

EVANGELICAL REVIEW OF THEOLOGY

VOLUME 14 p. 1

Volume 14 • Number 1 • January 1990

Evangelical Review of Theology



WORLD EVANGELICAL FELLOWSHIP
Theological Commission p. 3

The external services of the ATA visitation team verifies that these kinds of assessment activities have been made and necessary adjustments begun. [p. 31](#)

TEE programmes will seek to show that their students have the dynamic equivalency of various academic and professional awards. They will demonstrate that their programme completers have the professional competencies necessary for reliable church ministry. When one relates only to a local church, these considerations are secondary. But when local churches are in associations which relate to other organizations, for the sake of meaningful communication, evaluation and accreditation services are valuable.

We need to ascertain carefully if the principle of integral student involvement in ministry is a continuing reality. We need to develop assessment instruments that students can use to help them determine ministry strengths and directions for growth.

The key to innovation in theological education is regular spiritual renewal. Each time renewal comes, it is as if everything takes on a new look. When God's guiding hand moves in times of renewal, every aspect of the TEE programme has a change in its hue.

Theological education is never static. It can be increasing in relevance to its target audience or in a state of diminishing relevance. The pursuit of God enables him to renew and refresh our perspectives.

Renewal does not produce perfect people or perfect programmes. But it will keep us centred on Christ, responsive to the Spirit's guidance, and obedient to the Father's will. May the future find us faithful servants.

Richard Hart, based in Amman, Jordan, is Coordinator for TEE Services for the International Council of Accrediting Agencies. [p. 32](#)

Theological Education in Europe

Helmuth Egelkraut

In order to perceive the real situation of Europe, one has to look at different parts of the continent, each by itself. For that purpose I divide Europe into three sections. Even so generalizations are unavoidable.

SECTION I: ROMAN CATHOLIC COUNTRIES IN THE WEST, AND GREECE

We are here mainly concerned with southern and western Europe. The Roman Catholic and the Greek Orthodox Church have the traditional academic system of theological education. Since World War II evangelical national communities have come into existence mainly through foreign missionary influence. At the same time Bible Institutes or schools have come into operation. They can be found in all traditionally Roman Catholic countries, and are small in size, operating on a relatively low academic level, underfinanced, and dependent on foreign staff. In France there exist two graduate theological schools of evangelical persuasion. In all cases adequate theological literature in national languages is lacking. The schools operate mostly on their own, hardly ever seeking the fellowship of the schools in central or northern Europe. The long term growth and development of the

national evangelical churches and of the Christian in these countries depends to no small degree on the future shape evangelical theological training will take in these countries.

SECTION II: PROTESTANT COUNTRIES AND COUNTRIES WITH A LARGE PROTESTANT POPULATION

These countries are located mainly in central, north-western and northern Europe. They all boast prestigious university departments for the study of theology and religion. Most ministers of 'main line' churches study there. They receive in some regions additional practical training in church-operated schools. At that time, however, their theological position is in most cases already established. There have always been individual evangelical professors at the state university theological faculties. On the whole, though, the historical-critical method prevails. In many cases it is also held that as a science theology must not be studied with the practical requirements of church work in view. Study demands a neutrality of the person concerned, a detached objectivity which does establish a distance between the object being studied and the person who does the studying. Thus there is hardly any spiritual counsel. To remedy the situation theological colleges have sprung up in the vicinity of the universities in recent **P. 33** years. Most main line churches in Europe suffer greatly from the results of this preparation for the ministry. While the Church worldwide is growing faster than at any time in history, the Church in most European countries is stagnating or shrinking. Despite all this, due to God's grace there have always been some faithful ministers who graduated from the universities. But a revision of the traditional training for the ministry is urgently needed and will be decisive for the future of the churches.

During the last two centuries private Bible schools and theological colleges developed: first at the beginning of the nineteenth century for the training of missionaries, later in the course of the neopietistic revival at the end of the nineteenth century for the preparation of evangelists, pastors of non-mainline congregations and youth ministers. There are about 25 such schools in the U.K.; 24 have gathered together in the European Evangelical Accrediting Association; and there may be some two dozen or so schools besides, partly in Pentecostal (EPTA), partly in non-Pentecostal groups. Quite a few of them came into existence after World War II as the fruit of U.S.-originated missionary endeavours. Most of these schools have less than a hundred students; not a few have less than 60. Academically vast differences exist. Till about twenty years ago hardly any library resources had been developed by the schools of neo-pietistic origin. The last two decades have seen a shift in this regard. But good evangelical text books are still rare. After Lausanne 1974 the decision was made to develop evangelical theological text books in the German language. Hardly anything developed. This is not the least due to the lack of qualified faculty; but those qualified carry in many cases a far too heavy load to do writing on the side. Very little original research is conducted for the same reason. A number of these schools operate now on the M.Div. level. But in most cases their graduates are not allowed to enter the pastorate of main line churches. It is also very difficult for such schools to receive state recognition as institutions of tertiary education.

One problem for graduates going overseas either for advanced studies or for missionary service is that no degrees can be conferred (except in Britain). Strong endeavours should be made to establish a clear evaluation system for the transfer of credits and the recognition of training received.

In 1977 the European Evangelical Accrediting Association came into being, initiated through Dr. Bruce Nicholls of WEF. The idea of accreditation was difficult to introduce in a continent where the whole educational system has always operated under government

supervision. p. 34 Since then a number of schools have become accredited and a new consciousness of the value of good theological and biblical training, and outside peer evaluation, has arisen. Schools begin to formulate their mission.

The result of this situation is that the evangelical community is underrepresented in the theological debate, in church leadership and in the ministry of most churches. The evangelicals are also not as much noted in public affairs as they could be. There is a biblical and theological illiteracy among Christians. They are hardly capable, or totally incapable, of verbalizing their faith. In main line congregations pastors are responsible for congregations that number thousands. Careful counselling, and nurture in faith, as well as in witnessing, is not possible. In most cases their training has not prepared them for this.

SECTION III: EASTERN EUROPE

Eastern Europe is in itself by no means homogeneous. There are Roman Catholic churches (Poland, Czechoslovakia, parts of USSR), Orthodox churches (Bulgaria, Romania, USSR) and Protestant churches (GDR, Poland, Baltic areas, Hungary, Romania, USSR). Scattered throughout are free and Pentecostal Christian communities. In all countries traditional schools of theology at university level still operate. But by no means do they train enough ministers for the needs of the traditional churches. There are, for example, three seminaries for 60 million believers in Russia.

All over Eastern Europe many people are open to the gospel. Many turn in repentance to the Lord and are being baptized. Exact numbers, however, are hard to get. The highest growth rate appears to be in Romania, which some call the Korea of Eastern Europe. Since there are not enough trained servants of the gospel, few are being disciplined. The result is much legalism. Not a few backslide. Christians are not able to engage in conversation with intellectuals and answer their questions. The pastors who are there are overburdened. Many Christians lack any missionary vision. In Central Asia, with its Muslim environment, many Christians are entrenched in their churches. What is needed is an increasing number of well trained ministers.

A closer look reveals the following picture. In Russia the Orthodox Church has recently consecrated about 100 laymen as priests since there are not enough trained theologians. There are about five thousand Baptist churches with 500,000 believers and no seminary. A sort of TEE programme has been developed, but it is still in the p. 35 beginning stages. A seminary is planned for Kiev. The All Union Baptist churches have received permission to start a seminary at Moscow.

More difficult is the situation of the German stock Lutherans who have hardly any theologically trained pastors. Laymen and tradesmen with experience in Christian work are being ordained. Even prelates and bishops have no training. Here too a TEE programme is being initiated. In Russia the situation seems to be the worst, with many congregations having no trained leaders. In Poland the national Pentecostal church has a fully developed Bible Institute, and there is also a Lutheran seminary at Warsaw. In Hungary a Reformed and a Lutheran seminary are in operation at a medium academic level. Czechoslovakia still has a Protestant faculty at Bratislava. The pastors graduating from there have learned how to think. In Romania there are two theological faculties and a vigorous Bible Institute licensed by the government and operating under the auspices of a Pentecostal church in close liaison with the Church of God. In Yugoslavia a fully developed Bible College is in operation under government charter. It draws students from nine countries who enter the country legally and may return to their home countries. Albania has no school and the situation in Bulgaria is unclear. Besides there are other types of pastoral training, less or not at all structured, mostly of the apprenticeship type.

The Pentecostal schools are all in contact with EPTA and teachers from the West are invited to assist. In the GDR three seminaries exist besides the state university faculties in theology (at Rostock, Berlin, Greifswald, Leipzig, Jena).

All over Eastern Europe there is a lack of theological literature in the vernacular. In some countries the government permits less students to enter seminaries than could be accommodated.

Whether the present harvest can be brought in depends in no small measure upon the number of well trained and mature Christian leaders. It seems that under the present political and economic constellation the next decade will be of decisive importance for the re-evangelization of Eastern Europe.

But indeed this is true for *all* of Europe. So far, evangelical institutions for biblical and theological training have not co-operated much. Only recently have schools drawn together on regional and national levels. EEAA and EPTA have proven to be means of wider fellowship. Many schools in southern Europe, and also in Scandinavia and Britain, have not been brought into the wider continental fellowship nowadays of the need for a new evangelization of Europe, in addition to reaching those with the gospel who flock into Europe [p.36](#) from many parts of the world and adhere to non-Christian religions. Whether this will happen depends on the question of whether enough qualified evangelists, disciplers, shepherds, teachers and leaders will be found. In view of this it seems important to draw closer together.

This will also be necessary in order to find ways of higher theological training for future teachers. The European Evangelical Accrediting Agency could play a major role here. The same is true for the international recognition of evangelical theological training received in Europe. Any effort which can help in bringing this to pass will render a great service to the whole of Europe.

Helmuth Egelkraut, of the European Evangelical Accrediting Association, is based in Weissach im Tal, West Germany. [p. 37](#)

Theological Education in Latin America: A Personal Perspective

William D. Taylor

Latin American theological education owes a debt to North American theological education, because earlier missionaries had a vision for training. That vision too many times was culturally bound into established moulds; we all tend to teach and institutionalize as we were taught and institutionalized. Bible institute graduates started Bible institutes, and seminary graduates started seminaries. More recently, TEE proponents from the North started TEE programmes in Latin America.

This means that the Two-Thirds World inherited many Western categories: institutional models, curriculum, grading systems, terminology, theory over practice, and theological categories—a hermeneutic, systematic divisions, pedagogical/homiletical models, and theology as theory.