

## Theological Education: What Needs to Be Changed

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The slogan, “Theological education is at the center of Christianity - as the seminary goes, so goes the church,” must be taken seriously. The theological school determines the direction of the church of the future. The professors’ lectures, seminars, and textbooks are the foundation on which the leadership of our churches and Christian organizations is built. Pastors, missionaries, and evangelists put into practice what they are taught and pass on their knowledge and experience to people in their churches, mission works, or outreach ministries. It follows, then, that the lives of church members and the ministries in which they are involved will reflect what is taught in the theological schools. The direction in which a theological school is moving, any failure to communicate basic and essential elements of the faith or of ministry, any undue emphasis on particular formations or functions of ministry will all be replicated in the ministries of the students. It is therefore essential to take a closer, in-depth look at the emphases in current theological education in order to determine whether future Christian leaders are receiving the best possible training for ministry.<sup>1</sup> It will also be helpful to look at some

1. The discussion began five decades ago with H. Richard Niebuhr, *The Purpose of the Church and Its Ministry: Reflections on the Aims of Theological Education* (New York: Harper & Row, 1950) and H. Richard Niebuhr, Daniel Day Williams, and James M. Gustafson, *The Advancement of Theological Education: The Summary Report of a Mid-Century Study* (New York: Harper & Row, 1957).

A generation later, in the 1980s and early 1990s, the debate on theological education intensified. Here are some of the most significant publications: Edward Farley, *Theologia: The Fragmentation and Unity of Theological Education* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983) and *The Fragility of Knowledge: Theological Education in the Church and the University* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988); Max L. Stackhouse, *Apologia: Contextualization, Globalization, and Mission in Theological Education* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988); Joseph C. Hough, Jr., and John B. Cobb, Jr., *Christian Identity and Theological Education* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1985); David H. Kelsey, *To Understand God Truly: What’s Theological about a Theological School?* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1992); D.G. Hart and R. Albert Mobles, Jr., eds., *Theological Education in the Evangelical Tradition* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996); Thomas

examples of programs and approaches which, I believe, are addressing the issue of making training for theological education more effective and sustainable. In addition, I refer in the footnotes to pertinent resources for further studies.

Overseas Council International has just compiled a list of every theological school, faculty, seminary, and Bible college worldwide. There are more than seven thousand institutions in existence today.<sup>2</sup> In spite of the existence of accreditation agencies and standards, the differences in educational levels and methods of learning in these institutions are so extreme that any attempt at comparison or categorization are futile from the outset. This presentation will therefore deal only with theological education in seminaries and in theological faculties at the university level.

In February 2000 in Nairobi, Kenya, a continent-wide consultation took place between leaders of churches and leaders of theological institutions. Similar meetings have been held recently in Eastern Europe: Kiev, Ukraine; Moscow, Russia; and Oradea, Romania.<sup>3</sup> It is quite evident from the discussions at these consultations that the theological institution and the local church are not working towards supporting

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C. Oden, *Requiem: A Lament in Three Movements* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1995); Harry L. Poe, "The Revolution in Ministry Training," *Theological Education* 33.1 (1996), 25-27; Barbara G. Wheeler and Edward Farley, eds., *Shifting Boundaries: Contextual Approaches to the Structure of Theological Education* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1991). For a good summary of all the material available see W. Clark Gilpin, "Basic Issues in Theological Education: A Selected Bibliography," *Theological Education* 25 (Spring 1989), 115-121.

The most recent publication is Robert Banks, *Reenvisioning Theological Education* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999). In the recent issues of *Theological Education* the debate has been picked up again. *The Theological Forum* also had a series of articles in their 1999 editions entitled "Theological Education for a New Millennium."

2. Jack Graves, Overseas Council International, PO Box 17368, Indianapolis, IN 46217, USA. This material can be obtained electronically on a disk, or as a hard copy.

3. The Nairobi consultation was sponsored by the Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology, Nairobi, Kenya, and the African Theological Accrediting Association.

The Euroasian Accrediting Association, in conjunction with Overseas Council International, conducted theological consultations in Kiev in 1999, in Moscow in 1997, and in Oradea in 1995. These recent consultations have addressed, as have many others in the past, the ancient question formulated by the North African Church Father Tertullian (c.160–c.220), "What has Athens to do with Jerusalem?" In today's language, the question would be "What does the training center / academic program have to do with the church?"

each other. It cannot even be said that they exist in parallel. The relationship seems, rather, to be tending toward confrontation. On the one hand, one hears at these consultations statements such as “The products turned out by our theological schools are of no use to any church.” On the other hand, theological educators express disappointment and frustration that “the churches have no desire to be supportive partners of the theological training program.” It seems, therefore, that both theological institutions and churches tend to live more and more in isolation from each other, to the detriment of both in terms of effectiveness. One expert has stated that “there is no other professional organization in the world which allows its primary professional training institutions to produce graduates who are generally as functionally incompetent as the church permits her seminaries.”<sup>4</sup>

John Vawter describes a meeting of several hundred pastors and Christian leaders at which ministries in the nineties was being discussed. “When the discussion turned to seminary education,” he says, “the room was electric when one panel member said, with great fervor and emotion, ‘Seminary education in general has only four things wrong with it: it is taught by the wrong people in the wrong place with the wrong curriculum and has the wrong oversight.’”<sup>5</sup>

Churches send students who have a heart for ministry, an eagerness for mission, and a zeal for evangelism to be prepared and equipped; and three years later these students graduate from seminary theologically confused. They lose their commitment and often are unprepared for the task which they had hoped to accomplish – and for which they had come to seminary to be trained. Are boards of directors and trustees of seminaries, and accrediting agencies, evaluating the effectiveness of theological education in terms of a realistic “outcome assessment”?

Academic education in the fields of medicine, law, and business have changed drastically over the last few decades. Theological education has remained basically the same for a century. New, emerging theological schools mushrooming in the non-Western world, especially in countries such as Ukraine, Philippines, and Nigeria,<sup>6</sup> seem to be fol-

4. Tim Dearborn, “Preparing New Leaders for the Church of the Future: Transforming Theological Education through Multi-Institutional Partnerships,” *Transformation* (December 1996).

5. John Vawter, “Seminaries: Surviving or Thriving?,” *Faculty Dialogue* 23 (1995): 41. See also Mark Young, “Theological Approaches to Some Perpetual Problems in Theological Education,” *Christian Education Journal* (Spring 1998): 75-87.

6. “Metro Manila has 94 bible and theological schools for its 1896 churches.” Lee Wanak, unpublished research document (Manila: Asian Theological Seminary, 1998). “In Nigeria every year 200 new bible and theological schools

lowing in the same direction. New beginnings, like new wine, are being confined into old wineskins.<sup>7</sup>

### Developing Directives

If we believe that improvement requires change and that successful leadership in ministry requires strategic planning and futuristic orientation, we must have the courage to develop new directives as we train men and women for ministry. I would like to recommend the following:

#### *Changes in Subjects to Be Taught*

Most seminaries measure success by pure academic standards, minimizing the requirements for developing spiritual maturity and ministry experience. Character formation,<sup>8</sup> servant leadership, and spiritual modeling are not automatic outcomes of academic excellence. Academic achievement should, at most, take second place to the development of these personal characteristics.<sup>9</sup>

If the focus on evangelism, missions, and discipleship, with an emphasis on practical involvement in these activities, is not at the center of theological education, churches will start their own mini-seminaries for their prospective leaders instead of sending them to the established theological institutions.<sup>10</sup>

In the Murdock Study,<sup>11</sup> conducted only a few years ago, eight hundred individuals from various aspects of ministry were interviewed. These individuals came up with what they considered to be the ten essential subjects that should be taught at every theological seminary:

1. Ministry and spirituality
2. English Bible
3. Historical overview of Christianity

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are established. . . . The government of Nigeria had to step in to control the founding of theological schools." Gary Maxey, unpublished document (Owerri: Wesley International Theological Seminary, 1999).

7. Matt 9:17.

8. For an excellent study of the Greek word *paideia* see Werner Jaeger, *Early Christianity and Greek Paideia* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1961).

9. For the debate on *paideia* versus *academia* (*Wissenschaft*) see David H. Kelsey, *Between Athens and Berlin: The Theological Education Debate* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993).

10. Leith Anderson, *The Church for the Twenty-first Century* (Minneapolis: Bethany House, 1992); Tony Campolo, *Can Mainline Denominations Make a Comeback?* (Valley Forge: Judson, 1995).

11. The Murdock Charitable Trust. The study was conducted in 1994.

4. Christianity and culture
5. Evangelism and mission
6. Spiritual leadership
7. Hermeneutics
8. Theology of ministry
9. Personal growth and skill development
10. Communication

It is time for our curricula to be based on what is needed for the graduate to enter, or to continue in, his ministry, rather than on the hobbies of professors based on their own dissertations and research.

When the Murdock Study asked the same lay people, pastors, and seminary professors the question, "What should be the five priorities in the preparation of a pastor?", the lay people and the pastors put theological knowledge at the bottom of the list, whereas seminary professors said that it should rank at the top.

<b>Lay priorities</b>	<b>Pastors' priorities</b>	<b>Professors' priorities</b>
1. spirituality	1. role model	1. theological knowledge
2. relational skills	2. management skills	2. character
3. character	3. communication skills	3. leadership
4. communication skills	4. spirituality	4. communication skills
5. theological knowledge	5. theological knowledge	5. counseling skills

### *Changes in Missiological Emphasis*

During the debate on theological education, voices emphasizing the missiological perspective - including discipleship - were in the minority. Costas,<sup>12</sup> following Kähler's thesis that mission is the mother of theology, developed a model in which he placed mission at the center of God's purposes and thus made it the responsibility of all the people of God. "He understands that theological education is a significant expression of mission, identifies Jesus' relationship with his disciples as the basic model it should follow, recognizes the missiological background to the major divisions of the curriculum, and affirms the informational, formational, and transformational character of all aspects of ministry training."<sup>13</sup> The great South African missiologist D. J. Bosch<sup>14</sup> writes,

12. O. Costas, "Theological Education and Mission," in C. Rene Padilla (ed.), *New Alternatives in Theological Education* (Oxford: Regnum, 1986).

13. Banks, *Reenvisioning*, 132.

14. D. J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*

“Just as the church ceases to be the church if it is not missionary, theology ceases to be theology if it loses its missionary character. . . . We are in need of a missiological agenda for theology rather than just a theological agenda for mission; for theology, rightly understood, has no reason to exist other than critically to accompany the *missio Dei*.”<sup>15</sup>

The very thorough work of Banks in exploring a missional alternative to current models deserves serious attention. Banks provides numerous models for including a missional emphasis as the main character of theological education. At the recent International Consultation on Discipleship<sup>16</sup> several of the presenters stressed that theological education must focus more on missiological emphasis in order to do justice to the mandate of biblical discipleship. It is quite alarming that, according to the Murdock Study, neither lay people, pastors, nor professors considered mission or discipleship to be among the top five priorities in the preparation of a pastor. Jesus taught his students / disciples to be fishers of men, and gave them the Great Commission (Matt 28.19-20) as their plan of action.

### *Changes in the Area of Field Work*

Most seminaries require that their students engage in some field work, usually on weekends or on semester breaks. Some of these activities are supervised; most are not. In the field of medicine, the training program was changed decades ago to require every student of medicine to be part of a mentoring program, working in a “teaching hospital” for up to three years. The student is part of the senior physician’s team, visiting every hospital patient, helping to diagnose the sickness and to determine the needed treatment. They even assist in the operating theater. This same mentoring process is needed in theological education. Some theological schools have now included in their program “teaching churches,” where a student is mentored for one to two years under the tutelage of a senior pastor or a pastoral team. The student (pastor-to-be or missionary-to-be) learns his future work step by step. He learns from his mentor how to prepare a sermon, how to begin the practice of prayer and fasting, how to engage in a devotional or “quiet” time, how to handle staff, finances, and board meetings, how to deal with both supportive and critical deacons. He sits in on counseling sessions, participates in weddings and funerals, and his functions continue wherever the pastor leads him. He is exposed first hand to all the positive and

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(Maryknoll: Orbis, 1992).

15. Young, *Theological Approaches*, 85.

16. International Consultation on Discipleship held at Eastbourne, England, September 1999.

negative experiences he will face later in his ministry. All these mentors (senior pastors, missionaries, evangelists) are part of the faculty of the theological institution, just as are the professors who teach history, communication, or culture.

An excellent model of this kind of theological training is that of the Seattle Association of Theological Education (SATE), a cooperative venture between Regent College in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, and Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California. More than 400 students are involved in this program. Half of their courses are taught by seminary professors, and half by clergy, church staff members, or leaders of parachurch organizations. Students are mentored by their teachers. Under such an arrangement the students are watching ministry being done in areas such as preaching, evangelism, pastoral care, management, and Christian education. The SATE program was the first to receive ATS accreditation as a school which does not require students to spend even one year on campus and in which so many courses are taught by non-academics.<sup>17</sup>

By means of this mentoring process, a student comes directly into contact with the ordinary men, women, and children to whom he will later be ministering on his own after graduation. He learns to listen to them, to understand their needs and their way of thinking, and to speak their language. In Christian ministry, one has to become bilingual. "We must learn to live, think, and speak in two completely different languages," says H. Horn, "the language of the Bible and the language of modern man. Any attempt to short-circuit this difficulty – to be either wholly biblical or wholly relevant – does violence to one's vocation. One must live in both worlds at once."<sup>18</sup>

A recent survey discovered that more than half of the professors of theological institutions do not belong to, nor do they attend, a local church. How then can they prepare men and women for the ministry of the local church? It is time that we take another look at the role model provided by our professors and teachers.<sup>19</sup> Academic freedom and tenure in our theological institutions can have lasting negative implications

17. The SATE model and other innovations are described in Timothy Morgan, "Re-Engineering the Seminary," *Christianity Today* (24 October 1994), 54-78.

18. Henry Horn, *The Christian in Modern Style* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1968), 68. See also Steele W. Martin, *Blue Collar Ministry* (np: The Alban Institute, 1989).

19. Manfred W. Kohl, "The Role Model of a Theological Teacher" (Indianapolis: Overseas Council International, forthcoming). See also Peter Jensen, "The Teacher as Theologian in Theological Education," *The Reformed Theological Review* (September-December 1991), 81-90.

and should be thoroughly reviewed. Theological teachers, like pastors, must have clearly defined job descriptions. Their performance must be reviewed, and they must be held accountable by their board of directors or trustees. Such provisions should be made a requirement for academic accreditation for the institution.<sup>20</sup>

### *Changes in Organizational Structures*

Churches will not survive if they expect people to come to them to be ministered. Churches that are alive, growing, and effective have developed ministries to reach people where they are. This same trend applies to the seminaries. With the rapid explosion of electronic communication, teaching within four walls will change drastically. Extension programs, part-time and evening studies in various locations must be the strategy of theological institutions of the future.

The recent unprecedented expansion in theological education by extension (TEE) around the world is clearly based on a felt need. For the church, especially in the non-Western world, TEE provides essential theological tools and open doors to theological education for people previously excluded by age, educational level, social position, sex, or occupation. It establishes new relationships between training programs and the church, between teachers and students, between theory and practice, between clergy and laity. It equips more people for ministry (Eph 4.12).<sup>21</sup>

According to Tim Dearborn, director of the Seattle Association for Theological Education, “[T]heological education is best provided to part-time students who are full-time Christian servants. Training for ministry should occur in ministry, rather than before ministry. Students need the time to integrate into their lives that which they are learning.”<sup>22</sup>

Enormous changes are in progress in terms of campus locations, buildings and residence requirements for students, library privileges and class attendance. For instance, today one CD Rom, available in any Christian bookstore, contains the works of all the church fathers,

20. Barbara E. Taylor and Malcolm L. Warford, eds., *Good Stewardship: A Handbook for Seminary Trustees* (Washington: Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges, 1991).

21. I am convinced that in the next generation theological education by extension (TEE) will produce far more trained ministers for the church than the traditional institutions of the past. TEE has produced an enormous quantity of excellent material. For a good survey of what is being done in the non-Western world see F. Ross Kinsler, ed., *Ministry by the People: Theological Education by Extension* (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1983). In *Theological Education* 36.1 (1999) are six articles related to the theme of distance education.

22. Dearborn, *Transformation*, 9.

reformers, and modern missionaries – more than five hundred books. Another disk contains journal articles in theology over the last fifty years. The Internet transcribes virtually everything written within the last few years. Thousands of volumes of literature can be downloaded and printed from my laptop in my own home. Electronically transferred means of lecturing, even the ability to participate in group discussions, are already being practiced in numerous places. We will always need a home base for a theological institution, but a theological education without walls will become more and more the norm.

In the business world, activities are usually divided into three equal parts: production, administration, and marketing. The progressive theological institute also has its three divisions all on an equal level: academia and ministry; administration and finance; and communication and fund-raising. The third of these, the division of communication and fund-raising, becomes an especially pressing need for schools in the non-Western world. In the Western world schools usually have a well-established department to raise finances.

The president of an institution should lead a team of three equal vice-presidents (VP for Academia and Ministry, VP for Administration and Finance, VP for Communication and Fund-raising). These four individuals are jointly responsible for the affairs of the institution, reporting directly to an independent board of directors or trustees. This board should be composed of people from different sectors of the Christian community. Many theological schools need to review the composition of their boards and to replace some of the bishops and other denominational leaders who serve on numerous other boards with committed Christian individuals who can be counted on to make board membership a top priority.<sup>23</sup>

The board should request from the leadership of a theological school or program a seven-step strategic plan which will:

1. identify, clarify, and formulate the mission and purpose for the theological school
2. identify specific goals and objectives in fulfilling the mission and purpose
3. identify courses, programs, teachers, and mentors who can meet the goals and objectives
4. identify the resources necessary for implementation
5. analyze and compare resources needed to resources available

23. The National Center for Nonprofit Boards in Washington, DC ([www.ncnb.org](http://www.ncnb.org)) provides updated information (books [65 different titles], newsletters, seminars, consultancy, etc.) on every aspect of boards.

6. develop a series of one-year plans of action, with budgets
7. plan and develop a system for periodic evaluation.<sup>24</sup>

Any theological institution that has not developed a clear institutional development concept, with a strategic plan as its outcome, will struggle to be effective; it may not even survive.

### *Changes in Dealing with Financial Resources*

A few of the established theological institutions in the West are blessed with enormous financial resources, primarily from designated bequests and endowment funds. Most theological schools and training centers around the world, however, have financial difficulties. Costs rise faster than students can procure the necessary tuition fees. Scholarships are limited and, in many cases, decreasing in number. Funding agencies, foundations, and the donor community at large are asking penetrating questions before any funding is offered. Denominational headquarters, Christian funding groups, and mission agencies have more difficulty in generating funds today than in the past. Theological institutions must begin to develop their own financial resources.<sup>25</sup>

Although wealth and sharing are two of the major issues addressed in both the Old and New Testaments, and although Jesus spoke about giving more than about any other single issue, most theological schools do not deal with this subject and have had no course on finances in their curriculum. As a result, financial giving for Christian ministry in general and for theological education in particular is still minimal in most churches. Seminars, courses, and lectures on topics such as “Biblical Stewardship,” “Giving and Sharing,” and “Christian Fund-raising”

24. Overseas Council International conducts an “Institute of Excellence” for the leadership of theological schools and programs in a number of countries around the world. These seven steps form part of the basic requirements to be completed by every participant. (Indianapolis: Overseas Council International, 1999). See also Louis C. Vaccaro, “The President and Planning: Management and Vision” in *Courage in Mission: Presidential Leadership in the Church-related College*, ed. Duane H. Dagley (Washington: Council for Advancements and Support of Education, 1988); G. Blair Dowden, “Presidents: Effective Fundraising Leadership,” in *Advancing Christian Higher Education: A Guide to Effective Resource Development*, ed. Wesley K. Willmer (Washington: Coalition for Christian Colleges and Universities, 1996).

25. Under the auspices of Overseas Council International, seminars on the topic of “Biblical Stewardship and Christian Fundraising for Theological Education” were held recently for theological schools in South Africa, Ethiopia, Philippines, Argentina, and Poland. (Materials are available from Overseas Council International.)

should be mandatory for every theological school. Only if the theological school and the local church begin to teach and preach with conviction that everything—all that we are and all that we have—belongs to God and not to human beings will there be sufficient resources and finances for future Christian ministry, including theological education.

God is the Creator and Sustainer of all, and Scripture makes clear that everything we have belongs to God and has been entrusted to us for accountable management. We are told that where our treasures are there our hearts will be also (Mt. 6.21). These truths should be remembered in approaching individuals for giving to Christian ministry. Since God created all things and we are his stewards, we are not to consider our resources as personal property but as a trust from him to be shared with others. We are only appointed to be managers, custodians in time.<sup>26</sup>

There are many creative possibilities for fund-raising for theological institutions. Within the last decade an enormous amount of published material on the subject has become available. The Foundation Center in New York publishes semi-annually a catalog listing more than one hundred directories with information for funding in areas ranging from art, culture, and higher education to religious activities.<sup>27</sup> The leadership and the staff of the department of communication and fund-raising in a theological institution must be individuals who have specialized training and experience in grant writing, project applications, and both general and specific fund-raising projects.

There are literally thousands of organizations and foundations, many of which will provide funding for theological educational projects. One should therefore not rely only on the few well-known foundations which are specifically Christian. The right match, the right project, and the right timing are important. Museums, cultural programs, sport activities, environmental groups, medical research, and others receive substantial financial support from foundations. It is indeed time that

26. Manfred W. Kohl, "Fund-Raising Principles for Maintaining Continuous Giving to Christian Humanitarian Ministries" (DMin diss., Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, 1994), 1.

27. To cite one example: *The National Guide to Funding in Religion* (2000 edition) is a volume of 865 pages. It is described as follows: "The new fourth edition provides detailed fundraising information on more than 6,700 foundations and corporate direct giving programs . . . providing all the facts you need on potential funders; grantmaker addresses and contact names, financial data, application guidelines, and the names of key officials. The volume contains more than 8,000 sample grants."

Similar material is available in Great Britain through the Charity Aid Foundation and in Germany through the Bundesverband Deutscher Stiftungen.

Christian leadership, especially theological educational projects, begin to apply for funding for projects such as libraries, books and journals, computer labs, research and publication projects, staff assistance, study grants, conferences, facilities, and other needs.<sup>28</sup>

Fund-raising includes good communication. How can a willing individual donor, business enterprise, community group, multi-national company, government agency, embassy, or foreign government representative begin to contribute to a theological school if they have never heard or seen that school mentioned in the media? Christian leadership formation is a topic which can be presented in an exciting and appealing way.

The establishment of a proper data base is a must for every communication and fund-raising department. Every visitor, student, alumnus, staff member, friend, and contact person must be recorded in this data base (with motivation and designation codes available). Sharing information regularly—at best monthly, in the very least quarterly—creates awareness. In so doing, sharing provides the basis for financial support, volunteer help, and other needed resources.

In fund-raising, attention should be paid to motivation. A business man, for example, may be more likely to give to furnish an office or to help support a secretary. A medical doctor might be more likely to support a research project. A women's Bible study group may be interested in providing clothing or food for students, or in assisting female students. A widow may wish to pay for a scholarship. Good fund-raising takes into account the motivation of people, and returns often respond according their enthusiasm. Theological schools have lost many supporters because nominated funds have not been used for the purpose for which they were designated.<sup>29</sup> Credibility, that is above reproach, is the most critical issue for successful fund-raising.

28. Manfred W. Kohl, "Responsible Stewardship in Theological Education: Guidelines for Resource Development in Post-Communist Countries," *Christian Education Journal* (Spring 1998), 57-74.

29. Kelly Monroe, ed., *Finding God at Harvard: Spiritual Journeys of Thinking Christians* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998), 357-538. See also Manfred W. Kohl, "Motivation – Designation: Historic Glimpses into Donations and Fund-Raising for Christian Ministry," in *The Contentious Triangle: Church, State, and University. A Festschrift in Honor of Professor George Hunston Williams*, ed. Rodney L. Petersen and Calvin Augustine Pater, Sixteenth Century Essays and Studies, LI (Kirksville: Thomas Jefferson University Press, 1999).

## Conclusion

Theological education must always be seen as a process,<sup>30</sup> and “only when teaching is made effective in practice will the word of God receive proper place.”<sup>31</sup> To summarize, using M. Young’s words, “In order for theological education to make sense it, too, must discover, articulate, and submit itself to a purpose that is greater than itself – to contribute to a deepening knowledge and worship by *all* people. Only then can theological education begin to make sense to the student and to the church.”<sup>32</sup>

By far the best guidelines I have found for integrating theology with holistic ministry, including all aspects of practical theology, are those found in the Lausanne Covenant.<sup>33</sup> This document, written by a large team of church leaders, theologians, and missionaries under the direction of John Stott, is probably one of the best-written theological summaries of what Christian ministry is all about.

It is high time that theological education undergo a shift toward positive, meaningful training of leaders, making whatever changes are necessary. In my position with Overseas Council International, I have the unique advantage of observing and evaluating theological schools all over the world. I have observed aspects of theological education which give rise to a negative image of this education which is more prevalent than we would perhaps like to admit. Let me share three of these observations:

1. Theological faculty within theological institutions like to talk and debate, often with few results. It seems that action or change is to be avoided at any cost.
2. Theologians within theological institutions like to focus on the past. To plan ahead, to think futuristically, seems to be outside their comfort zone.
3. Theologians within theological institutions seem to have difficulties with issues of management, fund-raising, and outcome oriented assessment.

30. Charles M. Wood, *An Invitation to Theological Study* (Valley Forge: Trinity Press, 1994).

31. Steven Peay, “Change in the Theology and Practice of Preaching” (PhD diss., Saint Louis University, 1990), 349.

32. Young, *Theological Approaches*, 87.

33. Since the Lausanne Covenant is very seldom found in print in its entirety, although it is quoted extensively, I have included the entire document here as an appendix. It can easily be reproduced for use.

If theological institutions were to make their own, and act upon, the affirmations of the Lausanne Covenant, they would be well on the way to overcoming these weaknesses and of meeting Young's challenge to "submit [theological education] to a purpose that is greater than itself." Revival is not only the result of the working of the Holy Spirit in the past, as recorded in history. A new focus on the essentials must become reality today.