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Most of these and other educational insights that have grown out directly from modern psychological studies have contributed a great deal to the communication of Christian faith.

There are also a great number of teaching methods and skills that have been proved to be effective in CE. Some of them may prove to be equally effective in the teaching and studying of the various subjects in TE. Some of them are: seminars; counselling; group dynamics; role play; simulation games; case studies; field work; object lessons; and audiovisual teaching and brain-storming sessions. Some of these have already been widely used by theology teachers and some are yet to be tried. The important thing is not what methods the theologians use in teaching but whether they are aware that their teaching can be more effective if proper methods are employed.

CONCLUSION

Theological education and CE are two of the major functions of the church. They are both independent as well as inseparable from each other. Like the two faces of a coin, they are so distinctive that they do not look alike, yet they are so inseparable that they cannot be recognized as two. Without TE, CE can be educational and even religious but it cannot be Christian. It is from theology that CE receives most of its content, finds its norm, derives its process and develops part of its methodology. Apart from sound theology there is no sound CE. It is in TE that CE can develop and grow steadily as a discipline by way of research, experimentation and interaction with other disciplines. It is also in TE that Christian educators are trained.

Equally, TE cannot function properly without CE. Apart from CE there can be theological reflections but hardly TE. Theology is meaningless if it is not clearly interpreted and effectively taught to the people by Christian educators. Theology is useless if it does not answer the many questions of life that are raised in CE studies. It is in CE that TE may find answers to a number of pertinent questions, such as whether the objectives of TE are sound, whether its curriculum is complete, and whether its methodology is effective. It is largely through CE that TE becomes meaningful to the church.

TE and CE, important as they may be, are not ends in themselves. Their ultimate task is to serve the Church so that the Church can fulfil the unique mission received from the Lord Jesus Christ, namely, to make disciples of all nations. It is out of this conviction that TE and CE must be closely related to each other, and it is on this foundation that they will eventually find the right direction of their relationship.

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Theological Education for the Mission of the Church in India

Vinay Samuel and Chris Sugden

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PRESENT INDICATIVE

Theological education in India is set in an institutional framework. Training for full-time ministry in most Protestant churches is coordinated by the Board of Theological Education of Serampore University. Serampore University awards degrees, but individual colleges affiliated to the board have great flexibility and autonomy in setting and examining the courses. A B.A. graduate can earn a B.D. in three years, while undergraduate entrants can gain a B.Th. in four years. Most churches make ordination dependent on holding one of Serampore's degrees, so academic studies have a high priority in the curriculum of the colleges affiliated to Serampore. Some denominational colleges exist outside the Serampore framework and bring the total number of Protestant seminaries in India to around seventy. Most college curricula are based on the class-hour system. This places heavy demands on lecturers' time, so that a college of a hundred students will be hard pressed to function even with 15 staff. Foreign staff are found in most colleges while more Indian faculty are trained. All colleges depend almost entirely on foreign funds for capital and running expenses, and via sponsoring bodies for students' fees.

PAST IMPERFECT

Serious doubts are being raised now whether such a structure for ministerial training is producing either the sort of ministers that the church is looking for, or even the sort that this system of training leads the church to expect. Church leaders are frustrated because the colleges are unable to produce ministers who can motivate a congregation for evangelism or for social action. In 1978, twenty bishops of the Church of South India sent an alarmed appeal to the colleges that their graduates were neither able to act as facilitators for others, nor in many cases were they able to cope with the demands of present-day ministry themselves. These doubts have been raised about colleges right across the theological spectrum. Those who are involved in Christian ministry for development and justice in areas of poverty and injustice are also frustrated with the products of the colleges. People deeply committed to justice for the poor are increasingly finding that local church leaders and pastors show no real involvement in justice concerns. So increasingly those who want to carry on a ministry of justice concerns are being forced to carry it on outside the church and its institutions.

The college system is under fire because it is not producing the Christian ministers or leaders that the church and the context of India need. In response, the Board of Theological Education of Serampore has initiated a research project staffed by sociologists to examine the models and expectations of the ministry that are projected in the colleges and needed by the church. From examining the results so far presented by this team, we do not expect that its conclusions will give much help in curing the current malaise. For the researchers themselves assume that the locus of ministry is the entire community rather than the church as the servant of the community. In other words, there is underlying uncertainty about the relation of the church and the community, and there are unresolved theological issues about the mission of the church among those engaged in theological education.

Why are theological educators uncertain about the mission of the church in India? Why are their graduates not meeting the needs of the church?

We suggest that theological education has not been contextualized either in terms of India's poverty and injustice, or even in terms of the people of God in India. A number of factors have prevented the contextualization of theological education. First, the learning process followed in the college system is based on deductive study from principles to application; it is divorced from the living contexts which could be used as resource material for inductive study. Students pile up knowledge that is unrelated to their context and are never stimulated to relate that knowledge to that context. Such a learning process is common in many theological colleges around the world, but the flaws show most severely in India because Indian education as a whole follows a rote learning system and thus militates against inductive or creative thought.

Secondly, the content that the students are taught is imported from other contexts. The curriculum is subject-oriented rather than student-oriented. Its method is based on the number of class hours attended and assignments produced. Thirdly, the academic context of study means that mission is not central to the agenda of the educational institution or the students. Any training for Christian ministry must be in urgent relation to mission. Training in many colleges in India is seen to be training for status, employment, further studies, or access to power in the church.

To a large extent the answers to the present situation lie outside the Indian church. For this system will continue whether its products are relevant and effective or not, so long as pressure for change only comes from those within the Indian church and not from supporting bodies who are beyond the Indian context. There are signs that pressure may come on the supporting bodies from their own contexts, where world inflation is prompting some western churches to seriously question whether they can afford seminaries in their own countries, let alone support them in India.

FUTURE SUBJUNCTIVE

We will not attempt to make predictions for the 1980s; that road is too illusive. Instead we will map out some futures that we would like to see occur, signs of which we can already perceive. We would like to see theological training of church leaders integrated into the training of the entire people of God and in contact with the living contexts of India. India offers such rich contexts for Christian mission. It is a country of confident non-Christian religions, where cultural issues such as caste challenge the power of the Christian message as much as apartheid in South Africa. It is a land of living debate over a wide spectrum of political options, from authoritarianism of the left and right to grass roots people's participation. It is a sub-continent where economics is not theory but life and death. At the moment none of these issues has significant Christian input. Theological education must be geared to enable the whole people of God to relate to these issues.

We see signs of this already. Extension education is growing rapidly but needs clear focusing on the local church. Development education is producing trained animators whom churches are crying out for, but the congregations need to see justice as part of the mission of the church and not as an extra. Pastors with five years of experience are clamouring for places in graduate programmes in Christian ministry, but are finding that college-oriented courses again draw them away from living contexts. These are signs of new growth and of hope, but they do not contain within them any solutions unless they are clearly integrated with the life of local churches.

How shall such integration take place? At present the seminaries stand as an intermediary between these new patterns of education and the life of the church. Some

seminaries are taking these new patterns into their present structures, and all signs are that others will follow suit. But if residential institutions try and integrate these contextually creative dimensions of education into their traditional, merely academic, and exam-oriented structure, certain results will follow. Either the seminaries will cry that academic standards are being lowered and these new models will be discredited, or these new models will be distorted to fit the pre-existent knowledge package of seminary training. Either the seminaries will totally reject these models as inadequate for ministerial training, or these models will themselves stimulate a radical change in the college-based system. What would happen if such a radical change occurred? Basic theological education in living contexts with living churches would be offered on the extension model to students attached to local churches; the method of training would be action-reflection, encouraging them to reflect inductively on their context and the resources of theology.

Specialist research and training institutions would offer short residential courses in specialist areas, such as Christian education, evangelism, development education and biblical interpretation. Courses in these institutions would be attended by trainees, lay people and pastors together. There must be input from all the body of Christ. Trainees must see motivators actually motivating lay people; they must be exposed to the experience and insights of pastors. Seminaries must be microcosms of the people of God as it actually is. They must be small and be in living contact with actual situations. The argument that the large mega-seminaries alone can provide the breadth of skills necessary in training runs counter to the theology that each member of Christ's body possesses different gifts. It is an argument based on the requirements of the omniscient pastor. Such mega-institutions have been partly responsible for alienating theological education in India from its context.

We do not imagine that the situation we have described, our analysis, or our vision are unique to India. Theological educators in the West are grappling with the same issues. The difference is that the western church has enough wealth at the moment to afford both a college-based structure of training and creative experiments. India must produce a relevant contextual model in the 1980s or continue to fail with outside support. But if radical change comes about, how will the Indian church produce theologians who are rooted in theological history and equipped with the tools of theological science to give the intellectual leadership it needs? Unless there are nursery beds to produce them, how will these plants grow? Indian church history reveals that the creative theologians who have influenced the life of the Indian church have grown and developed outside the seminary system. And a study of theology suggests that true teachers of the church must be prophets speaking from and to the context of the people of God and the wider community.

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Book Reviews

FAITH AND CHURCH