

EVANGELICAL REVIEW OF THEOLOGY

VOLUME 14 p. 1

Volume 14 • Number 1 • January 1990

Evangelical Review of Theology



WORLD EVANGELICAL FELLOWSHIP
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is unadventurous, or self-satisfied, or both. I have to confess that in my own explorations I have found nothing which tempts me to shift from a fundamental Christian allegiance and a fundamental commitment to seeing the world in the light of God made known in Christ. As David Jenkins says, 'God is as he is in Jesus; and therefore there is hope'. To the charge of self-satisfaction I have a different answer, which is simply that we seriously need to have an open house, an open heart and an open mind, in order that we may discover just what Christianity actually means. One of the continual p.85 surprises in our discipleship is the discovery, quite suddenly and even catastrophically, that we do not really understand what we believe and that its significance has escaped us yet again. We are like unmathematical, un-physics-trained people repeating the formula $E=MC^2$, correctly but without understanding. We are like children parroting Shakespeare. So much of our history proves that we do not know what our Gospel really means in daily life, and we are compelled to learn its meaning with those with whom we would share it.

The parable here is Jonah. Jonah was the accredited prophet of God who was eventually, reluctantly, compelled to preach to the Ninevites, but who is in every respect the moral and spiritual inferior of the pagan sailors and the people of Nineveh as portrayed in the book. Yet it is Jonah who is the vehicle of the word of God and its guardian. And it is God's word through Jonah which brings the Ninevites to repentance. There could hardly be a clearer statement in the Judeo-Christian scriptures of the significance of election. The question of election, of the vocation of God's people, is central in this whole debate, but election never meant that those chosen of God are better than others, but that they are chosen for the sake of others and entrusted, even burdened with the Christian Gospel for the sake of others. On this hinge, on this particularity, our whole understanding of ourselves as God's people ultimately turns, and with it our whole Christian understanding and practice of religious education.

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The Future of ICAA

Tite Tiénou

The year 1990 marks the beginning of the second decade of life for the International Council of Accrediting Agencies for evangelical theological education. This seems therefore an appropriate time for attending to the question of ICAA's future. I wish to explore this topic under three headings: celebration, challenge, and call to action.

CELEBRATION

It would be imprudent to consider ICAA's future without first taking account of its past. And in focussing on the past, I wish to speak in terms of celebration, because we have now reached an important milestone in ICAA's history, the completion of a decade of service. This is a fitting time for us to pause and celebrate God's goodness to us, for enabling ICAA

with increasing effectiveness to serve the needs of evangelical theological education worldwide.

ICAA was founded under the auspices of the Theological Commission of the World Evangelical Fellowship in March 1980, at a special international consultation on evangelical theological education held at Hoddesdon, England. The founding members of ICAA (ACTEA, AABC, ATA, CETA AND EEAA) are all still very active in their respective regions and in the affairs of ICAA today.¹

Organizations such as ICAA are created through a delicate convergence of people, ideas and circumstances. This is not the place to enumerate all who laboured to see ICAA become a reality. But we should note that the immediate impetus came from ACTEA in Africa. ACTEA took the decision to call for the creation of such a body during its 1978 meetings at Miango, Nigeria, and wrote officially to its sister bodies to that effect on 22 December 1978. Somehow the time was right; and less than fifteen months later, ICAA was formally launched.

The founding vision of *icaa* was to facilitate international cooperation in evangelical theological education. This is reflected in the fourth purpose stated in the constitution:

To promote a sense of community among institutions and programmes of evangelical theological education worldwide for mutual stimulation and enrichment. [p. 87](#)

Since its founding, ICAA has engaged in a wide range of activities in keeping with this original vision. International consultations were held in conjunction with the ICAA meetings, at Hoddesdon, England (1980); Chongoni, Malawi (1981); Katydata, Cyprus (1983); and Weissach, Germany (1987). Papers read at these consultations have been published as books, which have offered stimulation to evangelical theological education worldwide.²

In addition to consultations, ICAA initiated a Library Development Programme in 1981, and this continues to benefit theological schools throughout the Third World. In 1982 ICAA adopted terms for associate membership status. This action allowed ICAA membership to be broadened, so that now six associate member organizations also participate in the affairs of ICAA.³ In 1983 ICAA adopted its *Manifesto on the Renewal of Evangelical Theological Education*.⁴ This document has proved of major significance. In 1984 ICAA initiated coordinating services for TEE worldwide. Four years later the *ICAA Compendium* was published. And so, despite the reference to accreditation in its name, ICAA's

¹ The full names of these bodies are: Accrediting Council for Theological Education in Africa, American Association of Bible Colleges, Asia Theological Association, Caribbean Evangelical Theological Association, and European Evangelical Accrediting Association. In 1988 the South Pacific Association of Bible Colleges (SPABC) was also admitted to full ICAA membership.

² Paul Bowers, ed., *Evangelical Theological Education Today: 1—An International Perspective* (Nairobi: Evangel, 1982), and *Evangelical Theological Education Today: 2—Agenda for Renewal* (Nairobi: Evangel, 1982). Robert Youngblood, ed., *Cyprus: TEE Come of Age* (Exeter: Paternoster, 1984), and *Excellence and Renewal: Goals for the Accreditation of Theological Education* (Exeter; Paternoster, 1989).

³ These are: The Committee to Assist Ministry Education Overseas (CAMEO), USA; Evangelical Association for Theological Training (AETTE), Brazil; Education Division, Church of God (USA); International Correspondence Institute (ICI), Belgium; Program for Theological Education by Extension (PTEE), Jordan; Overseas Council for Theological Education and Missions (OCTEM), USA.

⁴ *Theological Education Today* 16:2 (April–June 1984), 1–6; reprinted in *Evangelical Review of Theology* 8:1 (April 1984), 136–143. Spanish and French versions have also been issued.

accomplishments over the years testify to the fact that its scope is much more comprehensive. As one ICAA publication puts it:

ICAA is concerned with the whole range of functions by which evangelical theological education might fruitfully collaborate at the international level.⁵

CHALLENGE

While we may legitimately celebrate ICAA's past, we cannot afford to **p.88** ignore the many challenges which it is about to face in its second decade. I highlight here those that I consider the most crucial.

In a general way, the essential challenge of ICAA's second decade could be simply stated: to recover and expand the original vision which led to ICAA's creation. Here are some specifics of what that would mean.

As we have seen, ICAA was inaugurated to attend to much more than accreditation, as its constitution and early documents testify. Consequently, the first challenge before us is to move forward in making ICAA a full service agency, not limiting its role merely to providing avenues for international recognition of degrees. The fact is that *icaa's* larger role is unique. It is, as far as I know, the only established medium for international contact and collaboration in all aspects of evangelical theological education. If its function were to be restricted to accreditation, what person or organization would carry out this larger purpose? Accreditation is surely a vital element of ICAA's original vision; but it is not the only one, nor should be. ICAA is called primarily to humble servanthood, not to regulatory authority or empire-building. Developing a full range of services for evangelical theological education internationally bespeaks servanthood; limiting ourselves to accreditation can promote for us an unfortunate image of merely being the international academic police.

ICAA should also continue to strive to become truly international in perspective, in membership representation, and in staffing. To date, Hispanic Latin America is not effectively represented, nor are the evangelical theological educational structures of Britain, Canada and the USA. In this day of globalization of theological education, we should diligently work to keep ourselves international in fact as well as in appearance.

ICAA needs to nurture a sense of community and cross-fertilization among all forms of evangelical theological education worldwide. It should promote the modes for such fellowship and a sense of mutual identity. Similarly ICAA should establish itself as the forum for informed reflection and discussion within theological education worldwide. While ICAA has already made some contribution in these areas, I am suggesting here that we should become much more actively engaged.

The next challenge for ICAA concerns its role in the renewal of evangelical theological education. Here it must continue to articulate an effective ongoing call to renewal in this critical area of the church's life. ICAA should function not as reinforcement for traditional patterns, but as a true catalyst for renewal. (In doing so, however, it must not **p.89** become a forum for castigating some forms of theological education while favouring and promoting others.)

In light of the above, TEE presents yet another challenge for ICAA. In keeping with its vision, ICAA should furnish evangelical TEE with international networking and support services, and confirm an integral role for TEE within ICAA, alongside residential structures.

⁵ In the preface to *Evangelical Theological Education Today: 1—An International Perspective*, 4.

If ICAA accomplishes that, it will render a major service to contemporary theological education.

Lest you should think that I am calling ICAA to abandon accreditation altogether, I hasten to add that accreditation itself remains a challenge for us. ICAA should continue to nurture the means to ensure that our accreditation programmes are achieving the highest operational quality, and are therefore deserving of full public credibility. We must not allow our accreditation services to be cheapened by inadequate standards, inadequate procedures, or inadequate administrative practices. Nor, with respect both to TEE and to residential accreditation, should we endanger the larger enterprise through a careless assumption that credibility can be achieved simply through a forceful assertion of quality. Quality may be asserted, but credibility must be won, by a persuasive demonstration of quality as judged by the wider public. This is just as essential a component of accreditation as is the component of quality. Our accreditation systems must take this component of credibility fully into account.

Another important challenge for ICAA has to do with relationships. ICAA must cultivate effective relations with other international evangelical bodies and movements, encouraging wider familiarity with ICAA's existence and role, demonstrating that ICAA can be a useful, necessary and reliable partner in achieving the larger evangelical agenda. This includes, first and foremost, good relationships with our parent body, the Theological Commission of the World Evangelical Fellowship, as well as with its study unit on theological education, and with WEF itself. We must also build relationships with regional and continental bodies, international evangelical funding agencies, and the Lausanne movement. The challenge here is that ICAA must begin to play its needed role within the larger international evangelical context.

An added benefit of ICAA's increased international visibility would be that effective contact and dialogue could be established between First and Third World structures for evangelical theological education. Such contact and dialogue should also be established with evangelical missions structures, especially those now embracing Third World missions initiatives.

As ICAA recovers and expands its original vision, it should help to p. 90 sharpen the concern for theological education within the evangelical world. By this I mean that ICAA must become the voice for theological education on the global scene. We should begin ongoing measures to help international evangelicalism better improve its understanding of the strategic importance of theological education. In the arena of competing emphases in international evangelicalism, the significance of theological education is often eclipsed. May we seize the opportunity given us.

CALL TO ACTION

Having looked at some of the challenges for ICAA in its second decade, we are now ready for some specific proposals. My call to action will reflect the challenges already outlined.

1. In order to facilitate a sense of community, mutual familiarity, and common purpose, I submit that ICAA should re-establish its newsletter from earlier days, or produce a similar internal publication.

2. I propose that ICAA issue an international directory of associations and agencies involved with evangelical theological education. In addition to being a handy, needed reference tool, such a directory would serve to identify ICAA's intended constituency worldwide, and provide information about it. Such a document was issued in 1982, listing 23 bodies, but it was not widely distributed. A greatly expanded edition is now needed. Further updated editions could be issued on a regular basis.

3. ICAA must continue its series of international consultations on a biennial basis. We must make sure that these consultations attract wide representation and address key issues of the larger agenda of evangelical theological education. In this connection, ICAA welcomes the joint workshop between North American seminary leaders and Third World theological educators at Lausanne II in Manila. We must also seek an early opportunity to sponsor a broad consultation involving mission umbrella agencies such as IFMA and EFMA, the Third World Association of Missions Agencies, and comparable bodies from Europe and elsewhere.

4. In order to enlarge its membership, ICAA should actively recruit associate members from around the world. We should also grant our associate members a more effective voice in the direction of ICAA affairs. For example, the ICAA associate membership should be granted representation on the ICAA executive.

5. We need to accord priority to improving cordial cooperative relationships with our parent body, the World Evangelical Fellowship [p.91](#) Theological Commission. To achieve this, we should for example request a permanent representation of ICAA on the executive committee of the Theological Commission.

6. I also suggest that ICAA aggressively bolster its public relations in order to increase its visibility. If we do not attend to this, ICAA may be no more than a well-kept secret.

7. It is of urgent importance that we should republish the ICAA *Manifesto on the Renewal of Evangelical Theological Education* in a handy, attractive format, in order to facilitate wide distribution. We should also actively promote familiarity with its contents among our constituency, and find the means to focus commitment among theological educators to its practical implementation, lest the *Manifesto* remain one more document filed in the archives.

May God grant ICAA's second decade to be even more fruitful than its first.

Dr. Tite Tiénou, from Burkina Faso, has been chairman since 1981 of the Accrediting Council for Theological Education in Africa, and is currently also chairman of ICAA. This paper comes from an address given on the occasion of his installation as ICAA chairman in June 1989. [p. 92](#)

Book Reviews

THE STEEPLE'S SHADOW: ON THE MYTHS AND REALITIES OF SECULARIZATION

by David Lyon

(London: SPCK, 1985, £3.95; Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1987)
\$9.95. Pp. 165.

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Sociologists and theologians should interact more often than they do. They should have no trouble identifying topics in which they both have a legitimate professional interest, and probably could aid the other's scholarship more often. Secularization is clearly one of those topics.