world
Rational thinking	Enhance individual, society
Methods-wrestle with ideas	Learn skills, train for profession
Standards of Accreditation	
Schools to fit world-class expectations	Schools to fit contextual needs
Universal standards of excellence	Culturally relevant standards of excellence
High faculty academic qualifications	Faculty with practical experience
High entrance exam scores	Students with proven leadership ability
External written examinations	Quality internships

The *oikos* needs educational models and patterns that encompass contents ascribed to each of the "two rails" in Plueddemann's scheme, but Asian theological education has tended towards one or the other, rarely achieving a true "two rail" manifestation. Many institutions began "lower rail" but grew and matured to "upper rail" status. In doing so they lost some connection to context, flexibility and practicality. Institutions that remain decisively "lower rail", though perhaps producing more grassroots ministers to meet the needs of the churches, make little impact on the wider *oikos* of Asia and the world.

The task of theological education is to teach love of God and love of neighbor. It is not an academic exercise but a Spirit-filled identification with God and people that empowers action. 21st century theological educators need to guide (rather than indoctrinate) students in shaping their affections, sorting out their values, and acting on their commitments in the power of the Spirit to build the household of God, the *oikos*, in Asia.[87]

[87] Wanak, 2000, pp. 8-9.

Prospects for Ecumenicity in Theological Education in Asia

When 18th and 19th century Western missionaries preached Christianity in Asia, both the pre-industrial West and Asia were largely rural. Christianity came with a rural orientation and was preached into a largely rural society. Urbanization has changed the contexts of Christians around the world. Problems arise when what is modeled and taught in theological schools reflects more of the 19th century origins of missionary-planted-and-led churches than the reality experienced by contemporary Asian congregations. As cities become increasingly diverse theological educators need to consider training in diversity to build tolerance and understanding. Faculties need to consider how students take their place in the world as citizen-believers without losing their distinctive Christian identity.[88]

It is noteworthy that the fundamentalist counter-reaction to the situation of the rapid globalization of markets, media and technologies (which affirms exclusive, national, ethnic, cultural or religious identities), demands global and local interaction in order to express an ecumenical vision. If theological education is to play a transformative role in human communities it is imperative that theological studies move into such new areas.[89] For renewal and reform to happen, a revolutionary paradigm shift is required in the design and methodology of theological education. This might well begin with a return to such basics as: 1) cultivating a longing to know God; 2) focusing on ministry to people; 3) formation of lives based on biblical values; and 4) relevant expressions of faith in cultural contexts.[90] One design change might be towards "professorial ecumenicity" within the household of the individual theological college.

"Professorial ecumenicity" calls Asian theological colleges to "look to the rock from which you were hewn and to the quarry from which you were dug."[91] When many of these schools were founded their faculty members were more likely to be "generalists" than "specialists". But now separate disciplines are most likely taught by persons who have attained high levels of professional training and qualification in ever-narrowing fields. Those specialists themselves had likely received a general theological education before becoming the qualified professionals. Any of them might be called upon to teach ANY course at the undergraduate and first-year graduate level. It may be best to have an "expert" design the syllabus, but teaching should be assigned by the drawing of lots with a bias toward placing experts in one discipline into a cross-disciplinary teaching situation. Experts might continue to teach "upper level" courses in the classically divided subjects of Old Testament, New Testament, Theology, Ethics and History in their own fields. By this means, the faculty would be transformed from a collection of practitioners of separated disciplines into a *koinonia* of "professors of ministry." Over the course of 4 or 5 years, each faculty member would become "ecumenical" in terms of subject matter taught, while remaining an "expert" in one or more of the disciplines expected for upper level study. Students would be exposed to "professorial ecumenicity" as a matter of ministerial formation. This attempt to swim against the tide of the Western-inspired (and hence globalized) organization of knowledge according to separate disciplines is one way in which Asian theology makes its own "active, constructive response to global ethic."[92]

Conclusion

"Confessing Christ in the changing Asian context means crossing over the threshold into the unknown. …We may not know what the future holds, but we know who holds the future. … Confessing Christ is a joyful enterprise and fulfilling vocation to which we are called in Asia with its increasing involvement in world history."[93] May Asian Christians and the theological education institutions that serve them and their churches continue to seek to be faithful instruments and tokens of God's purpose of love in Christ for the world.

[88] Wanak, 2000, p. 6
[89] Longchar op cit.
[90] McKinney, op. cit.
[91] Isaiah 51:1
[92] Bin You, "Asian Theology and Global Ethic: A Reflection on Constructing Asian Theology in the Era of Globalization". *JTCA 3*, (2004) p. 205
[93] Kyaw Than, op. cit.