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EDITORIAL

Theological education for the sake of the whole world has long been the heartbeat and mission of the institution known as the Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. In 1905, the founding president of our *alma mater*, Benajah Harvey Carroll, envisioned a Texas institution that would serve as a transformative educational agent for the worldwide dissemination of the gospel of Jesus Christ. At the time, he noted, a fifteenth of the Baptists in the world lived in the state. Texas was like a "breeding place for migratory fowls," from which missionaries must go into the whole world. From all over "the prairies and plains of the West," he said, preachers were being called by the Lord.[1] These migratory preachers had clearly heard "the moaning prayer of a desperate world, 'Laborers, more laborers, Lord.'" They were answering the Lord's call, and responding, like Isaiah, "Lord, send me." Carroll continued, "They ask no question of the thither. Anywhere in the world where needed. The missionary nestling prepares for migratory flight to any destitute field in the wide world." Southwestern's first president saw these preachers and teachers heading off to Latin America as well as "Europe, Africa, Asia, the islands of the sea" and "as they swarm, they fill a thousand mission fields and three thousand pastorates in Texas."[2]

This all-embracing global vision electrified Carroll's contemporaries, and it has continued to shape the hearts and minds of the trustees, faculty, and students of Southwestern Seminary until today. The seminary's second president, Lee Rutland Scarborough, wrote books with telling outward-looking titles like *Recruits for World Conquests* (1914), *With Christ After the Lost* (1919), and *A Search for Souls* (1925). The long-serving and founding seminary trustee, George Washington Truett, pastor of the First Baptist Church of Dallas, agreed with Carroll and Scarborough, contributing books like *A Quest for Souls* (1917) and *The Salt of the Earth* (1949).

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[1] *The Baptist Standard* (May 4, 1905); cited in Robert A. Baker, *Tell the Generations Following: A History of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1908-1983* (Broadman, 1983), 119.

[2] Baker, *Tell the Generations Following*, 119.

Throughout its history, Southwestern has continued its founders' global outlook and missionary passion, training tens of thousands of missionaries over 116 years and, more recently, establishing the Roy J. Fish School of Evangelism and Missions. Perhaps no greater visual reminder of our global vision exists than the world map that dominates the Rotunda of the B.H. Carroll Memorial Building, which itself dominates the campus.

However, both the world and the seminary changed in the intervening years, as the campus welcomed, trained, and returned thousands upon thousands of international students in the twentieth century. Then, with the advent of widespread digital communication technologies in the twenty-first century, the classrooms of the seminary also began to become worldwide platforms in themselves. For instance, the two of us as teachers interact constantly with students in our Doctor of Philosophy seminars and in our master's level courses who are themselves located geographically throughout the United States and across the continents. With the growth in pedagogical methods and plenty of personal and corporate effort, and assisted by highly trained staff, we have taken note of how contemporaneous digital means that involve students from multiple cultures present a ripe opportunity for global theological education. However, as the authors of the following essays demonstrate, the needs of the churches in the majority world are so massive, and the intercultural dynamics are so complex, that much more thought and even greater effort need to be put into the highly critical matter of global theological education, if we who are evangelicals, Southern Baptists included, are to help the churches with the greatest possible effectiveness.

The following essays dedicated to evaluating and advancing global theological education, written by six accomplished educators, have been arranged logically. Ralph Enlow begins by asking a question that should set us on our heels: "Should North American Seminaries Become Global?" In the next two contributions, the theoretical foundations for global theological education are explored. Dean Sieberhagen looks at global theological education from the perspective of global missions, while Daniel Sánchez exposes the cultural dimensions of theological education. While each article in this issue of the *Southwestern Journal of Theology* offers ways to move forward with global theological education, the next two make dramatic proposals for educators to adopt. Michael Ortiz argues we must set about "Recalibrating Theological Education for the Church's Mission" and Perry Shaw draws upon deep crisis to demonstrate some ways we might engage

in "Transforming Theological Education." Finally, the new provost of Southwestern Seminary, Madison Grace, outlines his compelling convictions and offers some relevant proposals in an enlightening manifesto titled, "Global Theological Education and Southwestern Seminary."

Because we are passionate about helping the churches obey the Great Commission of our Lord Jesus Christ, the faculty and staff of the Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary are ready and willing, indeed eager, to educate ministers from around the world. However, we also know that we must change to meet the contours of this changing world even as we advocate the unchanging gospel. This is why we are passionate about engaging in global theological education. We know our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and the blessings that come by his Word and Spirit. We know there is a huge and desperate world that needs our students, whether they come from the cities and fields of the United States or the many nations throughout the world. We know that we must seek every venue possible and by whatever means possible, whether here on Seminary Hill or there on the field, to train our students. And we know we need to help growing ministers proclaim with passion, power, and precision God's saving Word, for the Day of the Lord approaches and the needs are too great to remain complacent. The fields indeed are white unto harvest, and we are compelled to train the laborers which the churches are praying the Lord will send into the harvest. May the Lord grant our prayers, bless our efforts for his glory, and show us the way to bring theological education at its best to the world in its overwhelming need.

David S. Dockery and Malcolm B. Yarnell III

SHOULD NORTH AMERICAN SEMINARIES BECOME GLOBAL?
A Case and Some Cautions

Ralph E. Enlow Jr.*

Critical readers will immediately notice a glaring ambiguity embedded in this article's title. They will rightly demand that the author define what is meant by "become global." Fair enough. Exploration of the "become global" characterization will indeed comprise a substantial portion of this essay. Let us, however, defer that question for the moment.

A prior matter, representing an even more basic consideration, demands address. Does the title's question even remain relevant as the first quarter of the 21st century rapidly expires? Arguably, the article poses its question at least three decades too late. Many have rightly observed:[1] "That ship has sailed."

Thus, before attempting to define "become global," wisdom dictates that we briefly set forth a *case*, delineating salient realities and reasons that call upon North American seminaries to become more globally mindful, informed, and engaged. After setting forth that case, we will attempt to illustrate the *extent* to, and the *manner* in, which some North American seminaries have elevated their international attention, noting a variety of commonly observed *means* by which seminaries have sought or might seek to become global. We will then posit alternate *frameworks* through which seminaries might contemplate and pursue becoming global. In that connection, we will commend for careful consideration some cautions which lead to the commendation of potentially fruitful *patterns* and *principles* through which to become global.

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[1]Consider, for example, *Evangelical Review of Theology* 47.3 (2023) featuring pertinent articles by David S. Dockery, D. A. Carson, John D. Woodbridge, Nathan S. Finn, and Bernhard Ott.

THE CASE FOR "BECOMING GLOBAL"

Even a cursory understanding of Scripture's grand story[2] makes the global and polycentric nature of God's redemptive project undeniable.[3] Such landmark twenty-first-century declarations such as *The Cape Town Commitment*[4] and the ICETE Manifesto[5] elegantly and ardently affirm that this understanding of the biblical storyline is as central to an authentic confession of evangelical faith as the ancient creeds' affirmation of the church's catholicity. North American theological seminaries' existence and essence lack biblical legitimacy and missional relevance to the extent they fail explicitly to affirm and faithfully abide by this central tenet upon which orthodox evangelical soteriology, ecclesiology, and eschatology are grounded.

A multitude of church historians and missiologists, among them Philip Jenkins,[6] Andrew Walls,[7] and Lamin Sanneh,[8] have documented two tectonic twentieth-century phenomena concerning Christianity's scale and changing global distribution patterns. First, the acceleration of global Christianity's growth rate and reach are breathtaking. *Frontier Ventures* (formerly US Center for World Mission, USCWM) founder Ralph Winter and colleague Bruce Koch document this staggering gospel progress in their landmark publication, *Finishing the Task: The Unreached Peoples Challenge*.[9] Notwithstanding some legitimate quibbles over definitions of nominal (even heretical) and truly authentic Christ-followers, the following general observations bear respectful consideration:

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[2]Mark S. Young, *The Hope of the Gospel: Theological Education and the Next Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2022), 96-97.

[3]Craig G. Bartholomew and Michael W. Goheen, *The Drama of Scripture: Finding Our Place in the Biblical Story* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2014), 20-21.

[4]Christopher J. H. Wright, ed. *The Cape Town Commitment: A Confession of Faith and a Call to Commitment*. International Congress on World Evangelization, The Third Lausanne Congress (October 2010); https://lausanne.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/The-Cape-Town-Commitment-%E2%80%93-Pages-20-09-2021.pdf.

[5]Bernhard Ott, "Shaping the Future of Theological Education: Introducing the ICETE Manifesto II," in *Evangelical Review of Theology* 47.3 (2023): 250-273.

[6]Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002).

[7]Andrew F. Walls, *Missionary Movement in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission of Faith* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2015).

[8]Lamin Sanneh, *Whose Religion is Christianity? The Gospel Beyond the West* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003).

[9]Ralph D. Winter and Bruce A. Koch, "Finishing the Task: The Unreached Peoples Challenge," https://s3.amazonaws.com/files.frontierventures.org/pdf/FinishingTheTask.pdf.

- One of every 8 people on the planet is a "practicing Christian, active in his/her faith."
- This compares to a 1:200 (0.5 percent) Christian to non-Christian ratio by the end of the first century.
- Over the following centuries until the beginning of the twentieth century, this ratio grew five-fold, to 2.5 percent of the global population.
- From 1900-1970, the percentage of practicing Christians *doubled*, reaching 5 percent of the world's population.
- Astonishingly, the next 40 years saw world Christianity's growth accelerate exponentially, more than doubling again such that practicing Christians represented 12 percent of the world's population by 2010.

Second, and perhaps even more consequentially for North American seminary educators, Christianity's map has been radically altered. Europe and North America can no longer claim to be the church's locus of concentration and epicenter of influence. Both designations now belong to the Global South. Consider the following excerpts from this summary wrap-up[10] of the 2006 *Global Consultation on Evangelical Theological Education* in Chiang Mai, Thailand—nearly two decades ago—at which both Walls and Sanneh delivered keynote addresses.

Walls asserted that the twentieth century has witnessed the greatest shift in the demographic and cultural contours of Christianity since the first century. During the great European colonial migrations of the past 400 years, Christianity's broadest extent and fullest cultural expression were associated with and emanated from the West. Westerners have tended to view themselves as the *only* Christians—at least the only *authentic* ones. Moreover, Walls asserted, Western Christianity, including its institutions of theological education, have too often been unwitting handmaidens to certain influences of the Enlightenment upon theological and world view formulation, imbibing, among other things, the Enlightenment bias toward compartmentalization or exclusion of the supernatural realm and its inhabitants and phenomena.

At the same 2006 ICETE consultation, Sanneh asserted that one of

[10]Some sections of this paper are drawn from the author's previously unpublished address, "Wrapping Up and Going Forward," delivered at the 2006 International Council for Evangelical Theological Education's Global Consultation on Evangelical Theological Education in Chiang Mai, Thailand. An abridged text can be accessed at https://icete.info/event/icete-c-06-chiang-mai/.

Christianity's primary features consists in its capacity to cultivate indigenous ethical and cultural root systems. He proposed that the current worldwide expressions of the Christian church may usefully be regarded in two major groupings: "heartland" Christianity (the receding Western paradigm of Christendom) and "frontier" Christianity (the nascent Christian churches of the majority world). Sanneh posited that a major global challenge for Christianity—and thus for theological educators to contribute to—is mediation between "heartland" and "frontier" Christianity. He commended an exchange of "frontier" Christianity's sometimes paradoxical resources and strengths (poverty, weakness, persecution/suffering, war,[11] and communal identity, to name a few) with those of "heartland" Christianity (individual liberties, wealth, scholastic, and cultural achievements, to name a few).

To summarize, since the middle of the twentieth century, global humanity has undergone a dramatic upheaval in patterns of demographic and cultural migration, accompanied by sometimes violent worldwide social and political repercussions and realignment. Simultaneously, we have witnessed the unprecedented growth of the church in the majority world according to patterns and by means largely unanticipated by Western missionary strategists. Christianity is declining in its former territorial heartlands but spreading such that it is now a predominantly non-Western religion–and it seems poised to continue this demographic and cultural reorientation for some time to come.

Recent shifts in the global church's size, distribution pattern, and character cannot be ignored by North America's seminaries. They must do more than offer token acknowledgement and undertake marginal adjustments. The question posed in this article's title, *Should North American Seminaries "Become Global"?* demands in answer a resounding and unequivocal "Yes!" Both our connected and interdependent world and North America's radically altered position in global Christianity propels and compels us ever increasingly to "become global." Properly, the question is not *should* North American seminaries "become global" but *in what ways* might North American seminaries do so?

Seminaries that decline greater global church orientation, engagement, presence, and participation will inevitably diminish themselves, their

[11]Roman Soloviy, "Theological Education in Wartime: Ukrainian Evangelical Seminaries as Communities of Compassion, Reflection, and Hope," in *Insights Journal*, 9.1 (2023): 1-18; https://insightsjournal.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Theological-Education-in-Wartime-Soloviy.pdf.

students, and their stakeholders. Perhaps unwittingly but nevertheless undeniably, they are modeling and in danger of producing myopic, parochial, impoverished, and tragically impotent gospel workers who will reproduce themselves in the North American evangelical movement's churches and institutions that are presently declining in numbers, vitality, and influence.

THE CURRENT PICTURE: BOLD, BUT BLURRY

The implications of global Christianity's realignment outlined above demand profound recalibration. North American seminaries and graduate theological schools typically have earned accredited membership in either the Association of Theological Schools (ATS) or the Association for Biblical Higher Education (ABHE), both limited in scope to accreditation of institutions legally incorporated in Canada or the United States of America. ATS membership comprises 279 institutions. ABHE's 163 member institutions, with some level of Commission on Accreditation status, are historically primarily undergraduate in scope. In recent years, however, many have expanded their degree offerings to include graduate and seminary ministerial degree offerings. Some other graduate-level evangelical institutions have chosen for a variety of reasons, including ABHE's confessional circumscription, to pursue ABHE accreditation instead of ATS accreditation. In fact, ABHE's aggregate student enrollment growth—rendering it an outlier among North American higher education sectors—is largely attributable to member institutions' initiation and expansion of graduate program offerings.

ABHE-related institutions have enjoyed both global structural ties and organic global engagement since the 1980s through their status as a founding and active regional member agency of the International Council of Accrediting Agencies (ICAA), later renamed the International Council for Evangelical Theological Education (ICETE). ABHE representatives actively participated, for example, in drafting and disseminating ICETE's 1983 *Manifesto on the Renewal of Evangelical Theological Education* and the 2022 ICETE *Manifesto II*;[12] ICETE board governance; ICETE's triennial Global Consultations on Evangelical Theological Education; ICETE formal agency recognition; and formulation of such global policies and principles

[12]Bernhard Ott, ed., International Council for Evangelical Theological Education, https://icete.info/resources/the-icete-manifesto/.

as the Beirut Benchmarks[13] and Bangalore Best Practices[14] relative to global doctoral education, Standards and Guidelines for Global Evangelical Theological Education,[15] and other collaborative quality assurance and professional development[16] initiatives.

For its part, ATS officially resolved more than a decade ago to mandate that its members demonstrate global engagement. The ATS website features a special Global Awareness and Engagement Initiative page[17] that offers a historical overview of the measures it has taken to encourage its members to "become global" in their outlook and engagements. When two decades of ATS efforts to advance interagency and member institution global engagement through the World Council of Churches' World Conference of Associations of Theological Institutions (WOCATI) bore inadequate fruit, an ATS board working group discussed options during its 2012-2014 biennium. A September 2013 letter to the ICETE board from then-ATS Executive Director Daniel O. Aleshire, outlined the contours of ATS's consideration of globalization's implications for their members' learning resources, curricula, and scholarship, among other things.[18] In the wake of those overtures, ATS and ICETE pursued and ultimately secured an agreement in the form of The ICETE-ATS Playa Bonita Affirmations, the preamble of which states:

> Acknowledging the importance to theological education of global awareness and engagement informed by the principles, values, and virtues of educational quality and improvement, mutual respect and collegiality, cooperation and collaboration, intentional networking and support, pluralism and diversity, and sustainability and contextuality in the light of their particular ecclesial and faith traditions and commitments—The International Council for Evangelical Theological Education (ICETE) and The Association of

[13]The Beirut Benchmarks (October 2010); https://icete.info/educational_resource/the-beirut-benchmarks/.

[14]Ian J. Shaw, Scott Cunningham, and Bernhard Ott, *Best Practice Guidelines for Doctoral Programs* (Cambria, UK: Langham Global Library, 2015).

[15]Marvin Oxenham, ed., *Standards and Guidelines for Global Theological Education* (March 2022); https://icete.info/educational_resource/sg-gete/.

[16]https://icete.info/resources/education-resources/.

[17]Association of Theological Schools Global Awareness and Education Initiative; https://www.ats.edu/Global-Awareness-and-Engagement-Initiative.

[18]Daniel O. Aleshire, letter to ICETE International Director Riad Kassis (September 25, 2013).

> Theological Schools in the United States and Canada (ATS) relying on God's grace, commit to seek God's help, pray for and accompany each other, and continue to share their hope to be faithful to the work to which they are called: the improvement and enhancement of quality theological education in the service of ministry, to the glory of God and for the fulfillment of God's purposes.[19]

A joint ATS-ICETE task force (which included ABHE representatives) was formed and a measure of fruitful dialogue and mutual presence, participation, and collaboration based upon these Playa-Bonita Affirmations has been evident. Leaders of each entity have consistently reaffirmed and exhibited mutual commitment and hopefulness.

ATS, moreover, has developed specific directives and accreditation standards requiring and providing guidance concerning greater global engagement. Global awareness and engagement is one of five themes that runs through the ATS Commission's Standards of Accreditation, and it is explicitly defined in the General Institutional Standards:

> 3.1 Theological teaching, learning, and research require patterns of institutional and educational practice that contribute to an awareness and appreciation of global connectedness and interdependence, particularly as they relate to the mission of the church. These patterns are intended to enhance the ways institutions participate in the ecumenical, dialogical, evangelistic, and justice efforts of the church.
>
> 3.3.4.2 Global awareness and engagement is cultivated by curricular attention to cross-cultural issues as well as the study of other major religions by opportunities for cross-cultural experiences; by the composition of the faculty, governing board, and student body; by professional development of faculty members; and by the design of community activities and worship.

[19]The ICETE-ATS Playa Bonita Affirmations (November 2022); https://icete.info/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/The-ICETE-ATS-Playa-Bonita-Affirmations-Final.pdf.

> 3.3.4.3 Schools shall demonstrate practices of teaching, learning, and research (comprehensively understood as theological scholarship) that encourage global awareness and responsiveness.

Despite such documented, sincere organizational aspirations, however, neither ATS[20] nor ABHE[21] publishes much readily accessible data concerning the nature and extent to which their accredited North American graduate/seminary member institutions have sought to "become global." Inquiries to professional colleagues in both ATS and ABHE yielded only a sketchy and incomplete picture.

ABHE reported merely that seven of 125 accredited member institutions operate approved international extension sites and that unduplicated, "non-residential alien or temporary resident" graduate students rose from 10.4 percent in 2022 to 11.9 percent in 2023. ABHE does not have aggregate data concerning which of its accredited members' approved distance education programs are available internationally though, ostensibly, distance education courses and programs would be available for delivery anywhere in the world.

Specific ATS aggregate data documenting their member institutions' global engagement and deployment has also proven difficult to ascertain. The scope of this article and the capacity of its author did not permit a deeper dive into ABHE and ATS member databases or the National Center for Educational Statistics Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) through which, presumably, a less blurry picture might emerge. This data gap presents an excellent doctoral research opportunity. In the meantime, simple observation warrants the impression of accelerating interest and sharp increases in North American seminaries' global interests and programming. To what extent is this observed uptick in North American seminaries' attention and activity good for the gospel cause and the global church? That brings us back to the definitional question with which we began.

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[20]See, for example, ATS 2022 Annual Data Tables; https://www.ats.edu/files/galleries/2022-2023_Annual_Data_Tables.pdf.

[21]See, for example, ABHE 2022 Annual Institutional Update Summary Report; https://www.abhe.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/2022-AIU-Report-ALL-MEMBERS.pdf.

FRAMING THE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

In what specific *ways* have North American seminaries undertaken initiatives to become global? Examples might be grouped into at least four categories: (a) hiring elite international scholars to "globalize" the faculty; (b) substantial international resident student recruitment and scholarship funding investment; (c) proliferating and promoting distance education degree programs targeted (if not actually tailored) to international students; and (d) establishing multiple international extension sites and branch campuses.

While each of the above may merit consideration and could yield some dividends, the uncritical pursuit of any of these strategies has the potential to demean, demoralize, and diminish *both* the global church in its various ethnic and national expressions *and* the seminaries that pursue these endeavors with zeal not tempered by wisdom and humility. One observer characterizes such measures as, at best, "a mixed blessing."[22] Simply put, we must not view global Christianity's shifts as opportunities for expansion and exploitation. Instead, we should embrace them as opportunities for transformation and participation. Prior to assessing specific means of global engagement and offering cautions relative to their implementation, let us consider three alternate frameworks through which to view global opportunity.

The Entrepreneurial Framework. Unfortunately, far too many of North American seminaries' entrepreneurial forays into global engagement may amount either to unwitting or indifferent exploitation. Seminaries have added to their ranks world-class theological scholars from every global region, resulting in what has been widely observed and lamented as a scandalous "brain drain."[23]

North America's traditional prospective seminary student pools are diminishing[24] due to demographic cliffs,[25] alternate pathways[26] to church

[22]M. R. Elliott, "Globalization in Theological Education: A Mixed Blessing," *Christian Education Journal*, 1.3 (2004): 130-139; https://doi.org/10.1177/073989130400100313.

[23] J. McGill "Furthering Christ's Mission: International Theological Education," *Transformation: An International Journal of Holistic Mission Studies* 32.4 (2015): 225-239; https://doi.org/10.1177/0265378814537761.

[24]Anthony T. Ruger and Barbara Wheeler; "Sobering Figures Point to Overall Enrollment Decline," *InTrust* (Spring 2013); https://www.intrust.org/in-trust-magazine/issues/spring-2013/sobering-enrollment-figures-point-to-overall-decline.

[25]Bryan C. Harvey, "Teetering on the Demographic Cliff, Part 1: Prepare Now for the Challenging Times Ahead," *Planning for Higher Education* 49.4 (2021); https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A680989841/AONE?u=anon-27b70a8c&sid=googleScholar&xid=16524d5.

[26]Alan Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways: Reactivating Apostolic Movements* (Grand Rapids: Baker, Brazos

ministry leadership placement,[27] and constituent church declines.[28] Some North American seminary leaders reason that we may offset these deficits by bolstering our international student enrollment. One respected long-term educational leader observed that at a recent international gathering, many Latin American theological education colleagues bemoaned the extent to which North American seminary representatives were unrestrained in promoting their study programs in the presence of respected Latin American educational institutions that offer similar programs. What chance did our Latin American institutions have when their offerings were compared to the shiny objects dangled before prospective students by prestigious North American seminaries?

In such cases, might North Americans not only be guilty of insensitivity to relatively lower-resource counterparts but also might they be guilty of devoting little or no consideration to the actual relevance of our curricula to the international students we attract and the unintended decimation of Majority World theological schools that struggle to compete? In our "flattened" world of global connectivity and learning management platforms, international student enrollment in North America's seminary programs has become a highly lucrative possibility. North American seminaries' international student resident or distance program enrollments have the potential to eclipse that of students from the home country.

Alas, advances in contextual applicability have seldom kept pace with technical accessibility. Questions of cultural and linguistic context and comprehensibility, as well as curricular content and instructional methodology, are largely glossed over by educators who should know better. Making distance education programs more available to students anywhere around the globe may be expedient, but the practice deserves careful examination lest it become yet another tragic example of exploitation of our Majority World church brethren.

When global reorientation follows typical North American cultural impulses to which our seminaries are in no way exempt, recognition of new realities too often takes forms merely superficial and hideously detrimental to both the institutions and the global church. Professional theological

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Press, 2016).

[27]Juan Francisco Martinez, "Preparing Leaders for God's Work in a World of Adaptive Challenge," *Theological Education*, 51.2 (2018): 11-18; https://www.ats.edu/files/galleries/2018-theological-education-v51-n2.pdf.

[28]George Hawley, *Demography, Culture, and the Decline of America's Christian Denominations* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2017).

education and missiology literature are replete with lament and calls for reform.[29] In her address to a 2014 Brazil Lausanne Consultation gathering, then-president of Biblical Seminary of Colombia, Elizabeth Sendek, offers the following biblical observations and admonitions for those who dream of pursuing international partnership.

> Biblical partnership …
> … recognizes and celebrates … the universal character of God's mission and the global character of His church.
> … means coming alongside not to teach [Majority World partners] how to reproduce the proven model but to *build capacity* [emphasis added].
> … allows new things to develop under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, *even at the risk of losing control* [emphasis added].
> … humbly recognizes that we really need each other in order to remain faithful.[30]

Whatever it means for North American seminaries to "become global," it must not merely, exclusively, or primarily consist of reflexively opportunistic, capitalistic, and colonialist strategy, and resource reallocation. We need to be preserved from the unforeseen devastation of a global educational tsunami contaminated by exploitation.

The Equity Framework. Disparities between North America and other world areas are undeniable. Such disparities are evident in every institution, including churches and theological schools. Marxist ideology and its contemporary intellectual stepchildren frame those disparities largely, if not exclusively, in economic terms.[31] Some have much; others have little. Those with much have been presented as exploiting and oppressing, indeed as gaining their advantages through exploitation and oppression. Redistribution is then assumed to be required.

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[29]Tito Paredes, Vinay Samuel, Colleen Samuel, Gervais Angel, John Bennett, Ruth Callanta, Fiona Beer, et al., "Institutional Development for Theological Education in the Two-Thirds World: Summary of Findings of the 1995 Consultation at the Oxford Centre for Mission Studies," *Transformation: An International Journal of Holistic Mission Studies* 12.4 (December 1995): 18-33; http://www.jstor.org/stable/43070177.

[30]Elizabeth Sendek, "Towards Biblical Partnerships in Global Theological Education: My Dream for Theological Education in Partnership" (unpublished address, Lausanne Movement Latin America Consultation, June 2, 2014).

[31] Neil Shenvi and Pat Sawyer, *Critical Dilemma: The Rise of Critical Theories and Social Justice Ideology—Implications for Church and Society* (Eugene, OR: Harvard House Publishers, 2023).

If we understand the church's dramatic global realignment in terms of equity, we might pursue one of two courses. We might glibly continue our exploitation and oppression by strategies that extract human and material resources from the global church to enrich and expand our endeavors. On the other hand, we might seek to compensate for our "oppressor" status by redistributing some of our comparatively lavish material and human resources to a "mendicant" global church. Either of these strategies impoverishes both parties because equity constitutes a flawed and sub-biblical frame through which to view reality. To follow either trajectory, among other things, absolves our international church counterparts of agency. In the words of Paul the Apostle, there is a "more excellent way."

The Equability Framework. Christopher Wright,[32] among others, posits that a better frame through which to view these matters is *equability*. He appears to appropriate a term that surfaced in the early half of the nineteenth-century relative to seminary pastoral education reforms.[33] His application of the concept seems novel, though intuitively sensible. It holds great promise as a helpful framework for viewing the asymmetry between "heartland" and "frontier" Christianity. Wright asserts that in the global church, wealth and poverty should not be viewed exclusively or primarily in terms of appalling economic disparities. Rather, we should come to realize that Western Christianity may be comparatively rich in economic terms yet deeply impoverished in ways the global church is stupendously wealthy.

In a 2006 ICETE plenary address on this subject,[34] Wright issued seven strategic reflections regarding the North/South divide. In so doing, he cautioned against the tendency toward extremism. He emphasized that the North/South divide is not merely economic. Rather, while the South may tend toward material poverty, the North suffers extreme spiritual poverty for which the South may offer resources and help. Meanwhile, economically privileged Christians should be educated regarding scandalous economic disparities so that they may receive the grace that is available only through their reciprocal attitudes and involvements.

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[32]Christopher J. H. Wright, "An Upside Down World: Distinguishing Between Home and Mission Field No Longer Makes Sense," in *Christianity Today: Outreach* (January 18, 2007); https://stage.cru.org/content/dam/cru/legacy/2012/02/An_Upside-Down_World.pdf.

[33]Abdel Ross Wentz, "A New Strategy for Theological Education," *Christian Education*, 20.4 (1937): 291-318; http://www.jstor.org/stable/41173073 .

[34]Christopher J. H. Wright, "Addressing the North-South Divide," (plenary address, ICETE Global Consultation on Evangelical Theological Education, Chiang Mai, Thailand, 2006); https://icete.info/event/icete-c-06-chiang-mai/.

Wright observes biblically that the issue of resource disparity has been a factor in the life of the church since its inception. Citing numerous New Testament references, he illustrates that the principle of reciprocity is embedded in Christian theology. Gross disparity in terms of any attribute or asset is a biblical and theological scandal. He also observes that current manifestations of global mutuality in the body of Christ mark a wholesome return to the polycentric, multidirectional nature of New Testament Christianity. Citing the polyphonic nature of New Testament theology—that theological and ethical problems and errors are addressed prophetically *across* cultures—Wright calls for a charitable but faithful prophetic North-South address of such errors as sexual ethics, prosperity, and Christian citizenship responsibility.

Wright offers notable examples of progress to celebrate in terms of the global divide over the past 20-30 years. Areas of progress include: (a) the narrowing divide in terms of access to advanced educational opportunity; (b) awareness even among secular Western media of the vitality and significance of majority world Christian movements; (c) biblical and missiological re-centering of the majority world church; (d) useful and robust forums (e.g., ICETE, Langham Partnership, Overseas Council, Lausanne Movement, World Evangelical Alliance) through which North/South disparities may receive attention and address. As progress is noted and celebrated, however, we cannot ignore that there persists uneven progress toward equity within the majority world, including virtually adjacent nations and communities.

FRUITFUL POSSIBILITIES: BETTER WAYS TO PURSUE "BECOMING GLOBAL"

Assuming, then, *equability* as the more commendable and useful framework through which to understand and address how North American seminaries might most constructively pursue ways to "become global," the track into the future rests on two rails: mutual partnership and meaningful exchange.

Previously, we observed several ways in which North American seminaries have increased their global posture and programming. Let us now return to the four categories cited above as to how seminaries typically seek to "become global." Let us explore how the principles of mutual partnership and meaningful exchange might produce dividends in the global church.

International Faculty. The ranks of many prominent North American

evangelical seminary faculties include international scholars of the highest order. By virtue of those global church and, in many cases, "frontier Christianity" colleagues, many institutions are not merely reputationally richer, they are economically richer. Without any intent to judge the merits or motives in specific cases, however, North American seminaries would do well to consider the extent to which escalating the addition of Majority World scholars to their faculty ranks should constitute a primary strategy. When a celebrated international scholar is deposited into the ranks of a North American seminary, arguably there occurs a corresponding withdrawal from the native region's ecclesial and spiritual reservoir, potentially depleting its intellectual and theological scholarship capital.

In the spirit of mutual partnership and meaningful *exchange*, international faculty exchange at least merits genuine consideration as an alternative to international faculty *employment*. Too many of North America's most laudable native theological scholars are, dare we say it, ignorant and impoverished to the extent that they have little or no direct engagement with "frontier Christianity." They are in danger of equipping students to look backward and myopically rather than looking ahead for global ministry. Sabbatical policies and faculty development priorities should emphasize and incentivize substantial faculty international experience for those who lack it. Fruitful, indeed mutually transformational, agreements should be sought for long-term partnership and faculty exchanges between North American seminaries and their counterparts in other global regions.

International Students. Just as students (and parents!) from around the world seek degrees from elite North American universities, so also students and their families may seek the benefits of enrollment in North American seminaries. Such endeavors allow North American institutions to extend internationally, leverage institutional brand equity, and exploit the universal "reserve currency" status of our accredited courses and degrees—scarcely realizing that what we have done may be at the expense of the global church and its nascent institutional infrastructure.

Discerning seminary leaders will devote care to developing and implementing international student admission, recruitment, and financial aid policies and incentives. International student sponsorship represents an attractive donor proposition. Absent careful planning and guardrails, however, such sponsorships can devolve into unhealthy long-term patron-client relationships. Students too often acclimate to Western economic standards

and decline upon graduation to return to their homelands. Moreover, inadequately considered international student recruitment can function according to a kind of "legacy admission" value system that privileges students with influential family connections over such more global, missionally consequential considerations of personal character, mission fit, and ministry potential.

What elements of a more globally humble and wise approach to increased international student enrollment might merit consideration? First, North American seminaries should limit recruitment and scholarship incentives (if not imposing actual admission restrictions) to aspiring ministerial students who have exhausted the best available theological education and ministry formation opportunities in their local region. Articulation agreements between North American seminaries and flagship institutions in other regions would make economic and educational sense for both students and institutions.

Second, admission policies should prioritize "in-service" students (i.e., ones with a proven ministry track record) over merely intellectually gifted "pre-service" students. Prospective students should be admitted (or, again, at the very least, scholarship support should be allocated) on condition of official commendation for advanced education by the applicable home country ecclesial entity or credible ministry organization. When North American seminaries offer full scholarships or sponsorships to academically elite, culturally advantaged, and well-connected international students, no one should be surprised when they remain in North America after graduation. Return to ministry in the homeland can be incentivized when the "commending" entity has financial skin in the game proportional to local material means.

Plenty of missiological strategy attention has been devoted in recent years to the phenomenon of Diaspora Christianity.[35] In not a few cases, the number of a country or ethnic group's genuine Christ-followers residing in North America far exceeds the number in the home region. Missionary vision is often embedded into the psyche of these diaspora churches. Potential for "international student" enrollment among the diaspora churches' emerging generation offers great promise absent many of the risks and frequent unintended consequences of large-scale international student importation.

[35]Sidiri Joy Tira and Tetsuano Yamamori, *Scattered and Gathered: A Global Compendium of Diaspora Missiology* (Cumbria, UK: Langham Publishing, 2020).

Finally, grounded in the values of mutual partnership and meaningful exchange, North American seminaries might well consider partnering with international theological school counterparts to embed study abroad, international exposure, and service learning into all their ministerial study programs. Such features hold high promise for enriching students and participating institutions in both directions. Every North American seminary should have a core commitment to producing "world Christian" graduates. Ministry education leaders must have no part in permitting or perpetuating the cultural, ecclesial, and missional ignorance and insulation that too often characterizes seminary graduates.

Distance Education Programs. Google Translate and other AI platforms dazzle with their capability to render our spoken and written words into a foreign tongue efficiently and accurately. Software transcribes video lectures and inserts audio translations or subtitles. But how much is "lost in translation" in terms of cultural milieu and contextual relevance? Superficial overlay of our North American seminary curricula—embedded with epistemological frameworks, intellectual and Christian scholarship history, psychological, and sociological landscapes—onto the cultural and ecclesial realities of our global church counterparts represents an expedient but inadequate approach. Translatable program content does not equate to transferable student learning outcomes.

Andrew Walls's 2006 ICETE address,[36] may seem perhaps too scathing, but it is nevertheless worthy of humble consideration. Walls presciently asserted that too much of what passes for theological education in the West and, through its pervasive residual influence upon emerging majority world churches, the educational philosophies and curricula of non-Western theological schools characteristically consist of transmission of intellectual content and theological dogma that is heavily Enlightenment-laden. Simply put, too often theology poses and answers questions that are irrelevant to constituent churches in many areas of the world while at the same time failing to address biblically urgent questions with which their constituent believers are confronted.

Walls calls for an awakening of theological schools to the true task of theology, namely, to bring the whole of Scripture to bear upon the questions and choices with which ordinary believers are confronted in

[36]Summarized in Shaw, "Wrapping Up and Going Forward" (International Council for Evangelical Theological Education's Global Consultation on Evangelical Theological Education, Chiang Mai, Thailand, 2006); https://icete.info/event/icete-c-06-chiang-mai/.

their calling to live out the Gospel in their native context. Rather than memorizing *theolog-y* formulated in and for a distant context, scholars and their students must hone the discernment and skills of *theolo-gizing*. Moreover, theologizing must go beyond the enlightenment notion of a theology that engages and shapes the mind, to a more relevant and biblical notion of theology that forms the person and facilitates his living in and through Christ in community. Global theological scholarship and theological education must pursue reorientation according to this calling.

Extension Sites and Branch Campuses. Two cases with which this author had direct involvement may serve to highlight alternative ways of approaching international extension site possibilities.

In one case, more than a decade ago, this author was invited to participate in a think tank along with more than a dozen church and educational leaders to consider how to fortify, refine, and accelerate plans to establish a large-scale, advanced global extension program of theological and pastoral leadership studies with an accompanying commitment to developing a large-scale digital learning resource repository. Participants represented elite pastoral, lay, and educational leaders from one of North America's largest and most mission-minded church networks. Their passion was palpable. Their ambition was admirable. It soon became clear, however, that their awareness of and connection to existing global ecclesial and international theological education networks was truncated.

I do not recall that a single representative of "frontier Christianity" was present that day. Group members were unaware of the International Council for Evangelical Theological Education (ICETE). Their plans were admirable and sincere, but their educational goals and values lacked deep consonance with ICETE's Manifesto on the Renewal of Evangelical Theological Education. They were largely unaware of the existence of and not at all in dialogue with ICETE's regional accrediting agencies and its richly developed international quality assurance standards and existing global learning resource coordination efforts. Thankfully, these eminent North American seminary leaders were humbly receptive to an awakening to existing global networks in which they have become active partakers and contributors. They have re-envisioned and reshaped their efforts, viewing and conducting themselves as global partners, not presumptive pioneers.

Another extension/branch campus initiative directly familiar to the author illustrates many commendable mutual partnership and mutual exchange features worthy of consideration. A credible existing educational

institution in another global region reached out to a North American institution some four decades ago. They sought to explore a partnership that would permit their graduates to obtain accredited international degree recognition precluded by their homeland's educational system and governmental regulation of degree-granting authority. They were looking neither for financial subsidy nor corporate takeover. They wanted a true partner. They sought a partner institution that was compatible with core biblical/theological commitments, ethos, academic rigor, and international credibility. They desired to continue to offer instruction primarily through their committed cadre of resident and visiting faculty, in the home country's language, with the freedom to negotiate curricular and degree program requirement adaptations to suit their context.

That was a tall order. The initial reaction by accrediting agencies resembled the proverbial seven last words of a church: "We've never done it that way before." A years-long process ensued, marked by baby steps, setbacks, and not a few surprises. Ultimately, however, humility, perseverance, mutual trust-building, delicate and determined accrediting agency negotiations, and novel forays into shared governance overcame the seemingly endless obstacles. Today, the partnership endures. Scores of graduates studied under faculty members from each institution, completed contextually adapted course work reflecting degree program integrity in the native languages, and received diplomas that carry internationally recognized secular and theological school accreditation. Each institution is infinitely richer because of this partnership.

AN APPEAL FOR MORE HUMBLE ENGAGEMENT

Should North American seminaries become global? Absolutely. A biblical understanding of the redemptive narrative and the present-day capabilities and conditions of both the world and the church demands we do so. To what sorts of transformation, then, does the Lord of our global church call us? What kinds of global participation offer seminaries the greatest potential for mutual edification and hastening of the eschaton? Alternate trajectories present themselves. Pathways based on exploitation or equity will ultimately be at best inadequately helpful and, at worst, insidiously harmful. On the other hand, the path of equability grounded in mutual exchange and mutual partnership offers practical guidance to institutions that take the initiative in globalizing faculty and students

and expanding curricular availability through technological mediation or campus extension.

For those North American seminaries that answer the call to "become global" in the coming days, let the admonitions of The Cape Town Commitment resonate and regulate:

> Partnership is about more than money.... Let us finally prove that the Church does not operate on the principle that those who have the most money have all the decision-making power. Let us no longer impose our own preferred names, slogans, programmes, systems and methods on other parts of the Church. Let us instead work for true mutuality of North and South, East and West, for interdependence in giving and receiving, for the respect and dignity that characterizes genuine friends and true partners in mission.[37]

[37] Wright, ed., "The Cape Town Commitment."

THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION AND GLOBAL MISSIONS

Dean Sieberhagen*

The globally connected world provides both an exciting and daunting prospect for those who think and write about missions and theology. It is exciting in that we have the intersection of multiple cultures and worldviews that can enrich how each of us studies and expresses our knowledge and belief about God. There are Christians in some contexts, for example, who face significant persecution for their belief in a Christian God. They may provide others in less persecuted contexts with a deeper and fuller understanding of belief in God when suffering is required. On the other hand, it can be daunting when an emphasis on human cultures causes us to develop theological beliefs and understandings that are man-centered rather than God-centered. Our theology then is fashioned according to human understanding, which means that as our understanding changes, so does our theology. Darrell Whiteman proposes another way of looking at this tension when he says, "The good news of globalization is that it is now easier for a hermeneutical community to exist that is global in scope and character, and people can test local expressions of Christianity against the universal body of Christ. The bad news is that people are likely to try to dominate the conversation from a position of power."[1] If, as he suggests, it is theology from the West that most likely will try to dominate, how do Western theologians, missionaries, and institutions find their proper place in global theological education?

God, in all his fullness, existed before any human knowledge or understanding, which means that any cultural expression must submit itself to the idea that it is partial, limited by man's fallen nature, and fully

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[1]Darrell Whiteman, "Anthropological Reflections on Contextualizing Theology in a Global World," in Craig Ott and Harold A. Netland, eds., *Globalizing Theology: Belief and Practice in an Era of World Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), 65.

dependent on God's revelation of himself. Within this tension between God's revelation and our human understanding, we appear to have an unprecedented opportunity to advance theological education. This is unprecedented in the sense that with a modern globalized world, we now have the technological capability and connectivity that allows us to communicate with almost any context in the world. Western-based theological education has traditionally taken a "come and study with us" approach. So, students from all over the world have come to our institutions, and for several years have removed themselves from presence and participation in their home context. While this remains a significant avenue, because of new technologies we now have a blossoming theological education that is more "we'll come to you" in its approach.

Should not theologians from the West then go into the mission field, in both short and long-term capacities, with both anticipation and humility, seeking to share sound biblical theology with the new context? How much should they allow the new context to take the lead in developing its theology? It comes down to the question of how much theology should come from outside, and how much from inside. The purpose of this article is to examine these fields of tension in the hope of discovering implications for Western theologians' and institutions' involvement in global theological education. These implications are fundamental to the missionary endeavor given that a goal of missions is the growth of indigenous churches that hold to sound biblical theology. Even though various scholars will be referenced, the perspective in this article is specifically evangelical, holding to a high view of the Bible, which understandably would raise questions for those outside an evangelical position. In the second half of this article, particular contexts in Africa, India, and China will be presented to examine and analyze how these fields of tension manifest in various contexts.

FIELDS OF TENSION IN GLOBAL THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

When examining the spread of the gospel to the nations and cultures of the world, missions historian Andrew Walls points out the constant challenge of balancing between what he calls the *indigenous* principle and the *pilgrim* principle.[2] With the indigenous principle it is understood that a person does not live in isolation, but as a part of a culture and society which impacts and conditions the way they both conceive and conduct

[2]Andrew Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History* (Marynoll: Orbis Books, 1996), 7-8.

their lives. Missions must consider this so that the gospel can find a place in the culture and society where it can speak to and influence from within. Another way of thinking about it is to consider how the gospel can make itself at home within the culture. The discipline of missiology builds ideas and concepts around this which introduce terms such as "contextualize," "localize," and "indigenize." Biblical examples, such as the methods of Jesus and Paul, should be studied and consideration given to how prescriptive or descriptive these methods are for the way we engage in missions today. Similarly, examples throughout mission's history are analyzed to discover successes and failures. This then brings the discussion to the other side of the coin, which is the pilgrim principle.

The pilgrim principle is based on the idea that when a person becomes a Christian, they take on a new identity which finds its home in God's kingdom. Such a person is now first and foremost a citizen of God's kingdom, which is distinct from the world around them. Jesus affirms this distinction in John 18:36: "My kingdom is not of this world."[3] Evidence for this is also found in Jesus's prayer for Christians in John 17, where he twice uses the phrase, "they are not of the world." The implication is that even though Christians must live within a culture, they never really feel at home. Building on this is the idea that the more they grow into their identity in God's kingdom, the more distant they become from any other kingdom. Missions then are impacted by this so that they call people to come out of a primary allegiance and identity with the culture and worldview into which they were born. They are now pilgrims in this world on their way to the complete fulfillment and expression of God's kingdom in heaven. This is not only future oriented but is also found in living out kingdom lives and principles while on the pilgrim journey. One of the clearest biblical supports for this is found in the prayer Jesus taught Christians to pray, when he said "Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven."[4]

The need to balance the indigenous principle with the pilgrim principle has clear application to evangelism, discipleship, and church formation in missions, but what of theological education? Does theological education have a place in this discussion, or is it mostly pilgrim in nature? Is it something to be inserted after the other indigenous components are in place? The pilgrim nature of theological education seems to be reinforced

[3]All Scripture are from the Holman Christian Standard Bible.
[4]Matthew 6:10.

by the absence of foundational biblical concepts in other religions. My argument is that in the context of another religion, theological principles and categories, such as the Trinity, soteriology (in particular salvation by grace alone), and ecclesiology, need to be introduced as something fresh and new. Even the word, "Trinity," may need the indigenous language to come up with a new term or phrase to communicate a biblical meaning. Several voices in mission theory and practice, however, are uncomfortable with the idea that theological education by its nature is pilgrim and prefer not to pay significant attention to the indigenous context.

John A. Mackay, who served as a missionary and later as Princeton Seminary president, proposed two ways of approaching theology. These two approaches illustrate the interaction between the indigenous and the pilgrim principles. The first approach he called the *balcony*, where theological education takes place from the position of a spectator looking down at those who are trying to live out the Christian life in their context. The second approach is referred to as the *road*, where theological education happens amid life with all the challenges and concerns of the immediate context.[5] Taking inspiration from Mackay, Latin American theologian Samuel Escobar asserted, "Therefore, as Latin American thinkers we chose to do our theology not contemplating Christ from the comfortable distance of the balcony, as secure easily received orthodoxy, but following him on the troubled roads of our Latin American lands."[6] In a similar vein, Lamin Sanneh pushes back against a pilgrim approach as he argues for the power of Bible translation. He proposes that if we acknowledge the validity of all cultures and languages in being able to express the Christian faith, then we must consider the idioms and values of each culture.[7] What is needed is the translation of the Bible into the vernacular, accompanied by a freedom to let the local context interact with the Bible and so express theology in their own terms. This also means that those looking in from the outside need to suspend judgment found in terms such as "syncretism," and rather humbly acknowledge the self-theologizing of others.

Andrew Walls puts this need for a theology on the road in a positive perspective when he proposes:

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[5]John A. Mackay, *A Preface to Christian Theology* (New York: McMillan, 1941), 27-30.

[6]Samuel Escobar, "Doing Theology on Christ's Road," in Jeffrey P. Greenman and Gene L. Green, eds., *Global Theology in Evangelical Perspective: Exploring the Contextual Nature of Theology and Mission* (Downer's Grove: IVP Academic, 2012), 71.

[7] Lamin Sanneh, "The Significance of the Translation Principle," in Greenman and Green, *Global Theology in Evangelical Perspective*, 35.

> Just as when the gospel crossed the frontier into the Hellenistic world there was an explosion of theological activity that gave us the great creeds and the beginnings of what one may call classical theology, so the biblical and Christian interaction with the cultures of Africa and Asia has begun to open a whole range of new theological issues and the possibility of fuller and clearer thought on some old ones. …We can expect, and rejoice in, a vast expansion of theological activity.[8]

If Christian theologians all over the world opened themselves up to this idea, then the argument is that we are all better off. The blind spots in one cultural context can be addressed by theological insights from a different cultural context. This requires that theologians in each context humbly, for mutual edification, become willing to participate in theological conversation. No singular context is thereby left to try and figure out theological challenges on its own, but theologians in each context consult with other contexts. In response to critical issues, such as the prosperity gospel, human needs, and relativism, we can rely on theologians from all over the world to provide insights in how to address these challenges.

Stephen Bevans, in his explanation of various models of contextual theology, describes what he calls the "Synthetic model." This is meant as a way of synthesizing different approaches. In particular, "it takes pains to keep the integrity of the traditional message while acknowledging the importance of taking all the aspects of context seriously."[9] In his explanation of this model, Bevans points out how both insiders and outsiders to the culture have a role to play in developing theology, but he cautions that insiders must take prominence. Theologians from all over the world then help each other to produce a better understanding of theology. In a mission context where the gospel has only begun to see its first fruit, this means that theological education from the West must be complemented by insights from other non-Western Christian traditions. This does seem to be very positive. Yet where is the voice of caution that we can thereby drift into a man-centered approach to theology?

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[8]Andrew Walls, "The Rise of Global Theologies," in Greenman and Green, *Global Theology in Evangelical Perspective*, 33.

[9]Stephen B. Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2009), 89.

The caution here concerns the problem of drift. It is unlikely that a seismic change in theology would suddenly take place in this model. In the discipline of missiology, for example, theology on the road discussions cause a rethinking of what constitutes the Great Commission. Injustice and human suffering as well as growing ecological issues prompt discussions as to whether our mission should be defined by Matthew 28:18-20 or by 2 Corinthians 5:19 and Colossians 1:20. The latter two texts produce a focus on reconciling and peacemaking at all levels, including with God through the gospel, with others through justice and human rights, and with the environment through creation care. These are each noble and good pursuits, but do they each come under the definition of "mission?" Rather, might some of them constitute the fruit of mission? When Jesus gave the Great Commission, did he leave some things out so that we need to turn to other texts rather than Matthew 28:18-20 on its own? Will we reach a time when planting trees is deemed to be fulfilling God's ultimate mission?

An example of going along that road of drift is addressed by Shaun Shorrosh in the growth and acceptance of a sacred/secular divide among Arab Christians in the Middle East. The road for these Christians is one where they are a small minority in a majority Muslim context which is hostile towards the Christian faith. He points out that an ecclesiology has developed where all active ministry is seen as the exclusive domain of the full-time clergy and that the laity is there to provide passive support. Any growth in the Kingdom of God comes through the clergy, with no confidence or expectations expressed for the laity.[10] Shorrosh attempts to address the drift into an unbiblical division between the sacred and the secular. These are important questions if we are to take up the challenge of keeping theology God-centered while trying to do it on the road.

THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION IN CONTEXT

The growth of Christianity in the Global South shows a maturing non-Western church that is calling for its voice to be heard.[11] This raises a significant proposition in this discussion, namely that theology is *translatable*. Timothy Tennent defines theological "translatability" as "the ability of the *kerymatic* essentials of the Christian faith to be discovered

[10] Shaun Shorrosh, "The Impact of the Sacred/Secular Divide on Gospel Transmission by Churches in the Arab World" (PhD Dissertation, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2022).

[11] "Global South" is one of the terms used to describe Christianity outside of the West. Broadly speaking, it covers the Latin American, African, and Asian contexts.

and restated within an infinite number of new global contexts."[12] As challenging as it might appear, the concept of the Trinity is therefore able to find meaningful expression in every context. The implication is that as each context undertakes this challenge it also enriches the overall understanding of God the Trinity so that no one context can declare that they have the final, conclusive word. Keeping our caution in mind we need to also declare that God has the final and conclusive word on this and other theological concepts and that our discovery in each context is not adding to or improving on this.

Are we able to arrive at a position that sees God as using the various cultures of the world as a means of confirming his eternal, unchanging truths found in the Bible? Tennent's example of the concept of sin helps to illustrate this.[13] Western-based Christianity takes an approach that focuses on sin as resulting in guilt before a holy God and as requiring atonement for that guilt. A non-Western context which is based on shame and honor points out how sin has brought us shame before a holy God and even more that we have dishonored the Triune God. This means we are not only guilty because of sin, but we also have a broken relationship with God due to the shame and dishonor that accompanies sin. All of this is a confirmation of what the Bible teaches about the concept of sin. As Gene Green explains, "So we read together with hope for a more complete understanding of the faith in the present, which anticipates the full revelation on Christ's advent."[14]

The growth of Christianity in China has been remarkable and remains a cause for celebration. Despite opposition in various forms, there appears to be a threshold that has been crossed so that under God's sovereignty Christianity is there to stay. Amid this, there are theologians and institutions within and without China who are trying to keep up with the developments. These represent different theological positions and mostly fall in place somewhere between the balcony and the road. Theologians from the outside, especially the West, are likely to be challenged by some of the inside/road approaches such as what Khiok-Khng Yeo calls "Christian Chinese Theology."[15] He explains how highly valued the Confucian scrip-

[12]Timothy C. Tennent, *Theology in the Context of World Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007), 16.

[13]Tennent, *Theology in the Context of World Christianity*, 97.

[14]Gene Green, "The Challenge of Global Hermeneutics," in Greenman and Green, eds., *Global Theology in Evangelical Perspective*, 53.

[15]Khiok-Khng Yeo, "Christian Chinese Theology," in Greenman and Green, eds., *Global Theology*

tures are in Chinese culture and suggests that the promises found in these scriptures are only fulfilled in the Bible. He argues for "an interscriptural reading between these two texts, with the hope that the Bible will be expressed using Confucian language, and the Confucian ethics will be fulfilled by the gospel."[16]

Is this acceptable theology on the road or does the road need to have boundaries? Is the road wide enough to allow a text other than the Bible to be elevated as a source of God's truth? Here is where Lamin Sanneh would caution the outsiders not to judge these Chinese theologians by using terms such as "compromise" and "syncretism." Yet a theological fundamental of evangelical Western theology is *sola Scriptura* (i.e., the Bible alone possesses sufficient authority). It may be that Western theologians misunderstand the nuances of the Chinese position so that for the Chinese they would argue that they do hold to *sola Scriptura* without any compromise. Is it reasonable for Western theologians to challenge these Chinese theologians to abide by this standard and remove themselves from any elevation of the Confucian writings to the level of Scripture, whether that elevation is real or apparent? Theology in the West has had to deal with the position of the Bible, dealing with questions of its inerrancy and infallibility, but it has dealt less with its comparison to other scriptures that exist in a culture. This is, however, the reality for the Chinese and others in the Global South. If theological education is extended from outside does it need to consider and attempt to address this Chinese context? Is it even valid for outsiders to do this? Collaboration does seem to be the right approach here where the outsiders/mission theologians can help to preserve and promote theological foundations, while the insiders contend for an indigenous application.

An example from Africa is the formation of the Africa Baptist Theological Education Network (ABTEN).[17] This network is about five years old and involves individuals and institutions with a commitment to theological education across Africa. These are both people and institutions indigenous to Africa as well as those from outside who share a confession of faith found on the abten.org website. Together they collaborate with the mission "to impact local African churches through Baptist theological institutions, by strengthening and promoting sound, missional and contextual

in Evangelical Perspective, 102.

[16]Yeo, "Christian Chinese Theology," 107.

[17]Details about this network can be found at www.abten.org.

theological education that is rooted in the Bible and responsive to African socio-cultural realities." African theologians in this network have produced works including, Moses Audi, "Academic Integrity in African Context;" Jacob Kasule, "Diversified Missional Theological Education;" Elizabeth Mburu, "Regaining the African Theological Voice;" and Bazil Bhasera, "African Theology and Ecclesiology."

Of particular significance is an ABTEN book titled *The Abandoned Gospel*. It is composed of chapters written by ABTEN theologians and directly confronts Neo-Pentecostalism and the prosperity gospel. Audi, for example, in his chapter on salvation, points to the challenges of African life which prompt a theology from Neo-Pentecostalism. This Neo-Pentecostalism grounds salvation in this life, placing the temporal over the eternal. Its concept of salvation is primarily how God delivers from all physical and spiritual problems in this life. As an African scholar living and ministering in that context, Audi can expose and address that problem in a way impossible for a remote Western scholar. The nuance and richness of the African perspective would be lost if such a book were produced in and by Western theologians who look from the balcony. Being produced from the African road it becomes a useful resource for any other context dealing with this issue. What cannot be overlooked is that many of the theologians who are active in ABTEN completed their studies in Western institutions. How much did this influence their interpretation of the African experience? If their Western study experience did not remove them from being able to apply biblical truth to their African context, then it seems reasonable to conclude that the Western institution has made an appropriate contribution.

Confessions is a model that is used to promote the development of theology in India.[18] Testimonies from several participants show that once a foundation for discipleship and church has been laid, potential leaders are given intensive workshops where they develop their theological confessions. In a workshop on the Trinity, for example, they work in groups with the missionary/outside theologian giving them a list of Bible passages that speak to the unity, essence, and function of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. In their groups, they come up with how, in their language and context, they would express these biblical truths. The groups present to each other, and then everyone as a whole works on a final statement

[18]Due to the sensitive situation in India this model is not publicized, and those who use it request anonymity.

that confesses their belief about the Trinity. This usually takes two days. They then commit to returning to their locations where they teach the confession to the believers. During the two days, the outsiders are in the room but are only consulted when needed. Is this a good example of theology on the road while keeping the Bible in the center and outsiders on the periphery? Is the eventual goal to have indigenous Indian theologians in the room as the consultants, or will there always be value in having an outsider voice? Collaboration in this kind of context, done with the right spirit, should always be better than trying to construct theology in isolation. This suggests itself as a valuable model for those called to theology in a mission context.

These are just a few examples that show the activities that are taking place and the questions that are being asked as Christians embrace mutual participation in the journey of global theological education. We seem comfortable in the approach to theological education that sees Western theologians and institutions helping to provide a foundational core, and then letting each context make its application. But are we comfortable with the idea that we all need help with understanding the core of our faith? Will we together collaborate on the universal, within agreed boundaries established through evangelical belief and practice, and then promote individual application to the immediate in each context?

THE ROLE OF THE WEST IN GLOBAL THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

Acknowledging that updated statistics are not readily available, can it reasonably be considered that in the evangelical world theological education has aspects that remain Western driven? These would include students who apply to institutions for formal study where the number of non-Western students applying to Western schools exceeds the number of Western students applying to non-Western schools (in person or online). It would also apply to the production of theological materials such as books, dissertations, and articles, which are then translated into other languages. Most of this production seems to be from the West to the Global South. If this proves to be true then what has not yet shifted to the Global South as its center is theological education. Tite Tienou provided insight into this when he wrote in 2006, "It is also clear that Christian scholarship and theology are not yet endeavors in which scholars and theologians from

Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Pacific Islands participate fully."[19] Although time has passed, the question is whether this situation remains the same. The Lausanne movement is a good example. This movement has been very intentional in including and allowing participation from the Global South. It appears to have succeeded in representing evangelical Christianity from all over the world. Despite this, its senior leadership team over the decades of its existence until the present indicate they were predominantly educated in the West.[20]

For evangelical theologians all over the world, a vital component of this discussion has to do with the preservation of biblical theology. The preservation principle would argue that God in his sovereignty raises up movements at various times in a variety of cultural and geographic locations to preserve biblical theology. The African Anglican experience is a good case in point. Olayemi Fatusi, in his dissertation "Crowther Goes to Canterbury: A Historical Analysis of Ajayi Crowther's (1810-1891) Missiological Practices and the Anglican Decade of Evangelism (1990-1999)," points out how evangelical Anglicans in Africa are challenging those who first brought them the gospel to return to their biblical roots.[21] His evidence suggests that it is the African Anglicans who have taken on the responsibility and role of preserving biblical theology in the Anglican church. Giving this a universal application we would say that when Christianity in a particular geographic and cultural location pursues a man-centered theology, God may allow this while at the same time inspiring a God-centered theology in another context. We may end up highly concerned and pessimistic in the context in which we are immersed as we see a move away from biblical theology, but we need to be encouraged by the larger context of God's kingdom, believing that he is preserving biblical theology. This optimism may even be to the point where such preservation of truth increasingly shows itself as Christianity grows and reaches into all corners of the earth.

If we commit ourselves to a God-centered approach in theological education, then Western theologians and institutions must recognize their

[19]Tite Tienou, "Christian Theology in an Era of World Christianity," in Ott and Netland, eds., *Globalizing Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), 45.

[20]J. E. M. Cameron, *The Lausanne Legacy: Landmarks in Global Mission* (Oxford: Dictum Press, 2023), Appendix 1.

[21]Olayemi Olusola Talabi Fatusi, "Crowther Goes to Canterbury : A Historical Analysis of Ajayi Crowther's (1810-1891) Missiological Practices and the Anglican Decade of Evangelism (1990-1999)," (PhD Dissertation, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2017). http://aaron.swbts.edu/login?url=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&site=eds-live&db=cat03589a&AN=swbts.b1862806.

calling and responsibility to preserve and *proclaim* biblical theology. This should occur within the context of all the issues and questions raised in this discussion so that our preservation and proclamation are covered in humility and servanthood, knowing that our participation in all the other contexts of the Global South will in turn benefit us in our preservation and proclamation. A God-centered approach also keeps us optimistic as we realize that, even if our immediate context faces opposition to preservation and proclamation, nevertheless there are other contexts where God is compensating for this. As Western theologians and missionaries, our temptation in all of this is one of control. But will we allow the Global South to participate as equal partners and forego our impulse to be in control? Some look at our track record and doubt whether this is possible; however, we must hold out hope that under the lordship of Christ and the illumination of the Holy Spirit we can do so.

CULTURAL DIMENSIONS OF GLOBALIZATION

Daniel R. Sanchez*

In *Evangelism in the Early Church*, Michael Green discusses three pathways that facilitated the spreading of the gospel message in the first century. First, there was the *Pax Romana*. "As it was, the new faith entered the world at a time of peace unparalleled in history."[1] The roadway system that was developed to maintain this peace also fostered trade and social interaction. "The possibilities of spreading the gospel afforded by this swift and safe method of travel were fully exploited by the early Christians."[2] Second, there was the Greek culture. "The Greek language was so widely disseminated through the Mediterranean basin that it acted almost as a universal common tongue."[3] "It was along the pathways of the Greek language and Greek thought that the Christian gospel travelled in the early days."[4] The third pathway was the Jewish religion. "But by far the broadest avenue to the advance of Christianity was afforded by Judaism. The Jews went far beyond the confines of Palestine long before the first century; and everywhere they went, they took their religion with them."[5]

If Green were writing about the spreading of the Christian message in our day, he would undoubtedly mention globalization as a pathway. Globalization, with its fast-paced digital communication and rapid air travel, makes it possible to obtain information about and establish contact with people groups around the world, thus facilitating the spreading of the Christian message.

The leadership of the Association of Theological Schools (ATS) is convinced that globalization represents a highly significant issue that must be

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[1]Michael Green, *Evangelism in the Early Church*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 30.

[2]Green, *Evangelism*, 33.

[3]Green, *Evangelism*, 33

[4]Green, *Evangelism*, 33.

[5]Green, *Evangelism*, 42.

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 world."[6]

In light of the impact of globalization, we need to pay close attention to the question: "What difference does it make for the practice of evangelical theology that the church is no longer rooted in America and Europe but increasingly comprises people from an astonishing variety of cultures and nations?"[7] As Jeffrey P. Greenman puts it, "During the twentieth century, the geographical center of the church moved South and East, so the heartlands of the Christian faith are no longer in the North American region but rather in Africa, Asia, Latin America and Oceania."[8] This is not an argument to ignore what the Lord is doing in the "Global North" but to pay attention to the marvelous way in which the gospel message is spreading the "Global South."[9]

In his book, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity*, Philip Jenkins states:

> We are currently living through one of the transforming moments in the history of religion worldwide. Over the past five centuries or so, the story of Christianity has been inexorably bound with the European-driven civilizations overseas, above all in North America.... Over the past century, however, the center of gravity in the Christian world has shifted inexorably southward to Africa, Asia and Latin America.… This trend will continue apace in the coming years. Many of the fastest growing countries in the world are either predominantly Christian or else very sizeable minorities. Even if Christians just maintain their share of the population in countries like Nigeria and Kenya, Mexico

[6]David S. Schuller, "Editorial Introduction," *Theological Education* XXII, (Spring 1986), 5-6.

[7]Stephen T. Pardue, *Why Evangelical Theology Needs the Global Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2023), 1.

[8]Jeffrey P. Greenman and Gene L. Green, *Global Theology in Evangelical Perspective* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2012), 9.

[9]For additional insights on this issue, see Mitri Raheb and Mark A. Lamport, eds., *Emerging Theologies from the Global South* (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2023).

> and Ethiopia, Brazil and the Philippines, there are soon going to be several hundred million more Christians in these nations alone. Moreover, conversions will swell the Christian share of the world population.[10]

In light of the globalization of Christianity, theological educators must consider it in training people for ministry in today's world. The first step will be an effort to understand the concept of globalization.

UNDERSTANDING THE CONCEPT OF GLOBALIZATION

Because this essay focuses on globalization in theological education, it will begin with a definition of globalization and a discussion of its impact on religion. This will lead to an exploration of cultural dimensions in globalization that need to be considered in the realm of theological education. Because globalization is a multidimensional concept, it is difficult to articulate a succinct definition. Iffat Ara Jasmin's definition of globalization is a good starting point towards an understanding of this concept:

> So, we can see that globalization is a process of interconnectedness, interdependence and integration of economics and societies. It is also a process of interaction and integration among the people, companies, and governments of different nations, a process driven by international trade and investment and enhanced by information technology. This process has effects on the environment, on culture, on religion, on political systems, on economic development and prosperity, and on human physical well-being in societies around the world.[11]

While there is a sense in which there is an increasing consciousness of perceiving the "world as a whole," the global community is heterogeneous. There are significant similarities as well as dissimilarities in the "interconnected systems of communication, transportation and economic exchange."[12] David Scott asserts that: "Globalization is always the product

[10]Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 1-2.

[11]Iffat Ara Jasmin, "Relationship between Globalisation and Religion: Possibilities and Challenges," *Daily Sun*, December 12, 2017; https://www.daily-sun.com/printversion/details/274889.

[12]Richard Osmer, "The Teaching Ministry in a Multicultural World," in *God and Globalization*,

of different local cultures coming together; there is no such thing as 'global culture.'"[13] Kenneth Nehrbass echoes the same idea when he states, "In the twenty years since Ritzer predicted McWorld, we have discovered that there are many cultural, linguistic, religious and political barriers to creating a homogeneous (and bland) world culture."[14]

How the different cultural groups respond to this interconnectedness reflects their religious orientation. Iffat Ana Jasmin similarly describes the impact that globalization can have on religion:

> On the one hand, globalisation creates [a] new door to strength religion such as enhancing beliefs and values, teaching equality for everyone, showing kindness, etc. On the other hand, it creates obstacles and challenges as it breaks traditional values while weakening their own religious values, reinforces specific identities, creates a circle of conflict and competition among various religion, etc. So, we can see that relationship between globalisation and religion is a complex issue, one with new possibilities and furthering challenges.[15]

In light of the various ways in which globalization is perceived, one can say that it can be a benefit as well as a threat to religion. The benefit comes from the fact that globalization can open geographical and cultural boundaries. Political and geographical barriers that previously prohibited communication between cultural groups can easily be breached through internet-driven applications on both computers and cell phones (e.g., such as Zoom, texting, websites, and translation systems such as Google, DeepL, Bing Microsoft, Systran, Amazon as well as hand-held translators, voice translator devices, simultaneous translation equipment). People wishing to go across political, cultural, and linguistic barriers with the gospel message can benefit significantly from the tools that are available

ed. Max L. Stackhouse with Don S. Browning, vol. 2, *The Spirit and the Modern Authorities* (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 2001), 39. Volumes 1 and 3 have valuable information on globalization.

[13]David Scott, "Globalization and Online Theological Education: Questions We Must Ask," *FullerMagazine* 21;https://fullerstudio.fuller.edu/theology/globalization-and-online-theological-education-questions-we-must-ask.

[14]Kenneth Nehrbass, *God's Image and Global Cultures: Integrating Faith and Culture in the Twenty-First Century* (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2016), 23.

[15]Jasmin, "Relationship."

through globalization. While in the 1950s evangelicals rejoiced when Brother Andrew was able to sneak a few Bibles into Russia, today not only oral and print Bibles but entire libraries in numerous languages can be delivered to "closed countries" in the encoded chips of cell phones and flash drives. The "Jesus Film" is now available in 2,093 languages and has been seen by more than one billion people.[16]

Walter Brueggemann stresses the importance of taking globalization into account in theological education when he states:

> It is because Christian faith and Christian ministry are inseparably linked to real life that globalization presses upon us. As is often the case, the defining pressures of theological education are not initiated by theological schools or generated by the church. They are rather emergent in the life of culture where the church and its theological schools find their rightful habitat.[17]

The threat of globalization emerges when it leads to a syncretistic approach to religion in which doctrines and practices of the different religions are modified and merged to form a "world religion" that purportedly seeks the common good of people in today's global community. While the idea of the "common good" of the people may sound appealing, it can lead to a syncretism that distorts the Christian message.[18]

Charles Kraft defines syncretism as "the mixing of Christian suppositions with those worldview suppositions that are incompatible with Christianity so that the result is not biblical Christianity."[19] David J. Hesselgrave says syncretism "is perhaps best understood as a very natural desire on the part of many people to embrace the most appealing aspects of the various religions.… Missionary communication will be well advised to be aware of the appeal of this response and to communicate patiently the uniqueness of Christ and Christian revelation."[20]

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[16]Jesus Film Project, November 2023 Report.

[17]Walter Brueggemann, "Foreword," in *The Globalization of Theological Education*, ed. Alice Frazer Evans, Robert A. Evans, and David Roozen (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1993), xi.

[18]For a critique of economic globalization, see Pardue, *Why Evangelical*, 94.

[19]Charles H. Kraft, "Culture and Contextualization," in Ralph D. Winter, Steven C. Hawthorne, *Perspectives on The World Christian Movement*, William Carey Library, 1981, 46.

[20]David J. Hesselgrave, *Communicating Christ Cross-Culturally* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1991), 185, 186.

A challenge for those involved in theological education today is that of utilizing the pathways provided by globalization while at the same time safeguarding the uniqueness of the Christian message. This, however, should not lead evangelical Christians to isolate themselves from people of other religious persuasions. For evangelical Christians, having a global perspective is a biblical imperative. In the Old Testament, God is presented as the creator of heaven and earth (Gen 1:1). The listing of the table of nations in Genesis 10 reveals that "all the nations issue forth from the creative hand of God and are under his watchful eye of patience and judgment."[21] In Genesis 12:1-3, we find God's promise to bless Abraham and through him to bless the nations of the world.[22] Exodus 19:5-6, explains God's plan for Israel. As Walter Kaiser explains, "It is here that Israel's missionary role becomes explicit, if any doubt had remained. The whole nation was to function on behalf of the Kingdom of God in a mediatorial role to the nations."[23]

The global dimension of the Christian message is clearly stated in the New Testament. In Matthew 24:14, Jesus stated that the gospel of the kingdom would be preached in all the world. In the Great Commission of Matthew 28:19, Jesus commands his disciples to "make disciples of all of the nations."[24] In Acts 1:8, Jesus tells his followers to be his witnesses "in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and unto the end of the earth." The multiple languages in which the believers spoke at Pentecost reveal the global intention of the Holy Spirit.

Justo L. Gonzalez explains, "Indeed, the 'great miracle of Pentecost' is that all of the people, who were gathered from a variety of places, all hear the 'mighty acts of God' in their own, tongue. It is the presence of these people that provides the occasion for the miracle, and it is on their behalf that the Spirit intervenes, so that they may hear the message in their own

[21] Johannes Verkuyl, "The Biblical Foundation for the Worldwide Mission Mandate," in *Perspectives on The World Christian Movement*, ed. Ralph D. Winter and Steven C. Hawthorne (Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1981), 35, 36.

[22] John R. Stott, "The Living God is a Missionary God," in *Perspectives on The World Christian Movement*, ed. Ralph D. Winter and Steven C. Hawthorne (Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1981), 12, 13.

[23] Walter C. Kaiser Jr., "Israel's Missionary Call," in *Perspectives on The World Christian Movement*, ed. Ralph D. Winter and Steven C. Hawthorne (Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1981), 29.

[24] All Scripture citations are taken from the New King James Version (NKJV) of Scripture.

tongues."[25] John Stott likewise emphasizes the global dimensions of the Christian message:

> Our mandate for world evangelization, therefore, is in the whole Bible. It is to be found in the creation of God (because of which all human beings are responsible to him), in the character of God (as outgoing, loving, compassionate, not willing that any should perish, desiring that all should come to repentance), in the promises of God (that all the nations will be blessed through Abraham's seed and will become the Messiah's inheritance), in the Christ of God (now exalted with universal authority to receive universal acclaim), in the Spirit of God (who convicts of sin, witnesses to Christ, and impels the church to evangelize) and in the church of God (which is a multinational community, under orders to evangelize until Christ returns).[26]

The scene described in Revelation 7:9 of "a great multitude which no one could number of all nations, tribes, peoples and tongues" reveals the global nature of the Great Commission. Stott categorically states, "We need to become global Christians, with a global vision, for we have a global God."[27] It is imperative for those of us involved in theological education to have a clear understanding of the concept of globalization.

OBSTACLES TO GLOBALIZATION

In this discussion of the cultural dimensions of globalization, those of us involved in theological education must be mindful of the fact that we are training Anglo-American as well as Ethnic-American students to be effective as they serve in multicultural settings in the United States as well as abroad.[28] We also need to train international students to focus their ministry on their particular ethnic group as well as other cultural groups.

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[25]Justo L. González and Catherine G. González, "An Historical Survey," in *The Globalization of Theological Education*, ed. Alice Frazer Evans, Robert A. Evans, and David A. Rozen, (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1993), 13.

[26]John R. Stott, "The Bible in World Evangelization," in *Perspectives on The World Christian Movement*, ed. Ralph D. Winter and Steven C. Hawthorne (Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1981), 4.

[27]Stott, "Living God," 18.

[28]Daniel R. Sanchez, *Hispanic Realities Impacting America* (Fort Worth: Church Starting Network, 2006), xi.

In our attempt to accomplish this, it will be helpful for us to begin with an analysis of ethnocentrism as one of the obstacles to globalization. This will be followed by an exploration of ways in which we might be more effective in addressing multiculturalism in our curricula, our classes, and our relationships.

The authors *Managing Cultural Differences* define culture as "a distinctly human means of adapting to circumstances and transmitting this copying skill to subsequent generations. Culture gives people a sense of who they are, of belonging, of how they should behave, and what they should be doing. Culture impacts behavior, morale, and productivity at work, and includes values and patterns that influence company values and actions."[29]

Smalley provides a definition of ethnocentrism: "Ethnocentrism is a term used by anthropologists to represent that point of view which we all have, to varying degrees, that our own culture, our own way of doing things, is best. It may lead us to assume that our own way is the only right way."[30] Ethnocentrism was addressed in the early church and requires our recognition of its existence in societies today.

Ethnocentrism in the Early Church. The newly formed church in Jerusalem encountered intercultural challenges. Acts 6:1 states, "Now those days, when the number of disciples was multiplying, there arose a complaint against the Hebrews by the Hellenists, because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution." It is evident that there were two people groups in the church in Jerusalem: the Hebraic Jews, who spoke Aramaic, and the Hellenistic Jews (principally Jews of the dispersion who had come to settle in Jerusalem), who spoke Greek.

It is important to note that, in response to this challenge, the church not only addressed the spiritual need by appointing men "full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom" but also addressed the cultural need in that the names of all of the deacons were Greek.[31] People with spiritual qualities and cultural sensitivity were appointed to address a need that otherwise could have split that young church. The result of the spiritually sensitive and culturally informed solution is reflected in verse 7: "Then the word of God spread, and the number of disciples was multiplied in Jerusalem, and great number of the priests were obedient to the faith."

The experience of Peter recorded in Acts 10 reveals his reticence to

[29]Harris, Moran, and Moran, *Managing Cultural Differences*, 4.

[30]William Smalley, "Respect and Ethnocentrism," in *Readings in Missionary Anthropology* II, ed. William Smalley (Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1984), 712.

[31]I. Howard Marshall, *Acts*, TNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 127.

share the gospel message with Gentiles. In verse 28, he clearly states, "You know how unlawful it is for a Jewish man to keep company with or go with another nation. But God has shown me that I should not call any man common or unclean." It is true that Peter stated, "I perceive that God shows no partiality. But from every nation whoever Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him" (vv. 34-35). However, at Antioch of Pisidia (Gal 2:11-14), Peter's decision to stop eating with Gentile Christians when Jewish Christians arrived may reflect that he was still influenced to some extent by his own ethnocentrism or that he was yielding to the ethnocentrism of the Jewish Christians.[32]

An ethnocentric attitude was evident initially when the Jewish refugees who fled Jerusalem, because of the persecution (Acts 8:1), arrived in Antioch and "preached to no one but the Jews only" (Acts 11:19). They restricted their message to their fellow Hebrew-speaking Jews. Things changed, however, when Hellenistic Jews arrived on the scene: "But there were some of them, men from Cyprus and Cyrene who came to Antioch and began speaking to the Greeks also, proclaiming the good news about Jesus" (v. 20).

It is understandable that these Jewish Christians initially shared the gospel message with those who spoke their language and shared the same culture.[33] It is estimated that there were between 25,000 and 50,000 Jews in Antioch.[34] On the other hand, the total population of this city was between 500,000 and 800,000.[35] We thank the Lord for the evangelistic attitude displayed in Acts 11:20, but we cannot help but wonder how many Acts 11:19 churches are in our midst today. The fact that the outreach to the Gentiles pleased the Lord is reflected in verse 21: "And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed and turned to the Lord."

Ethnocentrism was also reflected in the last question which the disciples asked Jesus, "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6). Polhill explains, "Jesus did not reject the concept of

[32]To Peter's credit, there is evidence that as he matured in his Christian faith, he encouraged believers to be ready always to give an answer of their hope but to do it "in reverence and respect." (1 Pet 3:15).

[33]Ebbie Smith makes a distinction between a homogeneous unit principle ("which are absolute and stand for what should be everywhere at all times") and homogeneous strategies ("which can be altered and set aside as situations demand"). Ebbie C. Smith, *Balanced Church Growth* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1984), 51. He states that it may be strategic for a person to start a church with a particular ethnic group; however, that strategy needs to change as the church family becomes more culturally diverse and as it surrounded by people of different cultures.

[34]John B. Polhill, *Acts*, NAC (Nashville: Broadman, 1992), 269.

[35]Polhill, *Acts*, 268.

the 'restoration of Israel.' Instead, he 'depoliticized it' with the call to a worldwide mission."[36] Polhill adds, "The reply of Jesus reflected a global perspective. 'You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and the ends of the earth.' The disciples were to be the true 'restored Israel,' fulfilling its mission to be a 'light for the Gentiles' so that God's salvation might reach 'to the ends of the earth' (Isa 49:6)."[37]

Ethnocentrism was certainly evident in the Judaizers who "saw Greek Christians through Hebrew eyes."[38] It is interesting to note that these Judaizers were Pharisees who had become believers but wanted to impose Jewish beliefs and cultural customs upon the Gentile believers (Acts 15:5). The evolving conflict prompted the meeting in Jerusalem. After hearing the testimonies of Peter, Paul, and Barnabas and being guided by the Holy Spirit, the decision was made "not to trouble them" but to require that they "abstain from things polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from things strangled and from blood" (Acts 15:19-20). While this prohibition refers to heathen practices that Gentile Christians should have abandoned, it also encourages them to refrain from practices that were repulsive to Jewish Christians. Cultural sensitivity on the part of both groups would contribute to the unity that should characterize the church.

Ethnocentrism in Today's Societies. Ethnocentrism was not only a challenge to the early church. It continues to challenge the church today. Paul Hiebert states,

> If cross-cultural misunderstandings are based on our knowledge of another culture, ethnocentrism is based on feelings and values. In relating to another people, we need not only to understand them but also to deal with our feelings that distinguish between "us" and "our kind of people" and "them" and "their kind of people." Identification takes place only when "they" become part of the circle we think of as "our kind of people."[39]

Gene Green makes a similar insightful observation:

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[36]Polhill, *Acts*, 84.

[37]Polhill, *Acts*, 85.

[38]William Smalley, "Cultural Implications of an Indigenous Church," in *Perspectives on The World Christian Movement*, ed. Ralph D. Winter and Steven C. Hawthorne (Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1981), 500.

[39]Hiebert, "Cross-Cultural Differences," 54.

> One does not have to become culturally Western in order to become a Christian. Christianity may be expressed in the languages of the world, through the music of the world and through the cultural idioms of the world. The current global engagements of Scripture and culture are parallel to the way the early church took the message of Jesus in the land of Judea and the Aramaic language and translated it both culturally and linguistically as it ran to the Roman World.[40]

In his chapter titled "Respect and Ethnocentrism," Smalley explains that value judgments are essential in dealing with people in other cultural settings: "This should not be read to imply that Christians should not make value judgments. Every human being does make them, whether he wants to or not, and every Christian is morally obligated to do so. The problem lies in the unthinking ethnocentricity of these judgments. It lies in our imposition of our judgments on other people."[41] If left unchecked, ethnocentrism can become a formidable obstacle to globalization.

OUTCOMES OF GLOBALIZATION

A sincere and ongoing focus on globalization should lead to a greater degree of cultural intelligence on the part of the individuals, a harmonious relationship between professors and students, and a culturally relevant environment in educational institutions. It is indeed interesting to note that, while missionaries were among the first to be involved in intercultural studies,[42] in recent years people involved in global business have written excellent books about intercultural communication under the rubric of cultural intelligence. They have come to the realization that their business dealing with people of other cultures is enhanced if they learn to see concepts and relationships through their eyes.[43]

David C. Thomas and Kerr Inkson define cultural intelligence in the

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[40]Greenman and Green, *Cultural Theology*, 10.

[41]Smalley, "Respect and Ethnocentrism," 712.

[42]In addition to the missionaries we have already cited (William Smalley, David J. Hesselgrave) are Eugene A. Nida, Donald N. Larson, Louis J. Luzbetak, Charles H. Kraft, Ralph D. Winter Paul Hiebert, Allan R. Tippett, J. Herbert Kane, E. Thomas and Elizabeth S. Brewster, Donald A. McGavran, John R. Mott, R. Pierce Bever, Danny Yu, Fatima Mahoumet, Samuel Moffett, Samuel Zwemer, Henry Venn, Arthur Glasser, Vergil Gerber, C. Peter Wagner, John Mizuki, Tetsunao Yamamori, Tomothy Monsma, Gailyn Van Rhennen and Rebecca J. Winter.

[43]David C. Thomas and Kerr Inkson, *Cultural Intelligence: People Skills for Global Businesses* (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler, 2004), 15-16.

following manner: "Cultural intelligence means being skilled and flexible about understanding a culture, learning more about it from ongoing interactions with it, and gradually reshaping your thinking to be more sympathetic to the culture and your behavior to be more skilled and appropriate when interacting with others from that culture."[44] They then explain the various components of cultural intelligence. "First, the culturally intelligent person needs to have *knowledge* of culture and of the fundamental principles of cross-cultural interactions. This means knowing what culture is, how cultures vary, and how culture affects behavior."[45] As we have mentioned earlier, through websites, books, and personal observation, professors and students in seminaries have an opportunity to acquire knowledge about the cultures of the people with whom they are relating.

Thomas and Inkson continue, "Second, the culturally intelligent person needs to practice *mindfulness*, the ability to pay attention in a reflexive and creative way to clues in cross-cultural situations encountered and to one's knowledge and feelings."[46] The opposite of mindfulness is what these authors call "cultural cruise control," which they define as "running your life on your built in cultural in assumptions."[47] In essence, this means doing things that are acceptable in our own culture without considering how this might be interpreted by people of other cultures. Cultural cruise control has implications for language, practices, and relationships. For professors in American educational institutions, cruise control means designing and teaching courses without taking into account how minority or international students might understand what is being taught. There is a sense in which "cruise control" and "ethnocentrism" are very similar. "Third, the culturally intelligent person needs to *develop the skills* that are required to act appropriately in a range of situations."[48] Thomas and Inkson elaborate, "In business, for example, the most common perceived causes of problems are not technical or administrative deficiencies, but problems such as communication failures, misunderstandings in negotiations, personality conflicts, poor leadership style, and bad teamwork—in other words, inadequacies in the ways people interact with each other."[49] Intercultural skills, by definition, cannot be acquired in isolation. There

[44]Thomas and Inkson, *Cultural Intelligence*, 15.
[45]Thomas and Inkson, *Cultural Intelligence*, 16.
[46]Thomas and Inkson, *Cultural Intelligence*, 16.
[47]Thomas and Inkson, *Cultural Intelligence*, 46.
[48]Thomas and Inkson, *Cultural Intelligence*, 22.
[49]Thomas and Inkson, *Cultural Intelligence*, 57.

must be a willingness to spend time with people of other cultures conversing, listening, and participating in social, religious, and recreational activities.

Thomas and Inkson conclude, "Through selective perception, stereotypic expectations, and inaccurate attributions, we may be led by our cultural programming to misjudge the behavior of others who are culturally different." In response, we must remember, "The elements of knowledge, mindfulness, and skills enable the practice of cultural intelligence in skilled performance that is adapted to the particular cultural settings the individual faces."[50]

APPLICATION OF GLOBALIZATION

The principles that we have reviewed can enable us to have a good understanding of the concept of globalization. Our last section will focus on practical ways in which globalization can be implemented in our educational institutions. Some of these will be suggestions while others will be questions to be addressed individually as well as in groups with fellow professors. We should consider enabling the application of globalization from the perspectives of both institutions and students.

Enable the Institution to Consider the Aspects of Globalization in Its Curricula and Structure. Because the educational institutions have their programs of education and structure, I will mention some of the key issues and encourage the institutions to determine how they can deal with these in their respective settings. In *The Globalization of Theological Education*,[51] the editors include insightful essays on the implementation of globalization principles in their institutions. The essay designed by a Globalization Committee, "Why Globalization?", has an excellent overview of the rationale which might be helpful to theological schools contemplating the initiation of a globalization program. This article begins by suggesting these objectives for discussion:

1. To identify the reason for incorporating globalization into the curriculum, especially the various theological reasons for such a program.
2. To identify the theological and pedagogical issues that must be

[50]Thomas and Inkson, *Cultural Intelligence*, 52.

[51]Alice Frazer Evans, Robert A. Evans, David A. Roozen, eds., *The Globalization of Theological Education* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1993).

addressed in developing such a program.
3. To draft a theological rationale for a globalization project.[52]

The article then utilizes questions that raise issues relevant to this endeavor:

1. What are the possible theological justifications for globalization of the curriculum?
2. Which do we consider appropriate and which ones are inappropriate?
3. Are faculty members solidly behind a project that addresses globalization?
4. Is there consensus on theological the rationale necessary or is it better avoided?
5. What pedagogical issues must be faced regarding immersion experiences (e.g., value of experiential learning, acquiring the necessary analytical tools, adequate debriefing)?
6. How will the congregations benefit from globalization of the theological curriculum?[53]

I would add these questions for theological schools to consider:

1. Does our school have a globalization task force that promotes ongoing inquiry, training, and involvement in theological education? If not, is it willing to establish one that involves administration, faculty members, and students?
2. To what extent is the leadership and faculty of our school exhibiting knowledge and practice of theological globalization in the classroom as well as in social interaction with the students?
3. How would a professor in your institution respond to this assertion: "What has typically been regarded as a theology for the whole global church actually has been, in many respects, Western Theology, which has been assumed to be universal theology"?[54]
4. What specific plans does our school have to enable students to deal effectively with globalization in the United States? How is this reflected in the curriculum?
5. What specific plans does our school have to enable students to

[52]"Why Globalization?" in *The Globalization of Theological Education*, ed. Alice Frazer Evans, Robert A. Evans, and David A. Rozen, (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1993), 56-57.

[53]"Why Globalization?" 56-57.

[54]Greenman and Green, *Cultural Theology*, 11.

deal effectively with globalization in other countries?

6. What specific plans does our school have to encourage American students and international students to spend sufficient time fellowshipping with one another to be prepared to serve in multicultural environments?
7. To what extent is our school communicating with the ethnic churches in our area?[55] Are students who are planning to serve as missionaries encouraged to join a local congregation of an ethnic group similar to the one they plan to serve abroad?
8. Does our school have courses on Cultural Anthropology and Intercultural Communication?
9. If theological schools make provision for students to form ethnic/language fellowships, a valid question might be, "Do we have an intercultural fellowship that encourages students from various cultural backgrounds to get to know each other?"
10. While there are definite advantages for international and ethnic American students to learn the English language (especially considering the abundance of published materials), is it advisable for theological schools in America to allow students to do research and writing (even dissertations) in their own language, thus ensuring that there is more diversity of resources in our libraries?
11. How does the faculty composition of our schools reflect the presence of international and ethnic students in our school?
12. To what extent are our faculty members and students becoming aware of available translation systems such as Google, DeepL, Bing Microsoft, Systran and Amazon as well as Hand-Held Translators, Voice Translator Devices, Simultaneous Translation Equipment, etc.?
13. How many of our guest professors are originally from other countries?
14. How many of our professors teach courses in other countries?
15. How is Zoom (and similar technologies) being used to teach courses abroad as well as to have courses that are taught abroad also offered in our U.S. campuses?
16. How many of the "Intercultural Failures" listed by Thomas and Inkson apply to our professors and our students? Among these intercultural failures are: Being unaware of key features and

[55]Tarrant County Baptist Association has a list of ethnic churches in its geographical area.

biases in your own culture. Feeling threatened or uneasy when interacting with people who are different culturally. Being unable to understand or explain the behavior of others who are culturally different. Being unable to transfer knowledge about one culture to another culture. Not recognizing when our cultural orientation is influencing our behavior. Being unable to adjust to living and working in another culture. Being unable to develop long-term interpersonal relationships.[56]

17. What modifications are faculty members willing to make in their classes to demonstrate cultural sensitivity to international and ethnic students without lowering academic standards? Could we use PowerPoint presesentations to enable our students to see as well as hear what we are saying? For students concerned about "losing face,"[57] if we correct them publicly, could we give them our input in writing or private conversation?[58] Would it be possible for us to permit international students to write their dissertations in their native language and then translate them into English? Are we willing to allow students to utilize discussion forms with which they are accustomed to express their views?[59] Are we willing to modify our testing methods to enable international students to communicate what they have learned in ways to which they are accustomed?[60]

In summary, as we consider the cultural aspects of globalization in our institutions, we must ask ourselves the question: "To what degree are we willing to adjust our methodology to be more effective as we teach students with a different cultural background?" Moreover, we must also enable our students to develop their theology of globalization.

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[56]Thomas and Inkson, *Cultural Intelligence*, 12.

[57]"Losing face," or diū liǎn (丢脸), in Asian cultures means loss of respect, reputation, or dignity in the eyes of others and a blow to their social standing.

[58]Sherwood G. Lingenfelter and Marvin K. Mayers, *Ministering Cross-Culturally: An Incarnational Model for Personal Relationships* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1986), 35. These authors also focus on the diversity between cultures regarding such factors as: Willingness to expose vulnerability, time orientation versus event orientation, person orientation versus task orientation, achievement focus versus status focus, dichotomistic thinking versus holistic thinking, and crisis orientation versus non-crisis orientation.

[59]E. Randolph Richards and Brandon J. O'Brien, *Misreading Scripture with Western Eyes* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity Press, 2012), 20. See also Esau McCaulley, *Reading While Black: African American Biblical Interpretation as an Exercise in Hope* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity, 2020).

[60]For a valuable resource on the communication patterns, listening habits, behavior at meetings, and manners and taboos of people in the various cultures of the world see Richard D. Lewis, *When Cultures Collide: Leading Across Cultures*, 3rd ed. (Boston: Nicholas Brealey, 2006).

Enable Students to Develop a Theology of Globalization That Reflects Cultural Intelligence. As previously mentioned, cultural intelligence is a significant component of globalization. Darrell L. Bock suggests six key biblical passages that should be studied for the development of a "theology of cultural intelligence": Ephesians 6:10-18; 1 Peter 3:13-18; Colossians 4:5-6; Galatians 6:10; 2 Corinthians 5:7-21 and 2 Timothy 2:22-26.[61]

To Bock's list, I would suggest three additional passages. In 1 Corinthians 9:19-23, Paul indicates his willingness to adapt the presentation of the gospel message to a particular audience for it to be receptive. To be sure, Paul is inflexible regarding the content of the gospel message, for in Galatians 1:8 he states, "But even if we or an angel from heaven preach any another gospel to you than what we have preached, let him be accursed." On the other hand, Paul's willingness to adapt the presentation of the gospel message is seen in the contrast between his message to the Jewish audience in the synagogue in Antioch in Pisidia (Acts 13:14-52) and to the Greek audience in Athens (Acts 17:22-34).[62] In these two instances, Paul does not merely use the appropriate language for each group[63] but also employs a different starting point.

American and international students alike need to develop a theology of globalization in their preparation for ministry.[64] The United States is now more multicultural than ever before in its history, as demonstrated by the following ethnic population statistics for 2023: Anglo, 58.9 percent; Hispanic, 19.1 percent; African American, 13.6 percent; and Asian, 6.3percent.[65] The projections for 2050 are Anglo, 47 percent; Hispanic, 29 percent; African American, 13 percent; and, Asian 9 precent.[66] In California and Texas, Hispanics are now the largest cultural group. There are at least two very significant implications of these population data.[67]

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[61]Darrell L. Bock, *Cultural Intelligence: Living for God in a Diverse, Pluralistic World* (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2020), 11-34.

[62]Andrew F. Walls, "Old Athens and New Jerusalem: Some Signposts of Christian Scholarship in the Early History of Mission Studies," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 21.4 (October 1997): 148.

[63]Acts 21:37 (Greek); 21:40 (Hebrew). A reasonable assumption is that Paul spoke in Hebrew in the synagogue in Antioch.

[64]Three helpful resources are Aylward Shorter, *Toward A Theology of Inculturation* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1988); Greenman and Green, *Cultural Theology*; and Nehrbass, *God's Image*.

[65]US Census Bureau Population, year, race, age, ethnicity, US Facts May 18, 2023

[66]Pew Research Center Analysis of 2010 and 2022 American Community Surveys (U.S. Census Bureau).

[67]For insights on reaching Hispanic Americans, see Rudolph D. Gonzalez, *Then Came Hispangelicals* (Sisters, OR: Deep River, 2019). See also Daniel R. Sanchez, ed., *Hispanic Realities Impacting America: Implications for Evangelism and Missions* (Fort Worth: Church Starting Network, 2006).

First, students receiving theological training need to be prepared to serve in multicultural settings in the United States. Their training needs to be similar to that which is used for missionaries serving abroad who need to be prepared to learn another language and to adjust and serve in another culture. For ethnic groups in the United States, it will not be enough for them to focus only on their group. They must be prepared to establish multicultural churches.[68] A relevant question is, "What are our educational institutions doing to train students to have a global perspective for their ministry?"[69] A related question is, "Are we equipping our students to deal effectively with churches in communities that are experiencing significant cultural transition?"[70]

Second, students who have a calling to be missionaries abroad also need to have a theology of globalization which guides them to be effective in living as well as communicating the gospel message in another culture. The population of the world today stands at 8.1 billion people.[71] The Joshua Project indicates there are 17,453 people groups in the world. Of these, 7,398 are considered "unreached people groups."[72] A valid question is, "What can our educational institutions do to enable students to learn a theology of globalization that will guide and undergird their missionary activities?"[73]

ATTEMPTS AT GLOBALIZATION

Throughout its history, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary has

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[68]I served as interim pastor in a Korean church in Dallas. It was the congregation of 1.5 and second generation Koreans who preferred an English-speaking service and who invited young people of other ethnic groups who were more fluent in English than the mother tongue of their parents. For a discussion on church planting models, see Daniel R. Sanchez and Ebbie C. Smith, S*tarting Reproducing Congregations* (Fort Worth: Church Planting Network, 2011), chapter 5.

[69]Two excellent resources are Lingenfelter and Mayers, *Ministering Cross-Culturally*; and Patty Lane, *A Beginner's Guide to Crossing Cultures* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2002).

[70]Some books on churches in transition are Carl S. Dudley and Nancy T. Ammerman, Congregations in Transition (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2002); Dan Southerland, *Transitioning: Leading Your Church Through Changes* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002); David N. Mosser, ed., *Transitions: Leading Churches Through Change* (Louisville: WJK, 2011). See also Graham Hill, *Global Church: Reshaping Our Conversations, Renewing Our Mission, Revitalizing Our Churches* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2016).

[71]World Population Clock, 2:55 PM, November 29, 2023, https://www.census.gov/popclock/.

[72]Joshua Project, Ministry of Frontier Ventures; https://joshuaproject.net.

[73]Some helpful resources are J. Herbert Kane, *A Global View of Christian Missions: From Pentecost to the Present* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979); Hill, *Global Church*; Ebbie C. Smith, *God's Incredible Plan: A Guide to the Place of Human Action in the Efforts to Share God's Salvation with the Peoples of the World* (Fort Worth: Church Starting Network, 2013).

trained missionaries and international students to serve globally. Currently, Southwestern has 455 international students from 43 countries, 301 students enrolled in the Master of Theological Studies in Spanish, 113 students in the Master of Theological Studies in Chinese, and 41 students enrolled in its Doctor of Ministry in Spanish. The seminary has also started a Master of Theological Studies in Portuguese.

Through Global Leadership Development, Southwestern is related to over 90 seminaries abroad. The request in 2008 from the Baptist Seminary in Havana, Cuba, to enable it to establish a master's degree in missions was followed by so many requests that a Hispanic Consortium for Theological Education was established and now has representation from all the countries in Latin America and Spain. This was followed by the formation of autonomous, self-supporting consortiums. These consortiums enable seminaries to share resources, exchange faculties, have a mutual recognition of academic credits, and hold meetings that update them on educational methodologies as well as provide fellowship opportunities. As a seminary partner, Southwestern shares library resources, provides technological training, and makes its faculty available for courses taught abroad.

Presently, the following consortiums have been formed or are being formed: the Hispanic Consortium (Spain and Latin America), the Portuguese Language Consortium (Portugal, Brazil, Mozambique, and Angola), the European Consortium (Hungary, Poland, Romania, Ukraine, Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Croatia), the Asian Consortium (South Korea, Philippines, Japan, Indonesia, and Malaysia), the Middle Eastern Consortium (Israel, Egypt, Lebanon, and Jordan), and a partnership with the African Baptist Theological Network. These consortiums include a total of 25,137 students utilizing 21 languages.

These represent attempts on the part of Southwestern Seminary to address the challenge of globalization. The degree plans, the courses in the various languages, and even the significantly discounted tuition for these courses have made it possible for many professors to obtain a master's and even a doctoral degree, thus contributing to the elevation of the academic standing of seminaries in numerous countries around the world.

CONCLUSION

Globalization is an ever-growing reality that is continually challenging our ways of thinking, learning, and living. Interconnected systems of communication, rapid transportation, and extensive economic exchange

are influencing the social, economic, and religious lives of people around the world. Coupled with the shift of gravity in the Christian world from Europe and America to Africa, Asia, and Latin America, we face the challenge of moving from our comfortable provincialism to a worldview that enables us to be more effective in an interdependent world. The cultural challenges of globalization in theological education should motivate us to cultivate a sensitivity that enables us to train people of different cultural backgrounds to serve in a variety of settings in obedience to the Great Commission.

May the words of John Stott challenge us to respond to the doors that the Lord is opening for us through globalization in theological education: "We need to become global Christians, with a global vision, for we have a global God."[74]

[74]Stott, "Living God," 18.

RECALIBRATING THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION FOR THE CHURCH'S MISSION

Michael A. Ortiz*

Byang Kato was born in a rural town in Nigeria. But his life journey was to become the leading voice for evangelical Christianity in Africa.[1] His studies led him from African schools to Dallas Theological Seminary where he earned his Doctor of Theology in 1973. Soon after his return to Africa, Kato became instrumental in establishing renowned theological institutions and evangelical fellowships. He strongly advocated for theological education at all levels and for all people in Africa, from non-formal to graduate level training. He spoke often about the need for continental-wide biblical and theological development for the sake of the African church. Speaking in South Africa in 1975, Kato expressed one of his deepest concerns, "The Church without a sound theological basis is like a drifting boat in a storm without an anchor. The wind of every doctrine is blowing against the Church today."[2]

It has been nearly 50 years since Kato made that statement. Recently, I traveled to seven countries on four continents over ten weeks and interacted with hundreds of theological education leaders from the most informal to the most formal. I had candid conversations about theological education, especially as related to how well it is serving their local churches. Every one of these conversations included comments about rapid church growth, but a lack of adequately prepared church leaders to biblically guide congregants. Kato's statement still rings true, and it rings true not only in Africa, but in most parts of Latin America and Asia. I do wonder as well how much his statement might even ring true in the West today.

Kato tragically drowned in December 1975, just a few months after his message in South Africa. He was thirty-nine years old. Although he made a lasting impact in the evangelical church in Africa, his concern remains

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[1]Aiah Dorkuh Foday-Khabenje, *Byang Kato* (Carlisle: Langham Publishing, 2023), 85.

[2]Foday-Khabenie, *Byang Kato*, 151.

today: churches drifting without an anchor. The future of the global church will depend on the extent to which Kato's concern holds merit in the months and years to come. Over the course of this article, I will briefly discuss the church leadership challenge. In essence, a global concern exists about church health due to a lack of biblically grounded leaders who can help anchor the church. This article will also touch on a long-standing gap between theological education, especially the more formal type, and the church. To rightfully address the leadership challenge, we must have a closer ecclesial nexus between the academy and the church. Lastly, this article will propose a missional recalibration for theological education. The whole of theological education must be recalibrated towards its missional purpose to serve the church for the sake of her mission.

Throughout this article I will occasionally insert global reflections about theological education. Through my recent travels and interactions, the Lord has allowed me to glean aspects of theological education I did not previously appreciate. While these reflections are still somewhat in process, I will attempt to impart them in the most useful manner possible.

CHURCH LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE

The global church leadership demand before us is monumental. The challenge is highlighted when we draw a contrast with the United States, where there is one trained pastor for every 230 people. By comparison, majority world churches have one trained pastor for every 450,000 people.[3] This colossal leadership training imbalance is only likely to expand. Even as far back as 2010, the "Cape Town Commitment" from the Lausanne Movement lamented the state of the church and leadership development. The Commitment declares that the "rapid growth of the Church in so many places remains shallow and vulnerable,"[4] mostly due to leaders who themselves have not been discipled and lack the "ability to teach God's Word to God's people."[5] Cape Town was concerned that existing leadership training was not producing enough pastors who were well discipled and equipped to rightly pass on the truth of the Scriptures. Of course, Kato had raised the same concern years earlier within the African context. More recently, we have additional data to further elevate the concern over

[3]"The Need," Training Pastors Worldwide, January 18, 2019, https://bobinthebush.com/training-leaders-international/the-desperate-need-for-theological-education/.

[4]Lausanne Movement, "The Cape Town Commitment," January 25, 2011, 87; https://lausanne.org/statement/ctcommitment#capetown.

[5]Lausanne Movement, "The Cape Town Commitment," 88.

church leadership.

According to the Global Alliance for Church Multiplication (GACX), the church in Asia, Africa, and Latin America has grown from 30 percent of the world's churches in 1970 to 70 percent by 2022.[6] In addition, the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA), representing churches in over 130 countries, estimates there are 50,000 new baptized believers each day.[7] Considering the data and our otherwise anecdotal awareness of church growth, we need hundreds of new trained church leaders every day for majority world settings. If we are not able to do so, we run the risk of having churches that are drifting without an anchor and subject to every wind of doctrine as Kato noted in 1975. These types of churches are perilous and simply not sustainable over time.

Craig Ott, a missions professor at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School and missiologist, expresses caution about church growth as a movement:

> If current leaders do not develop new leaders who will spiritually shepherd and further guide the movement, it will become susceptible to conflict, false teaching, syncretism, and other problems. The churches will neither be transformational at a deep level nor be sustainable over time.[8]

Theological education must guard against Ott's warning through the equipping of leaders prepared to disciple and teach God's Word for a transformational and sustainable church.

It was not too long ago that I interacted with a missionary in the Philippines. His name is Skip, and he commented, "Stop trying to come in and plant churches. There are so many that have failed, and mostly due to false teachings, and then the congregants from those closed churches run to the mega churches that doctrinally are no better."[9] There are countless stories about churches falling away, due to false teachings and a lack of sound pastoral leadership. In fact, a few years back GACX indicated that up to 70 percent of new churches fail within the first year, and often due

[6]GACX, "Framework," accessed January 21, 2024. https://gacx.io/about/framework.

[7]Thomas Schirrmacher, Virtual meeting with author, August, 4, 2022.

[8]Craig Ott, *The Church on Mission: A Biblical Vision for Transformation Among All People* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2019), 115.

[9]Skip Moran, Virtual meeting with author during the "Tell Me Something (TMS) Conversations," April 19, 2021.

to a lack of pastoral training.[10] Kato was pressing us to do better. We must do better for the sake of our Lord's church.

The International Council for Evangelical Theological Education (ICETE) has over 850 Bible colleges and seminaries within its global hub plus several partners and associates heavily involved in theological education at all levels.[11] ICETE keeps moving us to do better. In essence, ICETE's global community is about quality and connections in theological education, and by doing so helps to accelerate improved contextual training worldwide for all God's people. When considering its seven regional associations and the institutions, ministries, and programs connected to ICETE, it is equipping nearly 300,000 future leaders worldwide through its constituents for Christ's service. ICETE was founded in 1980 and developed the ICETE Manifesto on the Renewal of Evangelical Theological Education in 1983. During its global consultation in November 2022 in Izmir, Turkey (ICETE C-22), ICETE revealed a second declaration about global theological education known as the ICETE Manifesto II: Call and Commitment to the Renewal of Theological Education. It was developed over two years with input from theological education leaders from every sector of training and each region of the world. The document includes several poignant comments and reflections about theological education for today, including the following:

> Theological education must be accessible to all God's people. Special attention must be given to groups of people who have traditionally had and still have limited access to education: Neither gender nor social status, neither skin colour nor nationality, neither geographic location nor lack of personal connections should exclude people from theological education.[12]

[10]Ramesh Richard, "Training of Pastors: A High Priority for Global Ministry Strategy," *Lausanne Global Analysis* 4, no. 5 (September 2015), https://lausanne.org/content/lga/2015-09/training-of-pastors. In this article, Ramesh Richard offers this statistic from being personally present. Though not globally oriented, Aubrey Malphurs indicates a 30-40% failure rate within the first few years of a church plant in North America http://malphursgroup.com/the-need-for-church-planting-and-revitalization/?_ga=2.66591534.1654217729.1618950198-1603102877.1618950198.

[11]ICETE, "ICETE Constituents," International Council for Evangelical Theological Education. July 14, 2023. https://icete.info/constituents/overview/. ICETE's updated mission statement as of 2020 places the church as its primary focus: ICETE advances quality and collaboration in global theological education to strengthen and accompany the Church in its mission.

[12]ICETE, "ICETE Manifesto II: Call and Commitment to the Renewal of Theological Education," International Council for Evangelical Theological Education, July 12, 2022, 11; https://icete.

ICETE's global constituency continues to explore how many could have greater access to training. If we are going to have church leaders able to soundly lead their congregants, we must continue to ask the difficult questions about access for those in more remote locations and typically with less resources than found in more urban areas. Pastoral leadership training must be considered in various contexts and through various means.

Even so, increased access to training cannot be at the cost of impact, especially through non-conventional and more distant means. As I have traveled and interacted with many educators and ministers, a consistent theme I have reflected on has to do with impact. Those training leaders at all levels expressed the concern that although they were confident in their content and that they were increasing the numbers reached, they were much less confident about the transformational impact of their programs. Since then, I have grown in my conviction that impact needs to be measured beyond the content delivered. The ICETE Manifesto touches on this, especially as related to distance learning access models:

> We see the benefits of diversification, flexibility and extension which enhances accessibility for many more people, however, we also critically observe the challenges this means for holistic and integrated learning processes. . . This includes effectively accomplishing by new means spiritual and character formation, and practical training for ministry.[13]

For the sake of the church, all training, no matter the level, must assess not only the quality of content, but the transformation of character. If we cannot assess the transformation of character, then no matter how sound the content delivered, Kato's concern will remain.

Ramesh Richard has been a global leader in thinking through the need for pastoral church leadership training. He has led large global gatherings on this topic, including his most recent GProCongress II gathering of nearly 600 pastors in Panama. The theme was "Multiplying the Quantity and Quality of Trainers of Pastors." During the event, Richard stated the case in these terms: "Pastoral health affects church health, and church health affects societal health."[14] Richard also brings to the forefront the need for

info/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/ICETE-Manifesto-II_FinalDraft18Jul2023.pdf.

[13]ICETE, "ICETE Manifesto II," 16.

[14]Ramesh Richard, "GProCongress II Homepage," GProCongress, accessed June 14, 2023, https://www.gprocongress.org/.

training that is truly transformative and exercises long-standing impact upon the churches and ultimately the societies in which they minister.

The global church staying ready, fit, and on mission is not just a majority world concern. According to Gallup, we have gone from 76 percent of Americans claiming church membership in 1945 to 47 percent of Americans in 2020.[15] Pew Research shows similar statistics if not quite as drastic.[16] In November of 2021, the Barna Group indicated that 38 percent of pastors in the United States thought about quitting in 2021. Forty-six percent of these pastors were under 45 years of age.[17] It has also been reported that 4,000 churches closed in 2020.[18] The church persevering for the Lord is, therefore, not just a majority world concern. As noted in the introduction, although Kato was speaking 50 years ago about Africa, his concern might unfortunately apply today to churches in North America and Europe. The symptoms might be different, but the root cause is the same for all churches worldwide—churches are too often poorly led, adrift in a storm, and unable to remain faithful to their Lord Christ.

In consideration of this, we might be at the most consequential global church crossroads. The majority world church continues to surge and spread but without ample trained leaders. Meanwhile, the Western church continues to be contested and at times curtailed, even while it is rich with seminaries, pastoral and leadership training options, workshops, seminars, retreats, libraries and literature, technology, finances, and countless other resources. The tenuous state of the churches in the West, despite all their

[15]Jeffrey M. Jones, "U.S. Church Membership Falls Below Majority for First Time," Gallup, March 29, 2021, https://news.gallup.com/poll/341963/church-membership-falls-below-majority-first-time.aspx.

[16]Pew Research Center, "In U.S., Decline of Christianity Continues at Rapid Pace," Pew Research Center, October 17, 2019, https://www.pewforum.org/2019/10/17/in-u-s-decline-of-christianity-continues-at-rapid-pace/. The research shows a drop from 78% to 65% between 2009 and 2019.

[17]Barna, "38% of U.S. Pastors Have Thought About Quitting Full-Time Ministry in the Past Year," Barna, November 16, 2021, https://www.barna.com/research/pastors-well-being/. Mainline denominations accounted for 51% of those considering leaving versus 34% who were from non-mainline denominations. This article also states, "'We started seeing early warning signs of burnout among pastors before COVID,' says David Kinnaman, President of Barna Group. 'with initial warning bells sounding in Barna's The State of Pastors study in 2017. Now, after 18 months of the pandemic, along with intense congregational divisions and financial strain, an alarming percentage of pastors is experiencing significant burnout, driving them to seriously consider leaving ministry.'"

[18]Brody Carter, "New Barna Survey Finds That 38% of US Pastors Have Considered Leaving Ministry," CBN, November 16, 2021, https://www2.cbn.com/news/us/new-barna-survey-finds-38-us-pastors-have-considered-leaving-ministry. When these churches closed in 2020, about 20,000 pastors left the ministry.

resources must lead one to conclude that the challenges of the church in majority world settings will not be solved through resources alone.

As I recently traveled, many of those who interacted with me were terribly curious about the wide breadth of resources found in the United States, especially as related to church leadership development. I often found myself acknowledging that indeed we have a rich abundance of resources, but that the church in our context is not doing all that well. My point in saying so was to help them grasp that there is far more required beyond resources for sound church leadership development. If that were not the case, Western churches would be thriving. Majority world leaders often seek resources in various forms from the West believing those resources will help to solve most, if not all their challenges. Certainly, resources can help, but sound leadership development for the sake of global church health cannot rely upon resources alone.

Rather, the church today needs more than ever bold, biblically grounded, relevant, and transformational leaders deeply impacted by their training, so much so that they cannot help but pass these qualities to others. However, institutions of theological education, particularly in the more formal streams, have to a large extent not produced those types of leaders. In part, sound leadership development is dependent on the nexus between theological education and the church and the extent to which theological education willingly steps into its missional purpose with the church. These two topics will be the focus of the next two sections.

THE ECCLESIAL NEXUS GAP

In order for Kato's church concern from 1975 to be addressed not only in Africa, but in other contexts, even in the West, there must be a lessened ecclesial nexus gap between church and theological education. The ICETE Manifesto II addresses this gap:

> The academization of theological education has opened a gap between the needs of the church in mission and the agenda of academia. Programmes and institutions of theological education as well as the church are challenged to take concrete measures to bridge the gap between church and academy.[19]

[19]ICETE, "ICETE Manifesto II," 8-9.

This type of declaration does not stand alone. Over the years many have expressed similar concerns. There are practical challenges that restrict lessening that gap. Linda Cannell published a book in 2006 that still speaks to this issue. Cannell stated:

> Today many churches, frustrated with the graduates of theological schools, are challenging existing systems and joining their efforts to find new models. Schools, worried about economic survival, seek to retain current church constituencies while attracting new markets . . . many schools are still worried they may not survive, and many churches continue to experiment with alternatives."[20]

Especially in a post-COVID-19 era, schools more than ever are struggling to stay open, many having to regularly look at ways to generate revenue and cut expenses, with programs in the West not exempt. Additionally, unimaginable circumstances often found outside the West, due to wars like in Ukraine and the Middle East, political fallout, social pressures and unrest, or other cultural challenges, place an enormous burden on schools worldwide. Most theological education leaders in these regions have minimal margin for long-term planning and strategic thinking, including greater connectedness with their local churches. As Cannell noted, economic survival is near the forefront of theological education no matter the location. With all this upon academic leaders, and sometimes even more, the concern remains that the church will decreasingly define the goal of theological education as institutions turn inward to preserve and survive, rather than extending outward to prepare and serve.

Unfortunately, on the church side of the gap a waning confidence exists that theological education institutions, especially those of the more formal type, can provide the ready graduates needed for effective church leadership. As a recent example, a gathering of church planters from nearly 60 countries met in February 2024 in Indonesia. In part of their proceedings, the role of Bible colleges and seminaries in church planting was considered. An ICETE representative who led workshops documented the overwhelming sentiment among attendees that "the curriculum in the seminaries requires a huge lot of tweaking, if not at all irrelevant, to

[20]Linda Cannell, T*heological Education Matters: Leadership Education for the Church* (Newburgh: EDCOT Press, 2006), 19-20.

what church planters need in their work."[21] Globally, it is not uncommon for church ministries to create their own training programs to meet their immediate and contextual needs. Church planters have increasingly done so, illustrating a broader trend that lessens reliance on more formal training.

Kato saw the growing need for less formal church-based training during his time, too. Even so, he never lost sight of the importance of the more formal academic institutions serving local church needs. Today we find the churches are less willing to reach for theological education or explore greater alignment between the two. As does theological education, the church turns more inward. In the end, if this trajectory continues—theological education turning more inward to survive and the churches becoming more self-reliant—the gap may likely increase.

Still, hope remains for a theological education recalibration to set in motion an adjusted trajectory, one initiated through the academy. Other terms have been used in the past to reorient theological education. Often, we have used terms such as the "resetting" or the "renewal" of theological education. But theological education has been undergoing "renewal" for decades with little meaningful progress. The term "recalibrate" helps to signify that a drift in theological education from its true course has occurred. In turn, a correction must be sought. Just as a ship at sea might drift from its true heading and need recalibration to reach its intended destination, so theological education today needs to recalibrate if it will rightly serve the church, foster a greater ecclesial nexus, and reach its intended destination.

As I traveled, I found that most in the more formal spaces of training were reluctant to acknowledge the existence of an ecclesial nexus gap. They either pretended that it did not exist or that, if it did exist, they had found a way to somehow eliminate that gap with their local churches. Perhaps some of them have done so. But, as conversations unfolded, I adjusted the way I communicated about the gap. I found it far more productive not to accuse theological education leaders of having an ecclesial nexus gap, but rather asked them to imagine how their programs might further come to life. Often, I would suggest that theological education is most alive when it accompanies the church through her current realities and anticipates her future troubles. By expressing the "gap" in this fashion, I was attempting

[21] Rei Lemuel Crizaldo, Email message to author, February 26, 2024. The correspondence included a summary from his workshop on "Theological Education and Church Planting" at the Global Church Planting Network 2024 Batam Gathering. Roughly 180 people attended from nearly 60 countries.

to empower theological education leaders to think of ways their programs might be more relevant to the current needs of the church and proactively help her anticipate what might come down the road.

If theological education cannot produce future church leaders who are equipped to navigate through the current real-life and upcoming challenges of the church, then it will remain disconnected from and irrelevant to the church. It will slowly continue to drift off course and eventually find itself completely lost, and perhaps too far off for correction with no hope for any ecclesial nexus. Certainly, that is not the story we want to see written about theological education.

Another reflection from my travels which could help avoid that type of story being written has to do with voices to be included within theological education. These are somewhat related to the current realties and future troubles of the church. There are aspects of church life and culture that are not represented enough within theological education. Often, I have expressed this by saying that the future of theological education will depend on the voices it is willing to embody and elevate. As I traveled some became evident: women within the church, oral learning, peace and reconciliation, the global diaspora and migration, trauma and abuse care, contextual use of the arts and music, missions training, and others. One voice that particularly stood out was next-generation leadership. Theological education must more intentionally consider its role to connect and foster relational teaching and learning across multiple generations for the future church. Church leaders prepared to navigate the complexities of these voices and others depending on context will most likely lead relevant and sustainable churches.

The global demand for church leadership training requires more from theological education. The ecclesial nexus gap must be lessened for it to provide more. But perhaps progress in lessening that gap may take place as theological education further embraces its missional role for the sake of the church's mission.

A MISSIONAL RECALIBRATION

Certainly, each training program typically has a mission statement, and those are important to have. But, in this section I am not focused on that type of mission. Instead, I am focused on God's mission and the church, and the missional role of theological education to come alongside and strengthen the church for God's mission. Kato understood the

vital importance of this when he expressed his concern about the church drifting like a boat in a storm without an anchor and being subjected to every wind of doctrine. For many in theological education, this will require some recalibration. ICETE's Manifesto II encourages that recalibrated missional aim for theological education. The ICETE Manifesto II states:

> Perhaps the most formative insight of recent decades is the call for the integration of mission and theological education: Theology and theological education need to become missional in their very essence and orientation. The purpose of theological education must be defined within the framework of the missio Dei and a missional self-understanding of the Church.[22]

ICETE is not alone in this declaration. Lausanne's Cape Town Commitment likewise points out that "theological education stands in partnership with all forms of missional engagement. We will encourage and support all who provide biblically faithful theological education, formal and nonformal, at local, national, regional, and international levels."[23] Lausanne leaves no room for doubt that the missional purpose of theological education is the church when it further declares, "The mission of the Church on earth is to serve the mission of God, and the mission of theological education is to strengthen and accompany the mission of the Church."[24]

More recently, Mark Young, president of Denver Seminary, in his book, *The Hope of the Gospel: Theological Education and the Next Evangelicalism*, clearly articulates the missional role of theological education for the sake of the church. He introduced the content of his book by emphasizing that "a school's mission and vision must be formulated on the basis of shared theological convictions about the nature of God's mission in the world, the role of God's people in that mission, and the unique contribution theological education can make to that mission."[25] Recalibration requires

[22]ICETE, "ICETE Manifesto II," 8.

[23]Lausanne Movement, "The Cape Town Commitment," 107-108.

[24]Lausanne Movement, "The Cape Town Commitment," 107. The statement continues, "Theological education serves first to train those who lead the Church as pastor-teachers, equipping them to teach the truth of God's Word with faithfulness, relevance and clarity; and second, to equip all God's people for the missional task of understanding and relevantly communicating God's truth in every cultural context."

[25]Mark S. Young, *The Hope of the Gospel: Theological Education and the Next Evangelicalism* (Grand

that theological education be missionally understood, chiefly centered on strengthening the people of God, the church, that she may stay on mission.

The missional self-understanding of theological education as existing for the church finds biblical support. Within 2 Corinthians 11:1-4, Paul expresses his concern that the church would be "led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ" through a different Jesus or a different gospel.[26] Philippians 2:14-16 shows Paul asking the church amid a crooked and twisted generation to hold "fast to the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may be proud that I did not run in vain." In 2 Peter 3:14-18, the letter closes with a reminder to the church to "take care that you are not carried away with the error of lawless people and lose your own stability."[27] Lastly, within 1 Thessalonians 2:17-20 Paul expresses how desperately he wanted to visit the church. He wanted to assure himself that she was on mission, not having drifted under heavy opposition to his teachings. For Paul, this assurance was utmost because at the coming of Christ–she was to be his crown of boasting, his victory, and his proof that he had not run in vain.[28] Paul Barnett notes, "Paul as an apostle operates within a distinct eschatological framework." "The ongoing fidelity of the church in prospect of the end time is his concern."[29] Within the New Testament there exists a consistent motif of the missional self-understanding of the church, and the early church trainers fully embraced their duty under Christ to do all they could to help her stay on mission until his return. A recalibrated theological education with a missional self-understanding

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Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2022), 1. Young later further explains, "Not seeing the Bible as that one true story, creates the tragic inevitability that we will live by another story . . . Theological education for the next evangelicalism must be conceived and imbued with the startling claim that the Bible is cosmic history, that Jesus is the centerpiece of that history, and that our faith is a unique telling of it" (78-79).

[26]All scripture passages are from the English Standard Version.

[27]Other verses that seem to speak to the same are Eph. 5:25-27; Col. 1:21-23; 2 Tim. 2:1-2; Heb. 10:23-25; 1 Pet. 5:1-4; Jude 17-25.

[28]Charles A. Wanamaker, *The Epistles to the Thessalonians: A Commentary on the Greek Text, New International Greek Testament Commentary* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1990), 124. Paul uses the term here in the sense of a "crown of pride" like the victory wreath placed on the heads of victorious military commanders or the winners of athletic contests to signify their achievement. For Paul the Thessalonians were like a victory wreath of which he could be proud at the coming of Christ. They were a proof of his toil and achievement for Christ as a missionary to the Gentiles.

[29]Paul Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians, The New International Commentary on the New Testament*, (Grand Rapids: William. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1997), 498-499. For more on this this issue, but relying on Eph. 5:25-27 and Rev 19:6-9, see Craig Ott, *The Church on Mission: A Biblical Vision for Transformation Among All People*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2019), 20-21.

would likewise embrace this duty.

The ICETE Manifesto II further helps this recalibration by viewing theological education more holistically. The manifesto asserts that "we understand theological education in a broad sense includes formal and non-formal education and learning."[30] "Formal and non-formal theological education are equally important for church and mission. They should be offered in mutual respect and partnership."[31] A recalibration of theological education must move us towards a common agenda across the training sectors to seriously address the need for church leadership expressed earlier in this article.

During my recent reflections on global theological education, I have come to use the term "flatten" when speaking of the different sectors. Often, I have expressed that the formal, non-formal, and informal polarities in theological education need to flatten to foster a greater global collegiality. As I have done so, I try to emphasize that the point of doing so is not replacement. Historically, the sectors have remained fragmented for fear that one would attempt to take over and replace the other. I have assured many that this is not about replacement, but rather reinforcement. A recalibrated theological education focused on its intended missional purpose is not concerned about being replaced but about how to reinforce one another for the sake of that common missional purpose. If this flattening could take place, it would naturally lead towards greater community, collegiality, and even collaboration across the whole of theological education.

ICETE has endeavored to model and facilitate this type of missional recalibration for theological education towards greater flattening and collaborative postures across the sectors. ICETE has had 18 global consultations on theological education over its forty plus years. The last consultation was in November 2022 in Izmir, Turkey, and is known as ICETE C-22. The theme for the gathering was "Formal and Non-Formal Theological Education Beyond Dialogue." This was ICETE's largest gathering and included more than 500 delegates from 80 countries representing over 290 worldwide training ministries to envision a more collective and common global approach to meet the growing leadership demands of the church. As mentioned above, theological education, no matter the form, has a long history of being fragmented with minimal connectedness and collegiality. Such inward postures make training even less accessible and weaken the

[30]ICETE, "ICETE Manifesto II," 9.
[31]ICETE, "ICETE Manifesto II," 8.

collective capacity to prepare leaders for the Lord's church. During ICETE C-22 this was our opening collective prayer: "Lord, may ICETE C-22 Izmir not be measured by our numbers, but by our mutuality in one common aim—to strengthen Christ's church." That prayer is ongoing, and we trust the Lord has used ICETE C-22 to move us closer to theological education recalibration centered in one common aim, lessening fragmented inward postures, and increasing more emboldened outward, collegial postures.

Especially since ICETE C-22, ICETE has embraced a more holistic view of theological education which is more in tune with the times and has already engendered greater unity between all forms of church leadership training. For example, although ICETE continues to serve formal theological education, the scope of ICETE's global hub has expanded. There is a growing worldwide awareness that the task to develop church leaders is so monumental that there is no way any one program or sector of theological education can fulfill the needs alone. Non-formal training ministries are connecting with ICETE like never before, organically fostering greater collegiality across the theological education spectrum. As this occurs, seminaries become better aware of pew-level realities and can adjust their programs to produce more field-ready graduates through insights gleaned from their non-formal colleagues usually more closely connected to church life.[32] Certainly, progress can be then realized to lessen the ecclesial nexus gap.

As we look ahead, ICETE further plans to facilitate a missional recalibration for theological education through its next global consultation. ICETE C-25 will take place March 3-7, 2025. The theme will be "Next for Theological Education." The in-person event will be preceded by a year-long process of online forums, virtual meetings, webinars, and communication platforms to foster dialogue and exchanges of ideas worldwide about areas of church leadership training that need to be elevated. As ICETE leads in this fashion, there will be distinct opportunities for theological education leaders worldwide to consider more carefully adjustments needed to be closely aligned with the current realities and future troubles of the church.

A missional recalibration for theological education begins with acknowledging the gap that has historically existed with the church. Even so, we

[32]Michael A. Ortiz, "Theological Education Can't Catch Up to Global Church Growth," *Christianity Today*, June 2, 2023, https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2023/may-web-only/theological-education-global-church-growth-icete.html. Ortiz further illustrates in this article the importance of the different sectors working more closely together and highlights the role ICETE has recently played in encouraging progress in this regard.

must not simply accept that gap as perpetual. We have an opportunity to write a new story based upon a more biblically centered understanding of the role of theological education, particularly through highlighting a missional understanding of the church. A recalibrated theological education, regardless its form, must stand within a missional-ecclesial framework. Theological education cannot operate on its own, within a silo apart from its role as an instrument of God's mission, but must be carried out through the church, God's missionary people. ICETE has offered timely global declarations about theological education through its Manifesto II, and ICETE continues its consultations, offering global leaders opportunities to build community and explore collaboration to strengthen the church in her mission.

CONCLUSION

Byang Kato, the Nigerian theologian, still challenges those of us in global theological education to help the church not to drift and become subject to the winds of doctrine, but rather to be anchored in her mission for Christ. The church, especially in majority world settings, continues to grow with inadequately prepared leaders to meet the needs. The churches in the West struggle to keep congregants and remain culturally relevant. Kato's concern from the early 1970s extends beyond Africa and applies to all of us today.

Progress will require that theological education be recalibrated. Theological education ought to be truthful about its relationship with the church, especially in the more formal sectors. There may be ways to lessen the ecclesial nexus gap in various contexts worldwide, but the churches in many parts have lost confidence in theological education. It will be incumbent on theological educators to take the initiative. Recalibration will also require a missional self-understanding. The common aim among all forms of theological education is to strengthen the church for her mission. But a good portion of theological education has moved off this course.

Still, there are some signs of promise. Globally, there is a new collaborative attitude that is gaining momentum. In part, this is due to many recognizing the need for mutuality on one common aim—to strengthen Christ's church. ICETE has played a vital role in adjusting the global direction of theological education, especially through encouraging more outward, collegial postures recalibrated to that common aim.

As we look ahead, we have an opportunity to shape a new story about theological education: A story wherein theological educators understand and meet the needs of church leadership, intentionally initiate ways to close the gap with the church, and recalibrate their course to help the church stay on mission until our Lord Christ returns.

TRANSFORMING THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION[1]

Perry Shaw*

In 2006 my world fell apart and I had a complete breakdown. While a number of factors contributed to this personal crisis and the anxiety, and depression that ensued, a substantial element was my disillusionment with the world of theological education to which I had devoted much of my life's energies. By God's grace and with help from friends and the medical profession, my health recovered in less than a year. But many questions remained.

My reading pointed to the fragmentation and contextual irrelevance of most ministerial training programs. My own experience had seen student after student entering theological college passionate for ministry and leaving passionate for academia, with little idea how to empower the church and often with no genuine desire to do so. I seriously considered giving up completely on institutional theological education, seeing theological schools as counterproductive for preparing effective leadership for the church. However, it soon became evident that, for better or for worse, churches in much of the world still looked to theological colleges for their leaders, and consequently the solution lay not with rejection but with seeking change from within.

The years since this crisis have offered me multiple opportunities to be involved in just such creative work. Beginning with my hands-on experience of the extraordinarily innovative work embraced at the Arab Baptist Theological Seminary (ABTS) in Lebanon, I have seen an increasing number of programs and colleges striving to transform traditional paradigms into approaches that are transformative. In what follows I will present some of the basic principles for transforming theological education, and some significant models of missional curricula.

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[1]Parts of this article are direct extracts from my text, *Transforming Theological Education: A Practical Handbook for Integrative Learning*, 2nd ed. (Carlisle: Langham, 2022). Used with permission.

THE CHALLENGE OF RECONCEPTUALIZING THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

Paul Sanders, former executive director of the International Council for Evangelical Theological Education (ICETE), has observed that "the problem with much of theological education is that it is neither theological nor educational."[2] Several factors contribute to this anomalous situation.

One is the increasing pressure from secular governments that are forcing theological schools into university frameworks of humanities education. The result is a growing emphasis on publication with an accompanying focus on sometimes esoteric cerebral concerns. Quality formation for mission and ministry can easily be sidelined, and the pressures on faculty are such that spiritual and character formation become increasingly unnecessary appendages. It is not surprising that many churches and Christian organizations have started their own training programs, often in the non-formal sector, simply to keep their DNA alive.[3] In reality, however, most regulatory bodies are not as restrictive as perceived, and most are open to innovative curricula that are well argued as addressing the goals of the sector.[4]

Another factor is historical. The classic shape of theological education—with its "silos" of biblical, theological, and historical studies as well as (subsequently) ministerial studies or applied theology—emerged in a context where the relationship between the church and the wider society was largely in a "Christendom" paradigm. The assumption was that the church could and should have a level of power and influence in society. This pattern became virtually "sacred" at a time when the church in Europe was completely introverted.[5] If mission was even considered, it was usually incorporated into practical theology, as if it were largely a matter of technique or practical application, or it was offered as a separate subject, as if it had little to do with the "important" fields of Bible, history, and theology.[6]

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[2]Paul Sanders, "Evangelical Theological Education in a Globalised World," presentation delivered at the Centre for Theological Education, Belfast, Northern Ireland, 17 November 2009.

[3]Ashish Chrispal, "Restoring Missional Vision in Theological Education: The Need for Transformative Pastoral Training in the Majority World," Lausanne Global Analysis 8, no. 5, September 2019, https://www.lausanne.org/content/lga/2019-09/restoring-missional-vision-theological-education.

[4]Les Ball, *Transforming Theology: Student Experience and Transformative Learning in Undergraduate Theological Education* (Preston: Mosaic, 2012), 89.

[5]David J. Bosch, "Theological Education in Missionary Perspective," *Missiology* 10, no. 1 (January 1982): 26.

[6]Bosch, "Theological Education in Missionary Perspective," 17-19.

This pattern of theological education was exported to the rest of the world in the wake of the missionary expansion of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and uncritically adopted and implemented in the formation of generations of local Christian leaders in the Majority World.[7] The "Christendom" paradigm has never been relevant in the Majority World and is no longer relevant in most of the Minority World.[8] Hence the urging from theological educators such as Robert Banks and Linda Cannell for a missional foundation to theological education. As Cannell puts it,

> A structure formalized in the medieval period, modified to suit the theological shifts of the Reformation, influenced by the scientific methodology of the Enlightenment, shaped by the German research university, deeply affected by modernity, and assumed to define true theological education today is likely not adequate for the challenges of contemporary culture and the education of Christians who have been shaped by that culture.[9]

The major barrier to transformative theological education, however, is generally internal not external. Most faculty members in higher education have done little if any serious study in educational theory, and many have no desire to change. Frequently, the dominant voices in our theological schools are faculty who are more comfortable in the academy than they are in the local church, and who are theoreticians more than practitioners. Many academics are fearful of approaches that require them to move outside their specialist areas or that challenge them to emphasize the practice of ministry as well as academic excellence. In addition, theological faculty are generally those who have succeeded in the system and are consequently very reluctant to question the system to which they have devoted so much of their lives. It is therefore difficult for established

[7]Michael McCoy, "Restoring Mission to the Heart of Theological Education," in *Handbook of Theological Education in Africa*, ed. Isabel A. Phiri and Dietrich Werner (Oxford: Regnum, 2013), 523-29.

[8]Throughout this essay, I will use the term "Minority World" rather than the more common "West" or "Global North" to emphasize that the perspectives that so often are taken as normative actually represent minority, culturally driven assumptions as to the appropriate underpinnings of educational priorities.

[9]Linda Cannell, *Theological Education Matters: Leadership Education for the Church* (Newburgh: EDCOT, 2006), 306.

faculty to initiate curricular reform. As Parker Palmer so candidly puts it, "Changing a university is like trying to move a cemetery. You get no help from the inhabitants."[10]

As far back as 1994, John Woodyard observed,

> Within the present paradigm professors—the faculty—have control of their courses, their classes, the curriculum, faculty hiring and tenure decisions. This existing structure is reinforced by tradition, the accrediting associations and bureaucratic government structures. It cannot be changed by trustees, denominations, or administrators and donors. Yet, in many cases, what is needed is a realization by seminary boards, administration and faculty that they will not survive if they continue to look to past successes and old paths rather than deal realistically with the changes needed to assure that their graduates will give leadership to the churches of the next century.[11]

Another major barrier to curricular reform is the lack of meaningful models. It is difficult for us to break out of traditional patterns with which we are familiar, and we are all prone to teach as we have learned and to develop schools along the models of the schools where we were trained. Consequently, there are scattered across the globe a plethora of little Trinitys, Fullers, Dallases, and Princetons, and occasionally Oxfords, Edinburghs, and Tübingens—despite the fact that these models are generally irrelevant to the context of the Middle East, Africa, Asia, or Latin America, and are no longer relevant in the contemporary context of the Minority World.[12]

WHAT ARE WE TRYING TO DO ANYWAY?

Asking the right questions is the foundation for creative and innovative approaches to transforming theological education. As I visit with schools

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[10]Parker J. Palmer and Arthur Zajonc, *The Heart of Higher Education: A Call to Renewal: Transforming the Academy through Collegial Conversations* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2010), 127.

[11]John M. Woodyard, "A 21st-Century Seminary Faculty Model," in *The M. J. Murdock Charitable Trust Review of Graduate Theological Education in the Pacific Northwest* (Vancouver: M. J. Murdock Charitable Trust, 1994), 3.

[12]Jeffrey D. Jones and Robert W. Pazmiño, "Finding a New Way: A Call to Reconceptualize Theological Education," *Congregations* 34 (2008): 16-21.

and ask them about their approach to curriculum review, generally the conversation remains fixedly focused on "What?" and "How?" As a result, curricular discussions often devolve into arguments over the fine points of territorial boundaries, each faculty member vehemently defending the allocations to his or her discipline, rather than the faculty together seeing the big picture and working towards the accomplishment of the divine purpose to which we are called. While the questions "What?" and "How?" are important and must eventually be answered, they are in fact not the beginning but the end of planning for transformational theological curricula.

Educators tend to work backward, beginning with the end, by asking the foundational questions of why exactly do we exist and what are we trying to accomplish. To this end, the Bologna Process for European higher education has helpfully coined the phrases "Fitness of Purpose" and "Fitness for Purpose."[13] Any effective educational program must first establish an appropriate self-understanding of why it exists—in other words, a fit purpose. Once this is in place, the institution and its curriculum should then be shaped to best fulfill that purpose—fitness for purpose.

In response to the question of fit purpose, a recognition that God's mission through his people must be foundational to our shared telos has moved recent discussion beyond Kelsey's "Athens–Berlin" dichotomy to advocacy for a missional–ecclesial foundation as the integrative basis for theological education.[14] As articulated in the Lausanne Movement's Cape Town Commitment, "The mission of the Church on earth is to serve the

[13] *European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education, Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area*, 3rd ed. (Helsinki: European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education, 2009).

[14] Robert J. Banks, *Reenvisioning Theological Education: Exploring a Missional Alternative to Current Models* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999); Cannell, *Theological Education Matters*; Darren Cronshaw, "Reenvisioning Theological Education and Missional Spirituality," *Journal of Adult Theological Education* 9, no. 1 (2012): 9-27; Steve de Gruchy, "Theological Education and Missional Practice: A Vital Dialogue," in *Handbook of Theological Education in World Christianity: Theological Perspectives, Ecumenical Trends, Regional Surveys*, ed. Dietrich Werner, David Esterline, Namsoon Kang, and Joshva Raja (Oxford: Regnum Books, 2010), 42-50; Allan Harkness, "Seminary to Pew to Home, Workplace and Community – and Back Again: The Role of Theological Education in Asian Church Growth," presentation at OMF International Consultation on Ecclesiology and Discipleship, Singapore, 2-5 April 2013; David Hewlett, "Theological Education in England Since 1987," in *Handbook of Theological Education in World Christianity: Theological Perspectives, Regional Surveys*; J. Andrew Kirk, "Re-Envisioning the Theological Curriculum as if the Missio Dei Mattered," *Common Ground Journal 3*, no. 1 (2005): 23-40; *Bernhard Ott, Beyond Fragmentation: Integrating Mission and Theological Education: A Critical Assessment of Some Recent Developments in Evangelical Theological Education* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2011); Peter F. Penner, ed., *Theological Education as Mission*, 2nd ed. (Prague: IBTS, 2009).

mission of God, and the mission of theological education is to *strengthen and accompany the mission of the Church*."[15]

In reality, the church across the globe struggles to fulfill this mandate. Both internal and external challenges to the church blur our vision and stifle our effectiveness. The church is in desperate need of faithful men and women who can guide the people of God to confront and overcome the challenges they face, and courageously and clearly fulfill their missional mandate.

This is where our institutions play a role. Why do theological schools and programs of ministerial training exist? A missional–ecclesial foundation for theological education suggests that our schools exist in order to prepare men *and women who are capable of guiding the church to be effective in fulfilling the mission of having Christ acknowledged as Lord throughout the earth*. Note that the preparation of men and women is not the ultimate goal, but a significant means towards the accomplishment of the greater goal of seeing empowered churches that significantly impact their communities, such that the marks of the kingdom of God are evident in the world.[16]

While our role as providers of programs of study is important in preparing faithful men and women for Christian service, in point of fact our time with students is extremely limited, and we do well to acknowledge our limitations. Few of our programs of study have access to emerging leaders for more than a handful of years, but the divine work of leadership formation continues throughout life. The whole process can be represented diagrammatically as shown in figure 1.

[15]Cape Town Commitment, II.F.4, emphasis added. See https://lausanne.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/The-Cape-Town-Commitment---Pages-20-09-2021.pdf.

[16]Enrique Fernández, "Engaging Contextual Realities in Theological Education: Systems and Strategies," *Evangelical Review of Theology* 38, no. 4 (2014): 339-49.

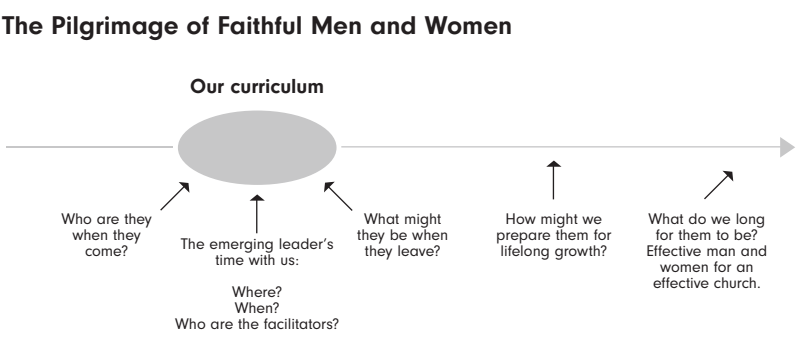

Figure 1. The Pilgrimage of a Christian Leader[17]

There is a tendency in many schools to attempt to deliver in three years everything that an emerging leader might need for the remainder of his or her life. The end result is a dense and demanding curriculum that focuses on content, with little time available to train students in reflection on practice and to prepare them for lifelong learning. Transformational theological education recognizes that a student's sojourn with us is simply a part of his or her lifelong pilgrimage of growth toward maturity in servant leadership.

Given a missional–-ecclesial foundation of theological education, and a recognition that a student's time with us is limited, a series of significant curricular questions emerges naturally:

1. *What is the ideal church in our context?* What would the ideal church look like—one that is sensitive to God's mission and able to empower all of God's people to be significant ambassadors for Christ and his gospel?
2. *What are the contextual challenges?* What are some of the challenges that confront the church or hinder it as an effective agency for the proclamation of Christ? Consider both external challenges (how the societal context hinders proclamation) and internal challenges (what chronic weaknesses exist within the Christian community).
3. *What might an ideal Christian leader look like?* For your specific local context, what are the chief characteristics of the ideal Christian leader, the sort of person who would be able to lead the church through its contextual challenges toward

[17]Shaw, *Transforming Theological Education*, 32.

the accomplishment of the general goal you have articulated? What sorts of character traits, skills, and knowledge would be needed to best accomplish the task of Christian leadership in your context? Based on these reflections, develop a "profile of the ideal graduate."

4. *Who are the learners?* What kind of communities do they come from (urban, suburban or rural; monocultural or multicultural)? What level of religious maturity do they have? What sort of churches do they come from?
5. *Where do the students go?* What kinds of roles do your alumni have? What sort of people do they serve? Are they wealthy, middle class, or poor? What level of education do they have? Are the people urban, suburban, or rural? Are they individualistic or communal, religious or a-religious? What are the greatest challenges your alumni have faced? The greater the diversity in alumni ministry contexts, the greater the need for diversity in the curriculum.
6. *When? The time frame*. An endemic problem in curriculum design is allocating too much "what" for the "when." The "when" includes all potential formal times (classroom or equivalent), non-formal times (structured but non-classroom; e.g. mentoring, discipleship groups, internships) and informal times (e.g. general time over meals, trips together, and casual encounters that hold potential for informal learning).
7. *Where? The learning environment*. What are your material resources? To what extent does the physical context help or hinder learning? How do physical limitations impact educational possibilities?
8. *Who will facilitate the learning?* Who are your human resources? How many people are involved in facilitating the learning? What is the nature of their training? How much do they know about teaching? Capacity is a highly significant element in curriculum design.
9. *What and how?* Once the initial eight questions have been answered, you will be in an adequate position to consider what the actual curriculum might look like.[18]

[18]Shaw, *Transforming Theological Education*, 52-53.

As can readily be seen, engaging these questions takes time and effort, and a thoroughgoing development of a genuinely transformative curriculum demands a posture of learning and research.[19] Each of the curricular models presented later in this essay began with months and in some cases years of preparatory reflection, discussion, and envisioning. In the process, it was almost inevitable that the traditional humanities–education approach to theological education was put aside in favor of more engaged approaches to curriculum development. The commitment of time and effort was costly, but in each case, the end result has been rich, exciting, and impactful.

RE-LANDING THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

The shape of theological education that continues to predominate today is rooted in the university model developed in Europe and North America in the early nineteenth century. Within the rationalist framework of that day, it was important that theology find its place within the general schools of knowledge. Theology was consequently "landed" within the humanities, as is readily observed through the close parallels between traditional theological disciplines and dominant fields in the humanities: biblical studies (literature), theology (philosophy), and church history (history). It is not surprising that in many cases, the "professional" component of preparation for ministry, often titled "practical" or "applied" theology, has been seen (either consciously or unconsciously) as peripheral or even irrelevant. Do both the title and the position of ministerial studies in traditional curricula imply that "true" theology can or perhaps should be "impractical" or "esoterically theoretical"?

Fundamental shifts have taken place over the past fifty years that raise questions about this normative model even in the Minority World, let alone in the Majority World. In this vein, Sunquis challenges the theological academy to rethink its paradigms:

> We have little in common with Christians of the 1950s and almost nothing in common with 16th-century European Christians. But we have much in common with 2nd century West Asian, 19th century South Asian or 20th century North African Christians. They lived in a world opposed

[19]Rupen Das, *Connecting Curriculum with Context: A Handbook for Context Relevant Curriculum Development in Theological Education*, ICETE, ed. Riad Aziz Kasis (Carlisle: Langham, 2015).

> to their faith. They understand that the church (*ecclesia*) is a "called out" community.[20]

I recognize that many graduates value the personal intellectual growth that comes through a greater appreciation of our heritage, and the critical–textual skills that are gained in a classic approach to theological studies. However, many also find their studies disconnected from real life, providing only minimal preparation for addressing the challenges of the contemporary world and helping people understand how to follow Christ in daily life.

How would our theological education be shaped differently if we began with grounded reality rather than ideas? De Gruchy's comparison of medical and theological education challenges us to see as imperative a continual process of assessment, review and curricular revision:

> In the former [medical education], the education of the next generation of health professionals is driven by constant attention to clinical practice, drug trials and technical breakthroughs. It makes no sense, and in fact endangers lives, to train students in procedures which are no longer up to date. By contrast, theological education often proceeds on the basis that we have learnt nothing new about the Christian faith in the last centuries, and students can be educated solely on the basis of the wisdom of the ages. Without negating the importance of history and tradition, the truth is that missional practice provides an ongoing contextual laboratory for theological reflection raising new issues and new perspectives on old issues almost daily. Our commitment to life, and to being on the cutting edge of responding to life, should be as profound as that of medical educators.[21]

Along with writers such as De Gruchy and Ball, I believe that a more adequate location for theological studies is not in the humanities but among professional fields such as medicine, education, and social work.[22]

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[20]Scott W. Sunquist, "Wrong Time, Wrong Place, Wrong Courses: The Dangers of the Unconverted Seminary," Unpublished paper, 28 June 2008.

[21]De Gruchy, "Theological Education and Missional Practice," 45.

[22]De Gruchy, "Theological Education and Missional Practice," 42-50; Ball, *Transforming Theology*,

While there are often philosophical and ethical studies in these fields, there is also a clear understanding that every element should be designed to prepare more effective practitioners. If we were to re-land theological education within professional studies, then there would be several implications for practice:

1. *Faculty recruitment and development*. Within a humanities paradigm, the fundamental credential for teaching is a library-based Ph.D. within a highly specialized field of research. Field experience may be valued but is rarely seen as necessary. In contrast, within the medical paradigm, particularly in the latter phases of study, faculty are predominantly reflective practitioner-experts. For theological education this would mean that most instructors would need to have had substantial field experience and schools would look for faculty whose research had a strong contextual component.[23] Interestingly, when ABTS shifted away from a humanities–education paradigm to a more integrated framework inspired by medical education, our Ph.D. track faculty members changed the focus of their research to topics that were more interdisciplinary in nature with a strong Middle Eastern slant. These interdisciplinary and contextual choices were not directed from above but were rather the natural outworking of the missional culture of the school.
2. *Awareness of student personalities*. It has been found in many of the so-called "people" professions that the best students often make poor practitioners, as they are more comfortable with books than with people. Consequently, many schools of medicine, nursing, education, and social work are now conducting extensive psychological testing and personal interviews as a key aspect of the admissions process. In some schools of medicine, a portfolio of community service is an essential component of the application process. Likewise, many theological schools have already intuited the need to account for the personal maturity and communication skills of prospective students. This should also mean that we are willing to "fail" people who do not have the necessary holistic skills necessary for Christian ministry and will likely be a

87; Perry Shaw, "Relanding Theological Education," *InSights Journal 2*, no. 1 (2016): 20-26.

[23]Brian E. Woolnough, "Purpose, Partnership, and Integration: Insights from Teacher Education for Ministerial/Mission Training," *Transformation: An International Journal of Holistic Mission Studies* 33, no. 4 (2016): 249-61.

liability to the church, even if they have successfully "passed" all their courses.[24] I experienced something of this while completing my basic teaching qualification in the early 1980s. Our cohort of prospective mathematics method trainees included one candidate who achieved high grades in the theoretical component of the program but failed as a classroom teacher even after substantial mentoring. Although she successfully passed the formal courses, this student was not granted the teaching degree because she was deemed a liability to the teaching profession. If we genuinely believe that our role is to prepare men and women for the crucial role of Christian ministry, we should have the courage to do the same in theological education.

3. *Problem-based learning*. The final measure of quality professionals is not what they know but their competence in intelligent reflection on practical problems and challenges. Within theological education, the goal would be to develop "theological leadership," a vision that goes far beyond the classic idea of developing "scholar pastors."[25] Consequently, a shift to Problem-Based Learning (PBL) has become common in virtually all fields of professional education. The strength of PBL lies in its demand for students to integrate material from multiple disciplines in addressing specific and real-life situations.[26] Students are thus better empowered to develop skills in reflective practice. PBL also opens the possibility for engaging knowledge that ordinarily "falls through the cracks" of the traditional disciplines. PBL, which is focused on life issues, inevitably raises questions that a traditional curriculum ignores. It takes students into areas that are highly significant for effective practice but do not naturally fit traditional boundaries.
4. *Early and continuous supervised experience in hands-on practice*. It is becoming increasingly common for medical schools to place

[24]Woolnough, "Purpose, Partnership, and Integration," 249-61.

[25]Evan R. Hunter, "A Context Conducive to Innovation: How Changes in Doctoral Education Create New Opportunities for Developing Theological Leaders," in *Challenging Tradition: Innovation in Advanced Theological Education*, ed. Perry Shaw and Havilah Dharamraj (Carlisle: Langham Global Library, 2018), 21-42. A primary justification for the traditional humanities-education paradigm for theological education has been the development of "scholar-pastors." In reality, the paradigm does well in developing "scholars" but its efficacy in developing "pastors" is highly questionable.

[26]John Jusu, "Problem-Based Learning in Advanced Theological Education," in *Challenging Tradition: Innovation in Advanced Theological Education*, 209-32.

their students in hospitals from the first year of their studies, and for schools of education to expect student teachers to be in the classroom from the very beginning of their training. These practical components are carefully supervised and are granted a substantial amount of "academic" credit. In my own training to become an educator, for instance, one-third of the credits in my program were devoted to these practical components. Many programs of theological education already have a strong emphasis on in-ministry training, but too often this training is largely divorced from what takes place in the text-based courses and is perceived as peripheral to the "real" classroom studies. In many cases, only a minimal amount of "academic" credit is granted for these significant learning experiences and supervision is exclusively in the hands of local-church leaders. A more "professional" approach to theological education would place a greater emphasis on theological reflection on life and ministry and would grant substantial "credit" for field education, in recognition of the strategic role that reflective practice plays in formation. There is much we can benefit from the growing number of teacher training programs in which students spend two to three days a week in field experience at schools, and two to three days a week learning at the college. Such an approach brings the theoretical components of the curriculum into constant dialogue with students' actual field experience.[27]

5. *Professional standards and continuing education*. In many parts of the world, students are not granted graduation in fields such as medicine, education, or social work until they satisfy the professional requirements of the respective "guilds." Moreover, continuing education is seen as a mandatory element in sustaining membership of the guild. While the process of ordination provides something of this sort of "guild accountability" to theological education, in many cases the college is so distant from church networks that there is no meaningful accountability for the quality preparation of practitioners. Moreover, while many schools offer "continuing education," too often these programs offer the same humanities-based courses that emphasize the theoretical, rather than providing curricula that are sensitive

[27]Ball, *Transforming Theology*, 46; Woolnough, "Purpose, Partnership, and Integration."

to recent insights in pastoral ministry, insights that can better empower practitioners in the field.

Across the globe, a key element emerging in professional training programs, particularly in the training of doctors, is a two-tiered understanding of training. Students undertake a period of foundational studies in a more traditional format, often called a "pre-professional" period. This is then followed by substantial clinical experience and case-centered learning, in which the foundational knowledge is applied to real-life situations.

This two-tiered approach, focused on the development of quality reflective practitioners, is at the heart of the curriculum we built at ABTS from 2008 onwards: a year of foundations followed by two years of integrated theological reflection on practice. Gradually other schools have followed suit. The China Graduate School of Theology (CGST) in Hong Kong has also adopted this philosophy. At the heart of the CGST vision has been a shift in the fundamental emphasis from the previous focus on developing "scholar pastors" to the new vision for developing "reflective collaborators."[28] This revised focus calls for a stronger emphasis on integrated reflection on practice and the nurturing of teamwork between faculty and students. More recently the newly established Flourish Institute of Theology (FIT) of the ECO Presbyterian Church in the United States has likewise embedded into its training program a mix of foundations with subsequent context-driven integrative courses. At ABTS and CGST, the integrative courses tend to examine more general issues such as peacebuilding and mission through multidisciplinary lenses. In contrast FIT builds its integrative courses on contemporary issues confronting churches in the USA in the 2020s: the Christian citizen, sexuality, race, etc. Given the urgent need for churches to deal in depth with these issues, the positive response of students has been overwhelming.

What is noteworthy in the ABTS, CGST, and FIT curricula is that while the foundational year is fairly specific, the second and third years are more general, with module/course titles that necessitate team teaching and provide significant flexibility for adaptation. Two factors change regularly for any training program: the faculty and the contextual reality. Having a general direction rather than defined specifics enables responsiveness to changing circumstances. In addition, a good curriculum does not look for faculty to teach courses, but for courses that respect the passions and

[28]B. Wong and R. Lai, eds., *Reflective Collaborators: Re-envisioning Theological Education* (Hong Kong: CGST, 2023).

expertise of the existing faculty. This is the advantage of team-taught modules: they can be adapted according to the people available to teach.

MISSIONAL CURRICULA FOR COMPLEX MINISTRY CONTEXTS

While ABTS, CGST, and FIT have sought to learn from medical education, missional engagement has led to other innovative approaches. Some of the most creative curricular models are those that respond to seemingly overwhelming contextual challenges. The work of these programs points to the need for responsive flexibility to the "right" questions of who, where, and when, while seeking to address the significant missional issues that arise out of the contextual challenges.

In Cuba, for example, movement around the country is complex and physical resources are limited. Consequently, innovative schools such as Escuela Cubana de Estudios Teológicos Evangélicos (ECETE) and Seminario Evangélico Metodista (SEM) have developed structures that minimize the residential component through the development of dozens of local learning centers. Both schools incorporate substantial elements of problem-based learning in which reflective thinking is nurtured through dialogue between limited textual resources and case studies rather than through the more traditional approach of the critical comparison of texts. In each case, the curriculum embraces some more traditional studies in the Bible, history, and theology, but sees these as a basis for reflecting on local contextual issues. And so we see at ECETE courses in Biblical Interpretation and Postmodern Realities, Personal and Organizational Communication, and Implementation of Missionary Strategies, as well as a very substantial component of Reflection on Ministerial Practice, in which students are required to dialogue between their courses of study and their experience of ministry. The reflective practice component is particularly significant in the Cuban context where the church is experiencing unprecedented renewal and a consequent shortage of leaders who are competent to think theologically about life and ministry.

Another creative access approach to missional curricula is seen in the various online programs that have emerged in the member schools of the Middle East and North Africa Association for Theological Education (MENATE), accessing the resources developed in the TEACH/LEARN project. The project began in 2008 in response to two critical factors: (1) the rapid growth of the church in North Africa, and the inability of the theological schools to meet the urgent need for leadership training

through traditional residential programs of study; and (2) the awareness that increasing levels of instability and security surveillance raised questions for the long-term viability of current approaches to theological education.

Materials in the form of multimedia online resources were developed over the period 2009-2013 cooperatively through the member schools of MENATE. The curriculum team immediately recognized the need to take a "menu" approach to access: that is, just as clients in a restaurant will choose the items that best suit their tastes, so the potential "clients" of the online theological programs would likely be highly selective in their choice of the materials they would access, and this selection would be rooted in immediate felt needs. Learning that is linked directly to felt needs is typical of adult learners but is minimally applied in traditional approaches to theological education.[29]

Due to the felt-needs focus, course development needed to be context-to-text, starting with contextual issues and then bringing appropriate textual materials to bear on these issues. This stands in contrast to the more traditional emphasis on text-to-context, in which we begin with "heritage" studies (Bible, history, and theology) where the connection with the contemporary context, while desirable, is not seen as imperative. The newer, conceptual framework taken by the TEACH/LEARN project followed a cycle of life and reflection, as shown in Figure 2.

[29]Malcolm S. Knowles, Elwood F. Holton, and Richard A. Swanson, *The Adult Learner: The Definitive Classic in Adult Education and Human Resource Development*, 6th ed. (Amsterdam: Elsevier, 2005).

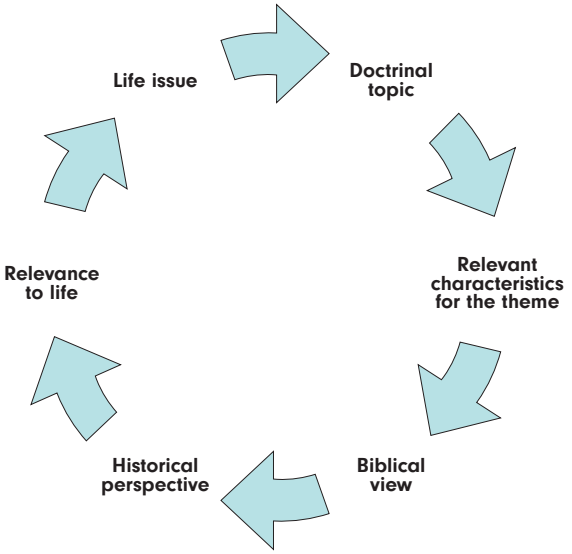

Figure 2. TEACH/LEARN Cycle of Life and Reflection

The starting point for curricular conceptualization was the discussion of two hypothetical students Saïd and Mariam, reflecting the sort of students that potentially would engage with the materials. We then sought to develop a series of courses that would best serve the needs of Saïd and Mariam, while maintaining an appreciation of our heritage of theological thought. Many of the participants in the MENATE courses live in extremely conservative communities, with a passion for missional living that is refreshing and challenging. The key to the effectiveness of this process has been the context-driven and missionally oriented emphases in curricular development, and a deep sensitization to the life realities of the students.

Each of the models presented in this and the previous section is different. However, some shared themes seem essential in the development of quality transformational curricula:

1. The context is a driving force in both the content and the methodology used in the curriculum.
2. The focus is more on the "how" of thinking theologically than on the "what" of content. The great heritage of Christian thought is taken seriously but seen less as a body of knowledge to be transferred and more as providing the foundational lens for critical reflection on the context.

3. The focus is less on traditional pastoral training than on the development of theological leadership. While pastoral formation is often an optional track, other vocational emphases such as marketplace ministry, counseling, mission, and public Christianity are equally valued.
4. Delivery challenges are never seen as definitive barriers but rather as an opportunity for creative expression.

CONCLUSION

The global church is witnessing dramatic change. The remarkable growth of the church in the Majority World and the counterpoint struggles of the church in the Minority World make imperative the need for paradigmatic rethinking of how we prepare men and women for Christian service in the twenty-first century. However, foundational systemic change is difficult, particularly when the key gatekeepers have a vested interest in preserving the status quo.

Several schools and programs have shown the courage and vision to think differently. These schools have developed feasible models that seek better to address the challenges confronting the church in its context as the church pursues its missional calling. The transformation in theological education that is increasingly taking place around the world is proving transformational not only for the students but for the churches and communities where they serve. May their number increase!

GLOBAL THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION AND SOUTHWESTERN SEMINARY

W. Madison Grace II*

The call to make disciples of all nations, which we receive from the Lord Jesus Christ in his Great Commission, is a universal call to all believers (Matt 28:18-20). Between Christ's ascension and his return, the call to the universal Church and the local churches is to go to the uttermost ends of the earth, teaching God's Word and baptizing believers. This task is much more involved than mere personal evangelism. It involves teaching, catechesis, preaching, prayer, communion, and other important matters. Following our Lord is a call that involves the whole human person.

Fulfilling that task is one that does not come naturally. To be sure, we receive gifts from the Holy Spirit, but they work in concert with the call to fulfill the mission of the Great Commission. To accomplish this overarching task, Christians need to be formed, taught, and developed into the image of Christ. This process involves hours of shepherding through teaching God's Word and offering wise counsel to believers. To fulfill this important task the Bible mentions that God calls out individuals for the work of ministry.

But how are these leaders trained? How do we ensure they are equipped to rightly handle the Word of God? How do we know they are passing on what our Lord intended for us to know and confess? These questions, and more, are necessary for reflecting on the role and praxis of theological education, or more simply stated, equipping the called.

Historically, different traditions have provided different roles for training of ministers according to their confessions. No matter the title, or the differences of opinion about ecclesial responsibilities, leaders have needed to be trained and taught since the beginning of the Church. Although methods and models have shifted in two millennia, what has remained

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consistent is the need for theological education, and it will remain a need for the Church until the Lord returns.

So, what of our time? What should theological education look like in the early part of the twenty-first century? Certainly, there is an element that is going to be constant, for the gospel has not changed, nor has our mission in propagating it. But our world has changed. How we think, how we interact, how we engage each other as persons in a global environment—these things have changed and require consistent, dynamic change for the static, unchanging ministerial call from our Lord.

I would like to offer my thoughts in what follows on the present needs for theological education in the third decade of the twenty-first century. I, of course, am approaching this task from my own tradition. As a Baptist and an evangelical I have commitments that lead to certain conclusions, especially about the primacy of Scripture, Baptist identity, and the role of education within a free church context. Some of what I say may correspond with other orthodox traditions, and some will be confessionally guided, but all of my statements are aimed at the need for training ministers in our time.

Specifically, I want to point out what remains timeless for theological education. This includes the gospel, Scripture, and orthodox doctrine. We will also consider what needs to be changed. This would include the global nature of the Church and the churches that are now more connected than ever before, as we engage in cross-cultural discourse. Additionally, ever-increasing technological change has created opportunities for new learning as well as obstacles that hinder true educational formation. Navigating this uncharted pathway will be challenging. Finally, I will look to the need for discipleship of the whole person, wherein our formation goes beyond intellectual and practical knowledge to form a minister holistically.

CONSTANT AND CONSISTENT THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

Change is almost always difficult to accept. It is either thwarted by those who dig into their traditions, or it is so prevalent that change becomes the *only* constant an institution knows. The virtuous mean between two vices finds its balance between what needs to remain constant and what needs to be changed. In theological education those who refuse any type of change will not be able to effectively accomplish the mission God has given for equipping the called for service to the church. However, those who change simply for the sake of change can seek after the differentiated ideal

and lose themselves in the process. Whether it concerns a new theology or mere pragmatism, a holistic approach to change can remove the essence of theological education. Neither pathway is new; both are detrimental. So, what needs to change and what should remain the same? This is the question that must be asked for theological education today.

THE GOSPEL

For those interested in changing trends in theological education it might seem strange to begin with the need for constancy in the gospel. However, this is exactly where one needs to begin if we are to effectively think through theological education. The core of what it means to be a Christian is predicated on the truth of the gospel. Since the beginning of the Church there have been attacks on the gospel. Many tried to teach contrary to the truth. In his epistle to the Galatians Paul reminds us of these incursions:

> I am amazed that you are so quickly turning away from him who called you by the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel—not that there is another gospel, but there are some who are troubling you and want to distort the gospel of Christ (Gal 1:6-7).

Distortions of the gospel lead people away from the truth and freedom they have in Jesus Christ. We need to ensure that the core of our theological education is in the gospel and that every bit of our work relates to that center.

So, what is the gospel? The gospel is not something we get to redefine for our times; it is timeless. It is not something we appropriate for our culture; it is supra-cultural. Simply stated, it is the *euangelion*, the "good news," of Jesus Christ. Paul defines it well in 1 Corinthians 15:1-8:

> Now I want to make clear for you, brothers and sisters, the gospel I preached to you, which you received, on which you have taken your stand and by which you are being saved, if you hold to the message I preached to you—unless you believed in vain. For I passed on to you as most important what I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised

> on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the Twelve. Then he appeared to over five hundred brothers and sisters at one time; most of them are still alive, but some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. Last of all, as to one born at the wrong time, he also appeared to me.

Beginning with this text and then looking to the rest of the Bible, Robert B. Sloan rightly summarizes the biblical gospel: "The two central moments for defining the gospel … are the death and resurrection of Jesus."[1] These two events are essential to the Christian message. Following Paul, we must affirm the gospel is that "on which you have taken your stand." From the earliest time in Christianity the gospel is the place upon which the centeredness of faith rested. To upend the gospel is to upend the Church, its mission, and our entire reason for existing. The gospel is so foundational to Christian belief that to change it is to change how we think about God and his interaction with us in the first place.

Students of church history are quite aware of the continuous work of changing the gospel message. It has happened in many ways and through many methods—inclusive of using Scripture—to the end of denying that Jesus Christ died, was buried, and rose again. From Ebionism to Docetism, Arianism to Apollinarianism, and Nestorianism to Eutychianism, the veracity of the gospel as seen through the person of Christ was challenged. Yet the gospel as delivered by the apostles stood firm. Throughout history such challenges have continued and will continue well past our own day. True faith, hope, and love are only met in the truth of Christ and his gospel.

Theological education that is not firmly grounded on the truthfulness of the good news of the work of Jesus Christ will be relegated to the hermeneutic of suspicion that too often defines at least western culture. The level of doubt that such a theology propagates is "driven and tossed by the wind … and should not expect to receive anything from the Lord" (Jas 1:6-7). The anchored, unchanging position of the gospel of Jesus Christ is the sure and steady place for theological education to persevere in our time and for the times to come.

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[1]Robert B. Sloan, "The Gospel" in *A Handbook of Theology*, edited by Daniel L. Akin, David S. Dockery, and Nathan A. Finn (Brentwood, TN: B&H Academic, 2023), 429.

SCRIPTURE

The second unchangeable aspect of theological education is its dependence on Scripture. It seems to go without saying that the Bible should be the central text of any curriculum that purports to prepare preachers for the pastorate. In every major tradition since the beginning of Christianity the Bible has been essential to church life. Yet this tradition too has been attacked throughout the years. A long-lasting and effective work in training church leaders needs to ensure that Scripture keeps its place as the central text of the classroom. This is important because of the content and nature of Scripture.

From the Old Testament to the New Testament, we find the content of the Christian faith explicated. "In the beginning" Genesis presents us with God, creation, humans, and our major problem in sin. Throughout the rest of the biblical text, we see the faithful work of God and the faithless rebellion of his people. Scripture's historical content establishes the reality of the need for a way forward. The wisdom literature teaches us how to cope in this reality as the prophets point to hope in the Lord. The New Testament provides the message of the hope in the gospel of Jesus Christ and in the edification of the churches through the writings in the New Testament, leaving us all with the hope that will come through Jesus's return in the future. This content is essential for the Christian faith. When biblical content is lacking, so, too, will be the health of a church and its effectiveness in the world.

The reason for the effectiveness of this biblical content is due to the nature of the Word of God. Theologians use a variety of concepts to describe Scripture's nature—"inspiration," "inerrancy," and "authority," to name a few.[2] Understanding the nature of Scripture is essential in making sure the divine author of Scripture is always understood when Scripture is studied, taught, or proclaimed. This divine authorship is attested to in Scripture itself, in places like 2 Timothy 3:16, where Scripture is said to be *theopneustos*, "inspired by God," or 1 Peter 1:21, which claims that "men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit." These two texts help us see the divine author in the inspiration and inscripturation of the biblical text, as well as the authority of those texts for its readers.

[2]For example, see James Leo Garrett Jr., *Systematic Theology: Biblical, Historical, and Evangelical, Fourth Edition*, vol. 1 (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2014), chs. 7-12; Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 3rd ed.(Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013), chaps. 8-10; and David S. Dockery and Malcolm B. Yarnell III, eds. *The Authority and Sufficiency of Scripture*, rev. and exp. (Fort Worth: Seminary Hill Press, 2024).

Because of this nature, we can claim the Bible is the very Word of God.[3]

However, throughout history the veracity of the nature of Scripture and subsequently its content has been called into question by many of those claiming to study it for what it is. The ebbing away of a doctrine of inspiration as well as of its authority has left only a collection of writings that purports theological claims no different than mythological literature throughout history. If one fails to see the historic and authoritative nature of Scripture as the living and active Word of God, where might one find reason for the belief within? Surely the human mind is not sufficient for sureties of truth? But left only to ourselves, we fall anchorless again into the sea of doubt and dissolution. Theological education of this type does not provide the voice for those ministering to the world, for it has removed the all-sufficient voice altogether.

ORTHODOXY

Southern Baptist education began through a variety of institutions—some still going strong, such as Union University and Mississippi College. However, it was at Furman University in 1856 that J. P. Boyce provided a vision for the type of theological education that would be beneficial for the future in a speech titled *Three Changes in Theological Institutions*.[4] One of those changes concerned the confessional nature of an institution engaged in theological education. Boyce states the need for "the adoption of a declaration of doctrine to be required of those who assume the various professorships."[5] This "declaration of doctrine" is an answer to the challenge of fighting against the incursions of theological heterodoxy.

The two previous anchors of the faith—the gospel and Scripture—are rightly aided by a rule of faith that provides the guardrails of theological orthodoxy. Theological education that is not grounded upon these truths will only lead people to go the way of past heresies. I am afraid that Dietrich Bonhoeffer is correct when he states, "the concept of heresy is lost today because there is no longer a teaching authority."[6] In a day that rebels against authority we need to be reminded of the consequences of such.

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[3]See Timothy Ward, *Words of Life: Scripture as the Living and Active Word of God* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press Academic, 2009).

[4]J. P. Boyce, *Three Changes in Theological Education: An Inaugural Address Delivered before the Board of Trustees the Furman University, the night before the Annual Commencement, July 31, 1856* (Greenville: C. J. Elford's Book and Job Press, 1856).

[5]Boyce, *Three Changes in Theological Education*, 33.

[6]Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Christ the Center*, trans. Edwin H. Robertson (New York: HarperCollins, 1974), 75.

Guardrails protect travelers, and theological guardrails protect Christians. Theological education must do its best to ensure that the proper authority is employed to protect from error. This can seem cold and heartless, but, as Bonhoeffer further contends, it is an application of love.

> Only when man does not withhold the truth from his brother, does he deal with him in a brotherly way. If I do not tell him the truth, then I treat him like a heathen. When I speak the truth to one who is of a different opinion from mine, then I offer him the love I owe him.[7]

It is indeed loving to ensure that what is taught to our current and future leaders in our churches is that which has been regarded as the correct interpretation of Scripture and not contrary to it.

At Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, we follow this plan, and we look to the confessional authority of the *Baptist Faith and Message*. This is the statement of faith that is approved by Southern Baptists and needs to regulate our institution. We do not claim it is without error or inspired, as is the nature of Scripture, nor is it written in very narrow, specialized ways. It simply provides the guardrails our convention of churches deems necessary to be in cooperation. In fact, it also addresses the need for academic freedom in the classroom. Article XII on Education states:

> Christianity is the faith of enlightenment and intelligence. In Jesus Christ abide all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. All sound learning is, therefore, a part of our Christian heritage. The new birth opens all human faculties and creates a thirst for knowledge. Moreover, the cause of education in the Kingdom of Christ is co-ordinate with the causes of missions and general benevolence, and should receive along with these the liberal support of the churches. An adequate system of Christian education is necessary to a complete spiritual program for Christ's people.
>
> In Christian education there should be a proper balance between academic freedom and academic responsibility. Freedom in any orderly relationship of human life is always

[7]Bonhoeffer, *Christ the Center*, 76.

> limited and never absolute. The freedom of a teacher in a Christian school, college, or seminary is limited by the pre-eminence of Jesus Christ, by the authoritative nature of the Scriptures, and by the distinct purpose for which the school exists.

The last line is very helpful for us as we engage in theological education for the future. Notice that the confession only limits academic freedom by the gospel, Scripture, and the purpose of the institution. The constraining orthodoxy that theological education needs in the future is something akin to the Southern Baptist *Baptist Faith and Message*. Although our confession is broader than the Apostle's Creed or the Nicene Creed, it includes their creedal dogma and provides a more contemporary outlook.

The three-point anchor of the gospel, Scripture, and confessional orthodoxy provides the elements of theological education which should not change if we are going to be churches that develop ministers and leaders for the present age until our Lord returns. The history of the last century demonstrates the effects of churches and institutions that have disregarded and redefined these stabilizing factors of the faith. Constancy in these will help guarantee a pipeline of well-trained ministers to serve the Church and the churches for generations to come.

WHAT NEEDS DEVELOPMENT

With the anchors of theological education established we need to look to areas that need change. The static nature of curriculum in many schools of theological education has led to stagnant churches, even in places where the gospel and the Bible are still held in high esteem. Why is this so? It is not because there is a limited power to the Word of God, rather it is due to the ever-changing world around us. In some ways, we need an Acts 17 approach to ministry. In Athens, Paul did not present a gospel that was somehow different, nor did he negate scriptural truth in teaching about God; rather he approached the task with the audience at hand. If the gospel is acultural and Scripture is able to be received by all people, then the churches and theological education need to be ever vigilant in keeping up with the changing means of delivering unchangeable truth.

As stated above, there are quite a few areas where one could look for the types of change in our world and needs of our churches. Perhaps one could argue for the development away from denominational traditions

to broader and looser ecclesial bonds. The movements of non-denominationalism or evangelical ecumenism are both issues of note for at least churches in the United States. Or one could look to practical concerns in a broader economic reality where church and state are engaging. The rise of neo-postmillenialism may be an area that needs greater attention for some. However, I would like to look at three areas that I believe will be pushing in and calling for change as we move forward into the twenty-first century.

GLOBALLY CONNECTED

The first area that I think is important to address in our changing world is the shrinking of that world. A century ago, we were aware of a broader world that a century before was barely known worldwide. Today, events that happen twelve time zones away are known within seconds by means of media in a globally connected world. That connectivity is also true for global churches, and it is incumbent upon theological educators to engage this opportunity. But in doing so, this global connection produces tensions which occur when cultures collide. So, it is important to address this global reality from the opportunities both of connectionalism as well as cross-cultural engagement.

Almost nothing has brought the world closer together than the advent of the internet. News and information now go around the world in a matter of seconds and reactions to it on social media occur before most can even process the news. Smartphones are ubiquitous in most cultures. Needless to say, the world has changed. We can look to research in the future to tell us of the health benefits and risks of this level of connectivity through digital devices, but the fact remains we are far more connected than ever before and we are dependent on that connectivity.

This is not bad news, rather such connection creates a global community that has greater opportunities to learn from one another. The ability to connect with one another on a global scale in the past was something left to those who had means for such travel, and that travel was not easy to endure. Today, we can travel the world in a matter of hours or log online and connect with others in a matter of seconds. People have the greatest ability to be connected than ever before in human history. This connectional opportunity should be leveraged for a greater engagement in theological education. Although global engagement in its variety of forms, including online curricula, is not new to higher education, sometimes there is a reticence to innovate in ways that reach out to the broader,

global community. The connectionalism that is before us should drive us to find new markets of students as well as engage a variety of communities that assist in the learning endeavors of theological education. If we truly believe we are united in Christ as his Church, then leaning into opportunities where we are connected with the broader body not only makes our educational endeavors greater but draws us closer together in Christ.

A second, important aspect of the global nature of theological education today, which comes out of this connectionalism, is the cross-cultural opportunities it affords. Through immigration, travel, or merely online engagement, theological educators have the ability to engage with other cultures around the world. If we believe that the unchanging gospel exists beyond culture, then it is valuable to see how the gospel is understood and the Church grows in a variety of cultures.

Further, as the world becomes smaller through this global impact, we need to recognize that cross-cultural communities are only going to increase. If theological education is intended to train leaders to reach communities, we need to ensure that we are equipping our students to reach communities as they are and that includes learning how to engage cross-culturally. Our theological education will become better and richer when we engage one another.

TECHNOLOGY

The second major category of change that theological education needs to continue to embrace is technology. As stated above, the world is connected more globally because of the abilities afforded through technology. There are not many tasks in which most of the world engages that do not include the necessity of greater advanced technology. Computers, tablets, and smartphones are not only office essentials in the modern workplace, they also are necessary for navigating the world to and from the workplace. This growth in technology overall has improved our way of life but has also created challenges for us.

The opportunities technology has afforded theological education today are found in the classroom specifically. Professors can now engage students residentially and virtually. Sometimes this virtual world includes live interaction but it can also be engaged asynchronously. For decades theological educators debated this technological move. Some innovated and grew tremendously while others hesitated and now are trying to catch up with the variety of virtual campuses that are completing their mission

in non-traditional ways. Although a case, I think, can always be made for embodied, residential education, online learning can be a very good thing for thousands of students looking to be equipped for ministry when they are unable to relocate.

The virtual classroom is here to stay, and it is important for theological education that we are investing in it for the future. Resources need to be allocated for personnel and equipment to aid in online education. A new coordinated effort is needed for this to succeed. Online education should not be inserted into the old paradigms of theological education, rather it should be created in its own paradigm with the necessary accoutrements. Recently, *The Chronicle of Higher Education* published an article titled, "Online Teaching Is Real Teaching: How to find meaning, purpose, and even a little joy in your asynchronous courses." The article addresses the frustrations many professors have in online education and honestly states, "Despite all the talk and training during the pandemic, online courses are painful to take and painful to teach."[8] Why is this so? In part it is due to the fact that for many professors this is not considered real teaching. The focus of the courses for the professors was focused too much on administrative guidelines rather than student learning outcomes. The author summarizes the problem, "A hyper-focus on course mechanics has caused faculty members to equate online teaching with hoop-jumping. That's not joy-filled teaching. That's not meaningful interactions with real people who need our support to get them over the finish line. That's just plodding through one online class after another."[9]

How do we overcome these challenges and make online teaching joyful? It will take effort to see the courses as something different than a mere modification of residential versions. For instance, the audience is just as different as the modality of teaching. The cross-section of online students has the potential to be more diverse than a traditional residential class with the professor's added inability to see or perceive that class as a whole. A holistic approach to online learning and teaching is necessary. When available theological education needs to address the resources necessary to equip this different population of students just as eager to be equipped for ministry as the traditional student.

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[8]Flower Darby, "Online Teaching Is Real Teaching: How to Find Meaning, Purpose, and Even a Little Joy in Your Asynchronous Courses," *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (March 1, 2024), 60.

[9]Darby, "Online Teaching," 60.

Other opportunities also exist with developments in technology in and out of the classroom. Writing, testing, engaging with students, and assessment are greatly impacted by the growth of technology in education. The high cost that accompanies some of these developments should not dissuade institutions from studying and learning about new innovations that could help fulfill its mission more faithfully. There are challenges that accompany any paradigm shift, just as there are technologies that can create problems for learning. But however real these challenges are they should not dissuade theological educators from looking forward to new, innovative ways to use technology for the future.

WHOLE-LIFE DISCIPLESHIP

Finally, one beneficial change in theological education includes the move to seeing the whole person in the curriculum. In the history of the Church this approach has been taken before, and perhaps it really is truly a modern problem, but there needs to be a greater emphasis on whole-life discipleship in our theological education.

For many who have studied at a seminary or a divinity school the curriculum was completed by ensuring a student earned the right number of credits. Subjects like Bible, theology, and church history are taken. Papers are written. Content is transmitted. Grades are earned. But has a minister truly been made? I am not downplaying the role of the Lord in the calling and development of his ministers, but I am questioning if this accumulating of credits alone has effectively formed the students that theological educators sent into the world for Kingdom work.

The attention to spiritual formation is not new to theological education. In fact many schools, including my own, have included it in their curriculum. But is this move enough for the students in the twenty-first century? With the increasing number of competing worldviews our students are in a greater need of formation of head and heart than ever before. There needs to be an emphasis in the whole program of theological education that looks at the whole person. Training in the Bible is foundational to the task, but more must be built upon it.

Here are three areas that should be considered for this formation. First, students need to process through formative mentorship pathways in and out of their ecclesial contexts. The changing social dynamic of the twenty-first century has many students seeking active mentorship. The desire to be equipped includes experiential, relational aspects that small group

and one-on-one mentorship can provide. The faculty are essential to this task, and efforts should be made to increase the shepherding of students.

Second, and related to this, schools need to look not just to the courses that comprise the curriculum but look also to co-curricular opportunities. The content taught in our lectures is essential, but attention must also be paid to ministerial development outside the classroom. Student life departments should come alongside classroom instruction to establish a curriculum that develops more than academic prowess but whole-life discipleship. Attention should be paid to the way in which all parts of the institution engage and interact with students. Leadership formation, for example, is not just taught in the classroom; it is also caught in the way in which students perceive their academic leaders operate. Mission, values, and character need to be on the forefront of all employees for the development of kingdom workers.

Third, seminaries need to partner with local churches to assist in the development of future ministers who will be leading in the near future. Any seminary, divinity school, Bible college, or university needs to remember that they are in a support role and operate as a parachurch organization. The primary task of theological education remains with the churches. This support role is intended to assist churches as they are fulfilling the Great Commission. Institutions need to be proactive in seeking cooperation and partnerships with the local church beyond the ever-important task of sending students and funds. Local church ministry needs to become part and parcel of theological education's curricular and co-curricular programs. All in all, this creates a greater, holistic student engagement that forms and disciples students for life.

This type of engagement calls for theological educators to rethink their investment and resourcing strategies. Teaching will always be a need for the educational task but there also needs to be an increased resourcing of personnel that administer mentoring environments for forming students into ministerial leaders. This can be accomplished in a variety of ways, but what is important is that attention is paid to the formation itself. Content transformation is not the goal. The mission is to equip future leaders, teachers, and missionaries for the whole life task before them, and this takes an approach to whole-life discipleship.

CONCLUSION

The mission of theological education is found in assisting the Church and the churches who are bound to the Great Commission. All Christians are called to go into all the world and make disciples of all nations, and the better equipped we are to do this, the more effective our response to his commission will be. Theological education needs to constantly evaluate its supportive role in this task. It is the churches who are sending students to our schools and are trusting us to form these students into ministers equipped for the twenty-first century. Some schools do well at teaching the unchanging content of the gospel and the Bible but have not evaluated their pedagogical methods. Others have sought change for the sake of growth, stability, or survival and perhaps have given up on their mission along the way. I do not have any institution in mind but can see either challenge in the future of many of our institutions. Leadership in theological education for the future must be anchored in the unchanging ways of our Lord and be ever innovative to ensure that the equipping of students for twenty-first century ministry is effective for generations to come.

BOOK REVIEWS

***Introducing Old Testament Theology: Creation Covenant and Prophecy in the Divine-Human Relationship*. By W. H. Bellinger. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2022, 224 pp., $24.99.**

W. H. Bellinger is professor of religion emeritus at Baylor University, where he taught for several decades. Bellinger organizes Old Testament (OT) theology around three issues, which he likens to a three-legged stool that together are able to give stability. These three are creation theology, covenant theology, and prophetic theology. He proposes the seat of the stool should be understood as wholeness or completeness (what he calls salvation in the Latin sense of *salvare*, and integrity, or wholeness, in the Hebrew sense of *tmm*).

In the first chapter, Bellinger recounts the progression from the earliest works of Old Testament theology (think Johann Gabler) up to the twentieth century (Walther Eichrodt and Gerhard von Rad), before presenting the "shattered spectrum" (to use Leo Perdue's term) of the early twenty-first-century post-modern landscape of OT theology. He then mentions Walter Brueggeman's work as the first truly post-modern attempt at an OT theology by using the courtroom metaphor. Bellinger suggests his three organizing issues, instead of a traditional "center" to OT theology (like Eichrodt's use of covenant), work within the post-modern moment. Because he presents an excellent summary of the progression of the field up to the time of this work, he is able to give the reader insight into where he contributes to the field.

Bellinger deals with method in the second chapter. His method may seem a bit tame when compared to other post-moderns, and he admits as much. He intends to give priority to the canonical shape of the text rather than the reader. Yet he stays away from prior discussions of history, remarking that they are fraught with questions. However, he does not really address what those questions might be (54). Still, Bellinger's

three-legged approach shines through in the way he analyzes the canonical texts in order rather than with a thematic presentation. In his view, the proper understanding of these three ideas together brings integrity to the believing community both past and present.

With his many publications in the study of Psalms, it is little wonder Bellinger suggests the book is the most important for understanding the theology of the entire OT. He describes his method as one that begins by identifying these three "theologies" within the Psalter and then interpreting the rest of the OT through that lens. He considers the Psalms the confession of faith by the people in the OT.

Though Bellinger does not technically suggest a "center" to OT theology, his three-legged stool functions similarly to a "center" in that he each of his categories is sufficiently broad enough to encompass all the canonical material within them. For example, his category of "creation theology" does deal with the act of creation, but also blessing and wisdom. Furthermore, "covenant theology" envelops not just the major covenants, but also the ideas of deliverance and instruction. Finally, his notion of "prophetic theology" consists of speech by God, speech by mankind, as well as mankind's acts of repentance. Bellinger teases these three beliefs out of each section of the canon: Torah, former prophets, wisdom literature, and latter prophets. Keeping true to his approach, he devotes an entire chapter to the Psalms in between the former prophets (the historical books) and the rest of the wisdom literature.

Bellinger contributes to the field of OT theology with his proposal. More than just offering a critique of others, or suggesting the task is impractical, he sustains an argument for his proposal over the course of the entire Protestant canon. His respect for the canonical form (rather than source critical approaches, etc.) is rare among post-modern interpreters. Furthermore, he manages to do so in an accessible style that avoids technical jargon (unless necessary), while still providing relevant footnotes. He also models a respect for the work of others, though he works from a perspective within a specific faith community (Texas Baptists).

Having said this, Bellinger's contribution does have some vulnerabilities. His description of how his three theologies can be found in each section of the canon feels a little stretched at times. For example, his description of the minor prophets is brief and does not address "covenant theology" often. Similarly, in discussing the Pentateuch, his remarks about prophetic theology mostly describe acts of deliverance. One issue he attempts to avoid

is the problem that having a single "center" to OT theology often stretches that central idea. Still, his three-part proposal seems to suffer a similar fate. In addition, his remarks about salvation—he describes "salvation" as "wholeness of life" (62)—may leave some evangelicals wondering if he believes in a literal hell. Then, how he cites his work when suggesting the arguments on current scholarship on Psalms seems puzzling. While it may be true, it can come across as odd at the very least.

In conclusion, the book is accessible enough for undergraduate students to learn from, yet conversant with the field in such a way that even graduate students can glean several insights. Its contribution to the field from a faithful perspective makes it worth recommending to all students of the OT.

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***Revelation*. By Thomas R. Schreiner. Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2023. 874 pp., $69.99.**

Thomas Schreiner had big shoes to fill in this replacement volume on *Revelation* in the excellent BECNT series, one of my favorite New Testament commentary sets. The 2002 volume on *Revelation* by Grant Osborne was one of the best in the series. So, Schreiner is careful to mention in his introduction that he hopes Osborne's "very fine commentary … will continue to be read and consulted for years to come" (xi).

James Buchanan Harrison Professor of New Testament Interpretation and professor of biblical theology at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Schreiner has written numerous scholarly works. It seems fitting *Revelation* is the seventh NT book on which Schreiner has written a commentary since the word "seven" is so important in it: "seven" or "seventh" occurs sixty-one times in Revelation—over half the number in the entire NT (42-43, 76, 82).

This commentary follows the user-friendly format of other commentaries in the BECNT series. Each section of text has 1-2 pages of overview, a large section of exegesis and exposition, and 1-2 pages of additional notes that mention grammatical and syntactical issues in the Greek text. There

are three sections on the important passage about the woman and child in Revelation 12:1-6 (424-26, 426-35, 435-36). There are also two helpful excurses: "The Beast and the Antichrist" (457-62) and "The Millennium" (659-82).

An Unusual Millennial View. Schreiner does not claim to have resolved the millennial debate and rightly notes "dogmatism about the millennium … must be avoided" (677). He espouses a minority millennial view called new-creation millennialism (xi-xii, 677-82). J. Webb Mealy and Eckhard J. Schnabel influenced Schreiner with this mediation between historic pre-millennialism and idealism. Schreiner claims it takes the "best features" of both (677). New-creation millennialism says the millennium is the first stage of the new creation. All unbelievers are killed and cast into hell at the last battle when Christ returns. All believers are resurrected and reign with Christ, but it is not based in Jerusalem, nor is there any special emphasis on Jewish Christians. In this millennium of indeterminate length, there is no sin or death. Satan is released at the end and leads a rebellion of unbelievers who are raised from the dead. Then God casts them all into the lake of fire (677-79). This reviewer will refrain from critiquing this hybrid view. He admits his reading has problems (680-82) but believes it "has the fewest problems" (677). Time and more research will tell.

Strengths. Contrary to most current scholars, Schreiner opts for the apostle John as the author of Revelation. He briefly sketches why John wrote it and why the time of writing was toward the end of Domitian's reign. This commentary is at home with conservative scholarship (12-19, 22). Schreiner interacts and deals fairly with the main interpretive views of Revelation. He often explains competing scholarly viewpoints about a passage and gently offers the reader his suggested solution. Yet, he shows refreshing candor about the difficulty in interpreting some passages, such as the beast who "was and is not, and is about to come" (Rev. 17:8 NASB). These constitute "some of the most difficult verses in the entire book" (582). Regarding the harlot on the beast, Schreiner notes, "interpreters have torn their hair out trying to unravel what John tells us here" (568).

Revelation is a complicated book, and Schreiner makes good use of charts to clarify material, such as lists of the twelve Jewish tribes (294-95), the various lists of 3.5 years (383), descriptions of the three sets of judgments (263, 325, 543), and the kings in Revelation (585). Schreiner explaining how one must understand John's many allusions and echoes to the Old Testament in Revelation order to properly interpret it. For

instance, why does John tell those who do wrong to continue doing wrong (Rev. 22:11)? That command sounds counterproductive. The answer keys are found in John's echoes of Ezekiel 3:27 and Daniel 12:10. We must recognize the "stubborn reality that some [people] will persist in evil" despite warnings (759).

Suggested Improvements. Additional charts or tables would be helpful, such as one showing all 3 sets of 7 judgments in relation to one another or charts listing groups of OT allusions in Revelation, such as the use of Isaiah 13 in Revelation 18. A table listing the charts would also help. Additionally, Schreiner gives short shrift to the dispensational premillennialism. He gives it only brief mention (662-63) in his excursus on millennial views. It ought to have a separate category apart from historical premillennialism rather than lumping the two views together under "premillennialism" (674-77).

Regardless of whether one buys into new-creation millennialism, Schreiner's commentary is a welcome addition to the complicated and continuing conversation on millennialism. This commentary competently covers the text of Revelation, shares many helpful insights, and will benefit pastors, students, and anyone using it to dig deeply into Revelation.

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***Dictionary of the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*. Edited by G. K. Beale, D. A. Carson, Benjamin L. Gladd, and Andrew David Naselli. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2023. 964 pp., $64.99.**

The New Testament use of the Old Testament is a burgeoning field in biblical and theological studies. *Dictionary of the New Testament Use of the Old Testament (DNTUOT)* is a timely and important addition to this field. It won the 2023 *Southwestern Journal of Theology* Book of the Year award. Full-time faculty of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary (SWBTS) and Texas Baptist College nominated books in 13 categories of theology and ministry, and this book rightly earned first place.

Written as a companion volume to the excellent *Commentary of the New Testament Use of the Old Testament (CNTUOT)*, published in 2007, the new volume addresses several needs: (1) additional book-by-book reflection, with essays on every biblical book, (2) examination of the OT

use of the OT, and (3) more emphasis on biblical theology. Thus, the essays in *DNTUOT* cover topics arranged alphabetically from "Abraham and Abrahamic Tradition" (1-6) to "Zephaniah, Book of" (886-90). The focus of each essay fits in one of five categories: biblical book surveys (55 essays, since some books are combined, such as "John, Letters of"), biblical-theological topics (54 essays), Jewish exegetical tradition (7 large topics divided into 25 essays), inner-biblical exegesis (20 essays), and systematic theology (5 essays) (ix-x, xvi).

Seasoned Scholars. A leading expert in the field wrote each specific topic, and most of these scholars have published an article or book on their essay subject. The advantage is obvious: each article is often a distillation of a scholar's published material on a topic along with up-to-date research, fresh insights, and a curated bibliography to guide the reader in further study. SWBTS is represented in this erudite scholarly group by two graduates: George H. Guthrie and J. Daniel Hays, and two professors, Craig Blaising and J. Daniel Hays.

Benefits. The purpose of a Bible dictionary, like a commentary, is not for a person to read the book from cover to cover. Rather, one reads a specific topic in the dictionary, gains a better understanding of it, learns ideas related to the subject, and finds a list of resources to guide further study. *DNTUOT* fits this need admirably, and it has the bonus of working well with the *CNTUOT*. For instance, one wants to study Paul's use of Genesis 15:6 in Romans 4:3, 5, 9, 22. Starting with the *CNTUOT*, it explains the meaning of this verse in Romans by examining: (1) the OT context, (2) Jewish Second Temple usage, and (3) Paul's use of this OT verse in Romans. Then the *DNTUOT* adds to this study, giving information on Genesis themes (61-63), the use of the OT in Romans (711-17), the specific use of Genesis 15:6 in the Dead Sea Scrolls (176-78) and the pseudepigrapha (665-67), its possible use in Nehemiah 9:8a (250), and over thirty references to this verse in other essays. Each essay lists helpful resources for additional information.

Of course, the *DNTUOT* is an excellent stand-alone volume with rich insights. The intriguing "Serpent and Antichrist" essay creatively describes a biblical theme as "kill the Dragon [Satan], get the girl [the people of God] (775-78)!" "Letter Couriers" examines often neglected aspects of the letter genre: the difficult task of letter delivery and the complex role of the carrier (455-61). This reader also enjoyed the longer series of essays—such as those on the Apocrypha (29-51), Dead Sea Scrolls

(165-87), which included helpful charts of references (173-76), and the History of Interpretation (300-27).

The *DNTUOT* introduces the reader to some relatively new topics in biblical studies, such as "Prosopological Exegesis" (641-48). "New Areas for Exploration of the OT in the NT" encourages the reader to consider two major areas for further study involving a macro and a micro examination of the NT text (560-68). "Temple" is thought provoking and unusual—claiming the Garden of Eden was the first temple or sanctuary (830-32) and the Jewish temple reestablished the Garden of Eden's temple (832-34)—thus, encouraging the reader to study the topic further.

Suggestions. Here are some suggestions for minor improvements to this volume. The "Index of Scripture and Other Ancient Writings" is indispensable (891-964), but a subject index would be a useful addition. Each essay has a helpful bibliography primarily listing English sources, but adding more foreign language writings would benefit the student and scholar. Although this volume has a synchronic focus, there are essays where it would help to add a section on Second Temple usage, such as "Consummation" (114-19) and "Day of the Lord" (161-65). The essay on the important subject "Quotation, Allusion, and Echo" needs some biblical examples of echo (690-91).

This reviewer highly recommends this volume as an indispensable tool for anyone interested in the NT use of the OT. It is a welcome and important addition to its companion volume, but it is a valuable resource on its own. It is well written and accessible. Not only are the contributors notable scholars in their areas of expertise, they are excellent communicators. This volume is helpful for students and pastors, and it is also beneficial for scholars doing research in this fruitful field of study.

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***Early North African Christianity: Turning Points in the Development of the Church*. By David L. Eastman. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2021. 192 pp., $22.99.**

David Eastman argues for the centrality of early North Africa in understanding Christian theology and spirituality. To demonstrate how crucial

this region was in early Christianity, Eastman focuses on numerous important figures and events. Beginning with the martyrdom of Perpetua and Felicity, discussion of the Donatist controversy, and the towering figure of Augustine of Hippo, Eastman demonstrates that early North Africa shaped Christian thought and practice for generations. The text is filled with helpful historical and social commentary, illustrating the multiple layers present within each figure and their thought. Its handbook style and summary vision make it useful for a wide range of readers, from students of church history and theology to church study groups and non-experts wishing to gain a stronger foundation in the era.

Chapter one introduces the hostile culture surrounding the early church in the first few centuries. Christians were deemed "atheist" because they did not give honor to the Roman gods or civic religion, creating potential dissonance between Rome and its deities. Considered a secretive sect, Christians were labeled seditious and malicious. While historical research has verified that Christian persecution was not widespread and ongoing in the early centuries, when it was present it was often severe. As Eastman notes, our best sources for early Christian persecution and martyrdom come from Roman (i.e. pagan) historical sources rather than Christian ones. One Christian source of consequence is the account of Perpetua and Felicity, the subject of chapters 3 and 4. Eastman artfully deals with historical issues yet focuses attention on key themes present within the primary text such as Christian discipleship, the role of women in early Christianity, and the notion of spiritual authority in North African Christianity. Eastman also relates the importance of the "New Prophecy" movement led initially by Montanus in connection with Perpetua and Felicitas. The era in question demonstrates shifting notions on the nature of the church and the role of the martyrs within church authority.

Related to the Montanist movement is the figure of Tertullian of Carthage, the subject of part two. Eastman divides this part into biography (ch. 4), apologetic writings (ch. 5), and trinitarian thought (ch. 6). Tertullian, who laid the groundwork for subsequent African theology, demonstrated "both the outward focus of an apologist and the inward focus of a theologian" (p. 39). As apologist, Tertullian famously skirted Greek categories of wisdom yet did not renounce human reason wholesale. "For Tertullian, only the church, not the academy, can lead you to the greatest good" (p. 51). Eastman affirms the importance of Tertullian's theological grammar and trinitarian categories. His pneumatology, though perhaps

influenced in some degree by the Montanist movement, paved the way for later orthodox formulation of the Holy Spirit. Eastman laments the lack of Tertullian's direct influence on Nicene theology, conjecturing that his theology would have solved some of the theological controversies of that era.

Part three focuses on the life and thought of Cyprian of Carthage. Chapter 8 recounts the Roman crisis of the third century, along with its intensified Christian persecution. Chapter 9 focuses on themes of unity and forgiveness in Cyprian's writing. The major questions included possibility of forgiveness for lapsed Christians, such as those who obtained certificates falsely stating their compliance with ritual emperor worship. This opened debate on the nature of the church, whether it should be as Eastman describes a "clean room" free of contaminates or a "hospital" for the sick to receive healing. Opposing parties arose in Carthage, even electing rival bishops. Cyprian treated schismatics as heretics; baptisms in rival churches were deemed illegitimate based on the supposed impious character of spurious bishops. For Cyprian, spiritual power and authority resides in the community of catholic bishops, so alternate bishops lose their ability to administer the sacraments. This put him at odds with Stephen, bishop of the Church of Rome, who sided with the "laxist" group, advocating for the church to be a hospital for the wounded. Facets of this debate would continue with the Donatist controversy, the subject of part four.

Eastman relates the details of the Donatist schism while remaining true to his "introductory" approach. The schism was directly tied to empire-wide Christian persecution under Diocletian, relating to bishops who had handed over copies of Scripture to avoid consequences. Harkening back to issues considered during Cyprian's life, the question as to the purity of a bishop, as well as the purity of their consecrations, became a central concern. Rival factions formed around the bishops Caecilian, supported by Rome, and Donatus, supported by most North Africans. Cyprian remained a key voice in the debate, as both groups considered themselves in line with the apostles. The testimony of the martyrs also figured prominently, as both sides claimed to be the church of the martyrs. Later theologians such as Augustine of Hippo, himself likely surrounded by many Christians of the Donatist sect, moved to settle the debate in favor of the Caecilianist party. Eastman carefully notes, however, that the controversy never officially ended. The slur of "Donatist" has been cast on those parties in church history who wish to divide over matters of ecclesial purity.

This conversation leads Eastman to the final part, which focuses on Augustine of Hippo. As the inheritor of North African theology and Christian culture, Augustine propeled Latin-speaking theology into the medieval church. Eastman focuses his attention on an overview of Augustine's life and thought, with attention to the Pelagian debates on grace and free will. This issue became a perpetual concern for theologians throughout the medieval period, the Reformation, and the modern church. Eastman covers other facets of Augustine's thought—his understanding of the Trinity, for example—but as the book's purpose is for summary and overview, he does not go deeper than basic analysis.

This book serves as a good introduction to early North African theology. Eastman begins every chapter with key ideas to aid readers in their understanding and reinforces these ideas throughout each chapter. The text is easy to read and provides clarity for introductory readers. While experts in this field will likely not discover anything new, there is much to gain from Eastman. Eastman's style and structure should be an encouragement to writers and scholars, as a model of producing a work of historical theology in brief form. The book situates well in courses of early Christian history, and as the title suggests, will profit courses on North African Christianity.

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***The Augustine Way: Retrieving a Vision for the Church's Apologetic Witness.* By Joshua Chatraw and Mark Allen. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2023, 184 pp., $24.99.**

What persuades unbelievers to change their minds and reject their current beliefs in favor of Christian beliefs? Chatraw and Allen address this question by confronting the disjunction between modern rationalistic apologetics methods and the state of contemporary culture in *The Augustine Way: Retrieving a Vision for the Church's Apologetic Witness*. Their goal is to develop "an integrative model—a way of doing apologetics—that is responsive to cultural and historical variances and … our social imaginaries" (37). Since people carry their own assumptions about reality that filter what counts to them as meaningful evidence, integrative apologetics must begin with those assumptions and seek to engage in

terms they find meaningful. The authors see this apologetics model not as something to be created as much as rediscovered. They focus on two works by Augustine, *Confessions* and *City of God*, to draw out his methods for engaging the minds of unbelievers. Ultimately, the authors land on a therapeutic model, which they claim regains the best of Augustine's ideas for a contemporary world.

The book comprises two parts. The authors begin their argument by assessing the state of contemporary reasoning about reality as grounded in desires and longings more than modernistic rationalism. The fracturing of assumptive foundations, in the eyes of the authors, mirrors the fractured Roman world Augustine engaged. Augustine "offers us the resources from an integrated approach that includes the thinking and believing aspects of our humanity.... Understanding people who desire to love and be loved and who reason toward a certain telos they believe will make them happy will change our apologetic encounters" (58).

Part two then walks through Augustine's testimony from *Confessions* and his cultural engagement in *City of God*. They find in his classic works the connection between thinking and believing, where Augustine's social imaginary had to be reoriented through the narrative failures of Manicheism in order for him to be open to the more fulfilling narrative Scripture offered. Using Augustine's realization that a questioner's whole person must be involved for persuasion to occur, Chatraw and Allen push for an apologetic process grounded in local church life, centered on the biblical narrative—creation/fall/redemption/restoration—and aimed at human desires. Their Augustinian approach is a therapeutic approach where the apologist first deconstructs a person's worldview on the basis of that person's own desires and then replaces it piece by piece with the Christian worldview seen as both superior at achieving the person's desires and more coherent from an objective standpoint.

Overall, *The Augustine Way* is a welcome addition to the apologetics books that have come out over the past few decades. Its strength lies primarily in its awareness of our current cultural state, especially concerning younger generations like Millennials and Gen Z. If apologetics is to serve its offensive function—in the sense that it aids Christians in persuading lost friends and acquaintances to hear the gospel message—then the keen diagnosis Chatraw and Allen offer serves the field well. The authors also reorient the function of apologetics away from a debate format that has become so prevalent yet seems so ineffective at persuasion today. Their

goal is not to win an argument but to have a conversation that moves a person's social imaginary away from falsehoods and toward the truths of the Christian worldview.

At the same time, the authors cannot escape the rationalistic methods they critique in the opening chapters. While the Augustinian method does not begin "from scratch" trying to prove that God exists, that Scripture is reliable, and that other typical topics support Christian ideas, it still must dismantle alternative worldviews through the process of logical argumentation. Chatraw and Allen hope that the beauty of the Christian story will engage the desires as well as the reason of unbelievers through their therapeutic method. Ideologically, this is a wonderful goal; practically, one might ask how achievable it is. The Christian worldview is certainly beautiful for those who have entered it by faith in Jesus Christ and have studied its coherent presentation of reality. However, the crux of this worldview's beauty is quite literally the cross. Considering that the offensive purpose of apologetics is to remove internal barriers and bring unbelievers to a place where they will hear the gospel, one must wonder whether the therapeutic method already needs the gospel in a person's heart to ignite the desires. In other words, what Chatraw and Allen may have developed is a method for doing apologetics that better serves a defensive role by solidifying faith for believers and helping to defend against the critiques brought by the social imaginaries held outside Christianity.

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***The Power of Revival: Martyn Lloyd-Jones, Baptism in the Spirit, and Preaching on Fire*. By Dongjin Park. Bellingham Lexham: Press, 2023, 239 pp., $29.99.**

In the years since his death in 1981, considerable discussion has arisen regarding the pneumatology of the Welsh preacher and esteemed pastor of London's Westminster Chapel, Martyn Lloyd-Jones. Dongjin Park's volume offers a clarifying perspective on this complex topic. Essentially, Park argues that Lloyd-Jones's doctrine of Spirit baptism was not derived from Pentecostalism with connections to the twentieth-century Charismatic movement but was rather an adaptation of the doctrine of

assurance articulated by a distinct strand of Puritanism.

Following Michael Knowles's foreword, which effectively introduces Lloyd-Jones and gives an overview of the book's trajectory, the reader encounters nine chapters that coalesce to shed light on Lloyd-Jones's preaching, writings, and theology of Spirit baptism. The chapters convey what amounts to a corrective historical reflection on his positions while underscoring the significance of the Spirit's work in the church today.

Lloyd-Jones views the baptism of the Spirit as a subsequent experience distinct from regeneration. This subsequent experience gives the believer an unusual assurance of full salvation. According to Lloyd-Jones, Spirit baptism is a sovereign act of God that is repeatable and which brings both a preacher and his congregation a sense of authority. Additionally, he asserts that it is primarily connected with the empowerment of witness and service. Specifically, a preacher's empowerment frequently is described as "unction" (3).

Park's treatment of Reformed and Pentecostal perspectives and their similarities and differences with Lloyd-Jones's understanding of Spirit baptism is illuminating. Convinced that a fundamental discrepancy exists between Lloyd-Jones and the Pentecostal understanding, Park argues that Lloyd-Jones's doctrine should be considered a reappropriation of the old Reformed doctrines within the circumstances in which he lived.

Two chapters in this book are devoted to an identification of the factors which contributed to the development of Lloyd-Jones's doctrine of Spirit baptism. After reviewing his upbringing as a Welsh Calvinistic Methodist, Park proceeds to highlight four other important factors in Lloyd-Jones's development: his personal experience of baptism of the Spirit, his public experience of baptism of the Spirit in connection with his ministry, his interpretation of baptism with the Spirit in the New Testament, and the history and theology of revival in Britain and New England in the eighteenth century.

Focusing on the central elements of assurance of salvation and revival in Lloyd-Jones's doctrine of Spirit baptism, Park asserts, based on an examination of Lloyd-Jones's lectures and sermons, that these elements flow down from the Reformed tradition of the seventeenth to mid-nineteenth centuries. With reference to Lloyd-Jones's understanding of genuine Christian preaching, Park observes it is entwined deeply with his doctrine of baptism with the Spirit. Genuine preaching should be "expository in methodology, doctrinal in content and experiential in goal" (175).

Ultimately, Park concludes that Lloyd-Jones's doctrine of Spirit baptism was shaped by Puritan spirituality and Welsh revivalism as well as by his personal experience of the Holy Spirit. Perhaps one of the most pertinent implications from Lloyd-Jones's perspective and ministry is a stress on the urgent need to expect and pray for the extraordinary work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the church and the ministry of preaching.

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