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WORLD EVANGELICAL FELLOWSHIP
Theological Commission p. 3

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.

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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.

And so today, in the Two-Thirds World, one of the greatest and most creative movements taking place is in the area of contextualization—theological and institutional. We see a rapidly changing picture, although only God knows how many theological education programmes are operating today. This is how the situation has developed:

1970:	16,000,000	Evangelicals	(?)
	75,000		churches
	60,000	[80%]	without 'trained leaders'
	15,000	[20%]	with some kind of 'trained leaders'
1988:	37,500,000	Evangelicals	
	225,000		churches
	175,000	[78%]	without 'trained leaders'
	50,000	[22%]	with some kind of 'trained leaders'

The number of schools varies, with a three-part categorization: Bible schools, seminaries, and TEE programmes.

Mexico: over 100 schools

Guatemala: 23 Bible schools, 6 seminaries, 6 TEE

Brazil: 50 Bible schools, 80 seminaries, uncounted TEE

El Salvador: 15 Bible schools, 3 seminaries, 12 TEE

Theological education in Latin America is carried out in the context of [p. 38](#) the evangelical churches of Latin America: exploding church growth coupled with biblical ignorance; a church of the poor, but with upward social mobility; a dependent church, searching for its own identity; a historically apolitical church now finding its social conscience; an evangelical church, 75% charismatic; a church with a new cross-cultural vision. Theological education in Latin America is lived in the context of Latin American historico-socio-economic-cultural realities. This includes:

- The development of underdevelopment, leading to hopelessness in political-economic experiments;
- A continent still in search of political stability;
- Phenomenal natural resources coupled with international debt;
- Devastating inflation aggravated by endemic corruption;
- A population explosion caused by those who can least afford it;
- The power of spiritism (45% of Brazilians actively practising, with up to 70% involved in some ways, and 40,000 spiritist centres in Rio de Janeiro);
- The seduction of secularization.

THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION IN LATIN AMERICA

What are the significant issues?

First, there is a need for the constant development of new programmes to meet the tremendous need for servant leaders of the churches. There is no way that current centres can keep up with the needs. Allied to this is the search for contextualization, both theological and institutional, requiring an examination of educational presuppositions and the excessive dependence on the theoretical, Greek models of the North.

Theological contextualization may include:

- re-examination of evangelical hermeneutics
- revival of more biblical theology
- development of new systematic categories
- a biblical response to Liberation Theology
- substantive response to the explosion of spiritism, teaching believers spiritual warfare
- examination of biblical social responsibility
- response to secularization
- a new study of the miraculous for today
- new approaches to ecclesiology p. 39
- careful response to the changing Roman Catholic Church
- sensitive study of biblical discipleship to solidify the numerical church growth

There is also a tension between *access* (making theological education available to as many as possible at the lowest costs) and *excellence* (a tricky term usually seen as education for upper levels, but it does not have to be that alone).

The relationship between residential and extension programmes is moving from the adversarial relationship of the past to a spirit of cooperation. This also means greater incorporation of non-formal education into formal structures.

There is a growing felt need and desire for evangelical theological education accreditation, networking and cooperation. Evangelical theological associations exist in the Caribbean and Brazil—both related to ICAA; with two other regional organizations unrelated to ICAA.

The struggle to finance and sustain theological education within the context of raging inflation, violence and poverty remains a problem; as does the fundamental need to re-examine theological education models exported from foreign lands: educational structures and systematic theological categories, with excessive dependence upon theoretical training ‘for’ ministry and little ‘in’ ministry. Finally, all of this takes place alongside the frustrating brain drain, complicated by the absence within Latin America of evangelical theological education on a doctoral level.

If these are the realities, what trends can we expect to see in future? I would suggest the following:

- the proliferation of new schools and programmes
- the marriage of TER and TEE to meet growing needs and combine ministry visions
- the development of theological educational networks on both a continental and a global scale
- the founding of a Latin America Evangelical Accreditation Association related to ICAA (which could also founder on the distrust that characterizes too many centres and leaders)
- the growth of culturally sensitive international scholarship programmes, moving not only to the North, but also East and West p. 40
- ongoing theological and institutional contextualization that may threaten some in the North
- the rise of missionary training centres, either as a quality programme of existing schools, or in the foundation of new and creative programmes integrating formal and non-formal education
- field experience. Less following of the theoretical model of North America

- the possible emerging of doctoral-level theological education in Latin America
- the reality that theological education in Latin America will continue to be economically dependent upon external finances, and even then will operate on limited budgets, faculty and facilities.

INTERDEPENDENCE

We must see the mutual ongoing debt we owe to each other: South to North, but also North to South, and East to West.

Most of the creative work on contextualization and educational renewal is coming from the South. In the South accreditation bodies are truly evangelical and not secular or just religious.

We must strive to greater interdependence in these areas:

- curriculum and content
- exchange of faculty and international sabbaticals (not merely between Tübingen, Basel, Cambridge, Oxford and the like)
- contextualization lessons
- educational methodology
- renewal trends
- building of trust and networking between institutions and their leadership
- student exchange, recognizing academic credit taken in strong schools in the South. Students from the North might be able to take a year abroad with full credit
- sharing of audio-visual aids (transparencies, video and so forth)

Schools in the North must be careful in their scholarship programmes, offering them to tested people of true quality; providing adequate shepherding during their studies; encouraging ongoing contextualization, even allowing them to do assignments related to their home culture and needs. The schools must be flexible in the testing and p. 41 measurement of their objectives; must allow some work in the mother tongue of students; and must vow not to recruit the best to stay in the North as faculty.

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Tensions in North American Theological Education

Bruce C. Stewart

I wonder how Elijah and Elisha planned the curriculum of the schools of the prophets. It would seem that Old Testament Studies had the highest priority, and that the study of Hebrew produced far less trauma for their students than for ours. Did they have a Department of Pastoral Theology? Was their experience in building a dormitory Field Work in Church Building? Was their borrowing of tools an assignment in Pastoral Administration? Is it significant that it took a miracle to continue their programme? One thing, at least, that we learn from this biblical model is the necessity of continually seeking God's help in the successful functioning of a seminary.

In the history of North American seminaries, Andover Theological Seminary was organized in 1808 as a corrective to the liberalism that was developing at Harvard Divinity School. The founding of new seminaries was one approach to tensions, and it has been duplicated many times.

Some ninety years ago William Rainey Harper, the founding President of the University of Chicago, wrote an essay entitled 'Shall the Theological Curriculum Be Modified, and How?' in which he expressed his concern that seminaries should prepare men to relate to and deal with the changing issues of the day and the real needs in the lives of their people. His criticism of Protestant ministers and seminaries continues to have relevance.

Before we look at specific areas of tension it would seem appropriate to cite a contemporary evaluation of the state of theological education. In an on-going dialogue at Andover Newton Theological Seminary, Max L. Stackhouse has written, 'Theological education is in the midst of a series of efforts to define its focus.... On the one hand, what happens in theological education seems too narrow, too self-satisfied, too geared to the maintenance of unimaginative ministries, and too cafeteria-like; on the other hand, it seems so diffuse, without governing vision, purpose, intensity or centre. The various parts do not integrate into a compelling vision of ministry.'¹

To this we might add the words of David S. Schuller: 'Too many students experience seminary education as a disparate series of p. 43 education hurdles, lacking a centre and adequate integration.... In spite of the fanfare with which institutions greet each curricular shift, suspicion grows that the levels of curricular reform may not have been fundamental enough to touch the real problem.'²

In identifying areas of tension in North American Theological Education, I am reflecting the responses of 26 seminary presidents to the questions: 'List some current tensions that concern you in North American theological education today', and 'What is your approach to globalization?'.

THE ACADEMIC AND THE PRACTICAL

¹ Stackhouse, Max L., *Apologia: Contextualization, Globalization and Mission in Theological Education*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1988, p. 15.

² Schuller, David S., Editorial Introduction, *Theological Education* 17 (Spring 1981), p. 8.