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Fresh Approaches to Theological Education

1 NORMAN E. WAGNER | AARNE J. SIIRALA

Theological Education as Ministry

It is hardly necessary to labour the obvious by drawing a detailed picture of the confused situation surrounding much of contemporary theological education. It might comfort some to learn that the much publicized frustrations of parish pastors are often shared equally by those entrusted with the task of training future ministers. Whether or not one thinks that this situation has reached crisis proportions depends very largely on one's optimism and one's sympathy for the participants in the struggle who are filled with genuine anxiety. Harvey Cox has drawn our attention to the fact that the basic question at issue is one which faces education at all levels: namely, whether some long-cherished presuppositions are still valid. Three such propositions are crucial: that education is the task of an institution and best performed in an institutional setting; that education is the task primarily of a group of professionals devoted almost exclusively to that task; that education is a training ground in which young people are prepared for future vocational pursuits.¹ Granted their limited validity, the question must still be raised of whether or not these presuppositions lead to the most realistic options in our time. While it is not possible to debate this question in a short paper, it is hoped that some light can be cast on selected aspects of the struggle into which all of us are being propelled with alarming acceleration.

Meaningful changes in patterns of theological education have been pitifully slow in evolving but that is hardly the result of lack of pertinent studies of the problems. During the past thirty years there has been no dearth of attempts to suggest modifications and new approaches. A few of the major efforts warrant brief mention here. In 1934, Mark May and others published a four-volume work entitled *The Education of American Ministers*,² a thorough sociological analysis of the ministerial profession, its training-ground, and its problems. It is quite possible that the frank appraisal of the situation prompted some of the burgeoning of 'practical' courses in the theological curriculum. About ten years ago another ambitious study of theological education was undertaken by a team headed by H. Richard Niebuhr. In contrast to May's sociological orientation, the outlook of the Niebuhr study was theological. This study was published as a three-volume series: *The Purpose of the Church and its Ministry; The Ministry and Historical Perspectives; The*

1. Cf. Harvey Cox, 'The Significance of the Church-World Dialogue for Theological Education,' *Theological Education*, 3 (1967), 274f.

2. New York: Institute of Social and Religious Research, 1934.

*Advancement of Theological Education.*³ We suspect, however, that only now is the field ripe for the insights of Niebuhr's group. In 1960 two significant volumes appeared. Prior to the establishment of the Theological Education Fund, a study made by Yorke Allen appeared under the title *A Seminary Survey*.⁴ Of even greater significance is a volume edited by Hans Hofmann, *Making the Ministry Relevant*,⁵ which grew out of the Harvard project on Religion and Mental Health. This volume certainly merits careful study by all who are concerned with theological education. It was perhaps inevitable that the approaches of May and Niebuhr would be synthesized. Thus Keith Bridston and Dwight Culver attempted a socio-theological survey of pre-seminary, seminary, and post-seminary training, resulting in the publication of *The Making of Ministers*⁶ and *Pre-Seminary Education*.⁷ Bridston had established himself as a keen observer of the scene with a study published a decade earlier, entitled *Theological Training in the Modern World*.⁸ With the American Association of Theological Schools now having launched *Theological Education*, a journal on the subject, no one can any longer plead ignorance of the debate in progress. The pages of *Theological Education* are brimming with well-informed studies.

It is impossible to include here a survey of studies directed primarily at the ministerial role, the mission of the church, or others of the countless topics which have direct bearing on the task of theological education. Most would agree that changing forms of ministry are upon us, and that this situation requires changes in the form and content of theological preparation for ministry. This matter can be simply focussed for us by referring to Steven Mackie's working paper for the Division of Studies of the World Council of Churches, entitled *Study on Patterns of Ministry and Theological Education*. Mackie drew attention to the fact that two basic questions are being asked around the world: 'How can the work of ministry be performed and new patterns of ministry be recognized and utilized in new situations in the modern world, and what modifications in the traditional academic curricula and methods of practical training are called for in order to meet the challenge of changing times?' Mackie insists that the questions must be asked, and answered, in this order, yet they are so inextricably related that to answer one without coming to grips with the other is both dishonest and futile. To attempt only a theoretical answer to either or both without bringing about the necessary changes would be disastrous. It is surely encouraging to see this debate being carried on in all parts of the world today.

Canada cannot hope to remain immune from this debate. Indeed, it would be our loss if we were to attempt to ignore both the severity of the problem

3. New York: Harper, 1956-57.

4. New York: Harper, 1960.

5. New York: Scribner, 1960.

6. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1964.

7. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1965.

8. Geneva: World Student Christian Federation, 1954.

which we share and the possibility for renewal. There seems to be no prospect of increasing enrolments at our theological schools. In fact, decline seems to be the trend for the years immediately ahead. This brings us to a time of decision, forced by economic considerations, if by nothing else. When one views the growth of university departments of religion in this country and the prospect of increased dialogue between English- and French-speaking scholars and students, it appears that radical changes may be in the offing. It is the good fortune of all of us that a man of the calibre of Professor Charles Feilding has been able to devote much of his time in recent years to a study of theological education, and that Canada has been very much part of his study. Preliminary papers by Feilding began to emerge in 1962, while his full report occupied the whole of the fall 1966 issue of *Theological Education*, under the title *Education for Ministry*. This study will no doubt take its rightful place among the other publications listed above. Canadians are particularly fortunate that Feilding saw fit to publish a separate study aimed particularly at the Canadian scene, 'Twenty-Three Theological Schools: Aspects of Canadian Theological Education.'⁹ It is difficult to see how some of Feilding's proposals can be disregarded. Surely the idea of fewer, but more adequately staffed, schools is something which must be seriously considered, regardless of how stubborn our denominational aspirations might be. The areas of study deemed relevant have so mushroomed in recent years that a student enrolled in a poorly staffed school is bound to suffer, to say nothing of his deprivation in social and other communal aspects. The prospect that professors will continue to spread themselves ever more thinly over vast areas, often with little or no preparation and training, is also far from comforting. There will no doubt be considerable debate regarding Feilding's concrete proposal for five theological centres in Canada, with a hoped-for average of fifteen professors and one hundred and fifty students, but it is likely that only such a comprehensive plan can make a meaningful impression on the total scene. One is rather tempted to say that Feilding's proposals should not be viewed as ultimate objectives, but as minimum requirements for the very near future. It is in fact our conviction that proposals even as radical as those put forth by Feilding will only partially solve our problems. Further analysis of the aims of theological education is required, and to this question we would address a few comments.

There have been relatively few, if any, periods in the past two thousand years during which uniformity of thought and practice existed among Christians. The existence of separate schools of thought has always been possible. Today, however, we are not only confronted with different views concerning the inspiration of scripture, different doctrines of the atonement, or different points of emphasis in liturgical matters. A basic division has cut through denominational lines, making questions such as those just listed seem terribly antiquated. We have come to a decisive moment in which we must radically question the very methodology for this enterprise which we have come to call theology. We refer, of course, to the attempt to understand and

9. *CJT*, 12 (1966), 229-37.

expound the gospel in predominantly secular terms. It would be foolish to undertake here a full discussion of the pros and cons of this movement or to evaluate the diverse practitioners who find shelter under the vague title, 'New Theology.' But let us not pretend that we are dealing with a passing phase, one which will soon fall from favour and disappear. Stanley Frost has adequately discussed the growing distance between theological and secular thought in our time, suggesting that it forces all scholars to search out once more a 'common starting point for all human thought.'¹⁰ But will this actually happen if we follow present forms of theological study? It is more likely that the division will become greater, with some theologians becoming more 'orthodox' while other scholars turn to secularity to such an extent that even the concept 'religion' becomes meaningless. Paul Tillich, in his last public address, dealt with this question in a manner which illustrates the peril in both extremes.¹¹ What would seem to be desirable today is the establishment of settings in which this debate can be carried out in actual fact. Let us be clear: we do not advocate the abolition of all existing theological schools in Canada. We do suggest, however, that some institutions might be daring enough to provide a setting in which the *doing* of what is often called 'New Theology' might be attempted and viewed as an authentic undertaking, not a freak manifestation tied to the personality of a particular theologian. Call it experimental if you wish, but give it a chance to prove its authenticity.

It should be remembered that it is only in recent years that such a new approach has been seriously presented as a viable option. Clearly the development of science and technology is a prerequisite for its happening at all. Let us not get bogged down in a discussion of whether or not 'God-is-dead' language can be traced back to previous eras. We are now in a new situation in which serious theologians are refusing to accept the definition that by divine revelation we mean only a 'religious' aspect which is added to one's secular existence, as an external factor which provides a supernatural dimension of eternal duration. One can sense the deep cleavage which results from such confrontation in Father Gregory Baum's summary of the Congress on the Theology of the Renewal of the Church, held in Toronto in August 1967.¹² This is indeed something new. As long as theology is granted a special sphere of concern, no direct confrontation or correlation with other aspects of human existence is required in its formative stage. Theology can claim to have a definitive answer to the problems of life, based on the Bible and/or the wisdom of the church. Such answers stand for eternity, regardless of the changing attitudes of psychologists, sociologists, or other critics of society. The answers can be updated or re-mythologized from time to time, but as

10. S. B. Frost, 'Reviewing Some Foundations - A Contribution from Canada,' *Theological Education*, 2 (1966), 5-25.

11. Cf. P. Tillich, 'The Significance of the History of Religions for the Systematic Theologian,' in Jerald C. Brauer (ed.), *The Future of Religions* (New York: Harper, 1966), pp. 80-94.

12. Cf. *The Ecumenist*, 5 (1967), 81-93.

ultimate answers they must stand. One surely senses something just like this in an article in as reputable an encyclopaedia as *Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, where we read,

From the positions of theology today it is difficult to define satisfactorily the relationship between the theological and psychological doctrine of man. Barth does not refer at all to a psychological doctrine of man (nor the medical doctrine of man which has grown up in such close relationship with it); Thurneysen on his part directly and radically dismisses the ability of psychology to understand and interpret the human personality. . . . Real knowledge of man can grow from the biblical revelation alone.¹³

There can be no doubt that this kind of attitude has played an overwhelming role in structuring present-day theological curricula. On the basis of such an approach the student is exposed to selected biblical, historical, and dogmatic material which, it is hoped, will give him adequate content for a theological position. He must then be taught how to communicate this theological content effectively to specific areas of ministry. In other words, practical theology is brought into the picture to give the student equipment whereby the communication can be best accomplished. In a sense the procedure is like that followed by professionals of most types. It is like studying the films of previous games to discover the weak spots in the opponent's defence. Feilding writes: 'Too much theological education, especially in Canada, still assumes that all we need is the correct faith (as it was interpreted yesterday) and the capacity to shout louder to people who are no longer within earshot.'¹⁴ Much of this is done in the name of loving the world, but if ready-made answers are arrived at first and then merely applied wherever practical, the claim begins to have a hollow sound. As our contemporary situation becomes more complex, and multiform ministries become more common, it will be increasingly difficult to follow the procedure outlined here. There is a limit to how flexible one can be in applying a given content to differing situations without losing sight of it entirely. Perhaps much of the frustration of which ministers and teachers speak is related specifically to this point.

The problem is not simply a matter of dynamic change in the social environment to which one must address oneself; the so-called content areas have also experienced an explosion of fact and technique. Biblical scholars have evolved a sophisticated methodology far beyond that presented in standard 'Introductions,' and the body of knowledge now at our disposal is phenomenal. This is no less true in other areas as well. The question of the time available for a student to master a subject is thus inevitably raised. Is it meaningful to introduce a student to each discipline, when we know full well that he will hardly be able to scratch the surface, let alone plumb the various subjects to their depths? It can be argued that to make an exegete out of a student does not require intimate knowledge of every book in the Bible, but surely a basic

13. *RGG* 3, 5 (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1961), p. 717 (freely translated).

14. 'Twenty-Three Theological Schools,' 234.

grasp of the field is required if one is to feel at all confident in dealing with the material in a given situation. Schools and students must make drastic choices to confine or ignore some areas or to lengthen the entire programme by a number of years.

The programme which we have caricatured (not too unfairly we hope) can certainly be undertaken best in larger, well-staffed schools where optional courses and areas of specialization are possible. We seriously question, however, whether this system is entirely capable of meeting the demands of the dynamic context in which we find ourselves.

In the preceding pages we have used the expression 'church' with some hesitation. This is not because we question its existence in some form, but simply because use of the term itself may result in considerable misunderstanding. Numerous writers have insisted that the social institutions in our culture are all becoming more and more secularized. One thinks, for example, of the well-known work of Harvey Cox¹⁵ or Dietrich von Oppen.¹⁶ If the definition of 'church' is also to be reviewed alongside other cultural institutions, in the light of a secularizing trend, the effects on theological education must be felt. This is especially true if one adheres to the outline discussed above, where the institutionalized version of the church was clearly an organizing principle in structuring theological education. That is to say, a church body with a well-defined concept of ministry naturally wants its students to be prepared for service according to the ministry recognized as authentic by that church. Even if one speaks of 'flexible' ministries as a goal, the principle works out in much the same way. To follow such a pattern today might result in a formal structure which was less and less adequate. One reads, for example, in the October 1963 minutes of the North American Faith and Order Study on Order and Organization, that there is alarm concerning the gulf 'between questions of order and organization, between theological statements about the nature of the Church and what actually takes place in the operations and activities of the churches.' The minutes continue: 'traditional doctrines of order appear to have little or no bearing on the organizational life of the churches.' To overcome this ambiguity the study commission suggests that ecclesiology must come to grips with the 'institutions in our society called churches.' It is true that such an approach ought to remove much of the utopian and idealistic aspects of the discussion. But one is left wondering whether it is really necessary to use a sociologically determined concept as one's organizing principle.

It may seem terribly old-fashioned, but we feel that a case can be made for studying this problem from the point of view of the divine word as a constitutive factor. In this connection, we would argue that Luther has a contribution

15. *The Secular City* (New York: Macmillan, 1965).

16. *Das personale Zeitalter: Formen und Grundlagen gesellschaftlichen Lebens im 20. Jahrhundert* (Stuttgart: Verlagsgemeinschaft Burckhardthaus and Kreuz Verlag, 1960).

to make. One of his most significant insights, yet one which was quickly misunderstood by his followers, was his view concerning the essential hiddenness of the church – the *ecclesia latet*. Luther's basic thesis was that the church is in fact, a community of people who search for and proclaim the word of God. The church by this definition is something that can only be sought out and discerned in love. It exists in the very context of the society and culture in which the believer finds himself. Unfortunately, Luther's followers did not live up to his aims and, before long, lines were once more drawn whereby the 'church' as institution could be defined.¹⁷ Thus, the Church of Rome could in essence be excommunicated, since it stood for a position which was felt to be out of harmony with the true intent of the gospel. Luther's view had been that the task of the church was essentially a prophetic one. It was to seek out those meaningful structures of life in community in which authentic healing could take place.¹⁸ In searching for such a stance the Christian has no ultimate monopoly. He must participate in all the ambiguities of life with others engaged in the same quest. In this ambiguous setting, the Christian acts in the certain faith that Jesus the Christ is the unambiguous word of life. Discerning this true word is the way of the Christian. In order to discern and celebrate his presence in all the world, concrete units of Christian life together are to be established. Thus, for Luther, the congregation is the place where the gospel is proclaimed, where the divine word reconciles man with God and with his neighbour. In this way, the Bible can never be equated with the word of God, but is a written witness through which the congregation of believers is able to discern the living word, the new man, the new life. To undertake an authentic study of scripture, therefore, means to take seriously the world with its human structures formed under law, wrath, sin, and death. As the scriptures are studied and proclaimed, the eyes of believers are opened so that they can discern the healing forms amid the structures of this world. The *sola scriptura* principle, then, does not lead to a doctrine of inspiration of the Bible, but serves to express the place of the Bible in the lives of those who search for and proclaim the prophetic word. No stronger evidence in support of this is needed than a study of the Old Testament prophets. It has long been recognized that these men spoke no theoretical words, only specific words for concrete situations. The prophet was called upon to search for the authentic word for his situation. He had to participate in the events of total community existence to find the message which he felt constrained to proclaim. Amos saw in a basket of ripe fruit a profound message which had escaped his contemporaries. Similarly, Jewish tradition speaks of the Torah as eternal but assuming different forms in different ages. Thus it can be pre-existent and yet ever new. Adam knew the Torah, and so

17. See, in this connection, Aarne Siirala, 'Luther and the Jews,' *The Lutheran World*, 40 (1964), 356f.

18. Aarne Siirala, *The Voice of Illness* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1964), is an elaboration of this thesis.

did Moses, David, and Ezra – yet each one dealt with different laws, different times, different problems. Each experienced God's Torah in different form.¹⁹

The implications of this approach for worship and other aspects of the common life are tremendous, but we wish to concentrate on the theme that these ideas can have a healthy secularizing effect on the ministerial role itself. If our starting-point is not an institutional framework, but rather a people called together to live in a prophetic situation, it is clear that no one has an exclusive monopoly. The voice of every member is needed. If there is to be true theological education on these terms, the mutual education of all believers is mandatory. Any concept of theological education as vocational training-ground for professional ministers must be abandoned. It is essential therefore, that the closest possible ties exist between theological centres and local congregations. The existing cleavages between theological schools and parishes must be bridged as never before. If a theological centre is not at the same time a forum for the laity, its job will be only partially carried out.

Behind this point lies another not so immediately obvious. In an institutionally patterned community the requirements for each 'profession' can be defined according to fixed standards. Individuals can be trained to fulfil certain duties which are prescribed in advance. The main virtue of faithfulness to one's professional calling is that one becomes as expert as possible in one's field and acts according to the standards of the profession. If, however, the institutional basis for the function of a profession is called into question, a new sphere emerges. One is immediately thrown into a situation of interdependence, a mutually dependent context in which an integration of professions is demanded. Applied to the ministry, this proposition means that all Christians, including the clergy, have to step out of a narrow sphere of professionalism into the public domain where discussions regarding authentic personalistic existence in terms of mutual interdependence can take place. If the professions are 'secularized' so that they are no longer regarded as the exclusive domain in which a man can find his calling to be a man, engagement in interprofessional dialogue is essential.

Instead of defining the ministry as far as possible as a special professional function, it is necessary to show that a minister finds himself in the same situation as the lay person. Over against the idea that each profession or occupation leads the Christian in a particular direction in his responsibility and that the ministry is one professional path alongside others, stress must be laid on the one common function which the minister and those Christians engaged in other occupations alike have to fulfil.²⁰

If we admit a secularizing trend with regard to the profession of ministry, we must not concentrate only on preparing and training ministers who can adapt themselves to changing times and conditions. We must come to grips

19. Cf. Abraham Heschel, *God in Search of Man* (New York: Meridian Books, 1959), pp. 262f.

20. Justus Freytag, 'The Ministry as a Profession: A Sociological Critique,' in David M. Paton (ed.), *New Forms of Ministry* (London: S.C.M. Press, 1965), pp. 77ff.

with the educational process itself. We have mentioned above the tremendous explosion in factual data increasingly being made available to us. This explosion will no doubt continue in the future, and we ought to be genuinely grateful for increased access to knowledge and skills. But it seems to follow that current educational practices themselves are at the crossroads – a fact which adds a further complication to the question of theological education. Marshall McLuhan has spoken directly to this problem:

In education, likewise, it is not the increase in numbers of those seeking to learn that creates the crisis. Our new concern with education follows upon the change-over to an interrelation in knowledge, where before the separate subjects of the curriculum had stood apart from each other. Departmental sovereignties have melted away as rapidly as national sovereignties under the conditions of electric speed.²¹

If specialist technologies are a thing of the past, as McLuhan suggests, it is imperative that we seek new patterns for research and teaching. In the growing frustration and turmoil on university campuses, the complaint most frequently heard is that the separate subjects being studied cannot be synthesized into an authentic whole which can stand up to critical appraisal. As Paul Goodman pointed out in the 1966 Massey Lectures, once the traditional professions are rejected by students because of their share in perpetuating the hated 'System,' the confusion on the part of students searching for authentic roles in the learning process can become staggering.²² What is at stake, therefore, is not just the improvement of professional training, but the whole question of participation in an authentic learning experience in our current world.

It is surely utopian to attempt to spell out an over-all programme which will solve these problems. Let us suggest, however, a few preliminary considerations which might be borne in mind. Richard Niebuhr wrote, in one of the volumes noted above: 'In school and pulpit theology today is not simply an affair of translating ancient ideas into modern language, but of wrestling with ultimate problems as they arise in contemporary form.'²³ We have argued that it is absolutely impossible to accomplish this by bringing ready-made, theoretical answers to different concrete situations. This can only be overcome by establishing some form of interdisciplinary setting in which the participants are treated as equals. In such a context a number of things can begin to happen:

1 The specialized theological vocabulary will be scrapped in favour of a language understood by all. In consequence, it will be impossible to separate, for example, a theological understanding of man from a psychological understanding. The net result will be that the old problem of translating

21. M. McLuhan, *Understanding Media* (New York: McGraw-Hill Paperbacks, 1965), pp. 35f.

22. Paul Goodman, *The Moral Ambiguity of America* (Toronto: Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, 1966), p. 25.

23. Niebuhr *et al.*, *The Purpose of the Church and its Ministry*, p. 3.

one's theology into secular terms for purposes of communication will become obsolete.

2 In such a setting the most important emphasis will be on discovery. One will be compelled to develop a methodology which is far more meaningful because it is the result of one's personal grappling with concrete situations, not merely the faithful mastery of a fixed body of information which has to be revived sporadically. It might be mentioned that this approach is gaining respectability in our elementary school systems; unless we wish to retrain students when they reach college, it will become part of our educational practice whether we like it or not. Jerome Bruner, among others, has given cogent reasons for thinking that this approach has significant motivational features as well.²⁴

3 One of the long-held myths will be completely broken, namely, that theological education is preparation *for* ministry, an unreal period in one's life which must be endured for a time; when it is all over, real ministry will begin. Northrop Frye has shown how college students in general no longer see such a justification in their schooling, but believe rather that in the educational process they 'are fully participating in their society, and can no longer be thought of as getting ready for something else more important.'²⁵ This reminds us of the words of John Dewey:

When preparation is made the controlling end, then the potentialities of the present are sacrificed to a suppositious future. When this happens, the actual preparation for the future is missed or distorted. The ideal of using the present simply to get ready for the future contradicts itself. It omits, and even shuts out, the very conditions by which a person can be prepared for his future.²⁶

We have attempted to stress this point in the title of this paper. If it is in the learning process that one senses the dimension of ministering to his fellow man in a common search for authentic manhood, there is little question that such a person has become prepared to minister beyond that one setting.

The first question which is certain to be raised is this: just how does 'theology' fit into such an interdisciplinary setting? The answer we would begin with is that theology itself is just such a task. However, it must be made clear that this is not to disparage the traditional aspects of theological study. Let us be clear: these must be mastered in some depth if interdisciplinary dialogue is to be more than uninformed chatting. The programme might be initiated by reversing some of our thinking about gradual specialization from B.A. through M.A. to PH.D. It might just as well happen that a more specialized B.A. programme, which trained the student in at least some of the theological subjects long familiar to us, would be capped with an interdisciplinary M.A.

24. Cf. Jerome S. Bruner, *On Knowing: Essays for the Left Hand* (New York: Atheneum, 1967), pp. 81-96, 'The Act of Discovery.'

25. H. N. Frye, *The Modern Century* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1967), pp. 92f.

26. J. Dewey, *Experience and Education* (New York: Macmillan, 1938), p. 49.

programme in which the student was forced to integrate and expand his thinking in a purely 'secular' setting. A first step in this direction might be an Interdisciplinary Centre for Religion and Culture, at which such work could be undertaken at the M.A. level. Such a programme would assume that a new impetus from growing departments of religion in this country had led to more teaching in this area at the B.A. level. Theological schools, as we know them, would thus be freed to concentrate their efforts on specific training to meet denominational requirements, leading to a Master of Ministry degree (or some comparable designation). Close integration with clinical training programmes, professional schools of social work, etc., would also become more practical.

We would argue that an experimental programme along these lines could benefit all concerned. If they were exposed to relevant theological research, colleagues from other disciplines would no longer be able to label theology as a subject out of step with contemporary concern. If theologians were called upon to defend their affirmations and methods in partnership with other disciplines, they might discover that rigid dogmatism is characteristic of other disciplines as well. Attempting to work together for the common good is a form of ministry which we need to recapture. Is there a faculty and student body in Canada with the courage to attempt such a task?

2 ELLIOTT B. ALLEN, *csb*

The Roman Catholic Seminary: Changing Perspectives in Theological Education

One of the interesting and encouraging developments of the present time is revealed by the fact that the phrase 'theological education' cannot any longer be spontaneously taken as somehow equivalent to 'clerical education.' Of course it is true that, taken in its broadest and most elementary sense, theology has always been 'done' whenever a believer sought to understand or apply his faith. But within the church of today we find theology, taken now in a more sophisticated and technical sense, to be an area of interest engaging an ever-wider spectrum of the laity, and at increasingly profound levels of commitment. The number of professional lay theologians is rapidly growing, as university departments expand on both the undergraduate and graduate levels.

It is true, of course, that theology is 'in' at the moment as the euphoria of Vatican II lingers on. But, however much this heady atmosphere dissipates in the next few years, there is no reason to think that old patterns will be resurrected in this aspect of the church's life. Theology will not again be considered a narrowly professional necessity for clerics. As more and more Roman Catholic Christians come spontaneously to live with the understanding of the church brought into focus by the teaching of Vatican II, there will come the sharpened realization that the mission and apostolate of the church cannot