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Continuing Education for Missionaries

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In travelling to nearly 80 countries of the world and in working with hundreds of missionaries over the years in my capacity as a missions pastor, much of my time in the field is given over to listening. I am especially curious about what missionaries say during times of reflection.

One of my favourite questions to ask them is: 'If you could do it all over again and could change anything you have done, what would you do differently?' Invariably, almost without exception, comes back the response, 'I wish I had come to the mission field with better training', or 'I wish I had taken in more of the Bible before I went to the field'.

Unfortunately, many make such statements wistfully, knowing that they had not received the most thorough preparation beforehand, and yet also believing that nothing could be done about their predicament now. But much, even now, can be done about their predicament, and this is the central message of this article.

Every year more and more doors are opening to provide career missionaries with the opportunities they need to further their educational aspirations, especially on the graduate level. In fact, the anthropological and theological training available now to missionary candidates and short-termers is more extensive, innovative, and effective than almost anything available to career missionaries a generation ago. The training programmes are there, and the felt needs of the missionaries are there. But matching up the right missionary with the right programme—that's another story.

Many schools, professors, mission agencies, and churches, however, are very anxious that this matching up of the right missionary with the right programme become a reality for more and more veteran missionaries. Even now some institutions and agencies are showing signs of beginning to cooperate in providing cross-cultural workers with the ongoing academic and professional training that they need to be highly efficient tools in God's work of world evangelization.

A COMMITMENT TO LIFELONG LEARNING

Some nagging questions persist, though, in the minds of many. Where P. 255 will I ever get the extra time needed to pursue diligently my new studies? How can I possibly pay for those expensive semester units when I'm already several hundred dollars undersupported each month in my personal support account? What will my field director think? What will my peers on the field think are my real motives for 'going back to school'? Don't my children even need me more now than when they were little? Won't I feel foolish or awkward trying to compete with many younger students? What if I can't even pass the first course? What if I'm not even accepted into the programme? Maybe it's not even worth the effort to begin with …

WHAT IS CONTINUOUS EDUCATION?

In order to answer this question, an important distinction must be made between 'continuing education' and 'continuous education'. The Council on the Continuing Education Unit in Washington, D.C., defines 'continuing education' as 'formal education

programmes/activities for professional development and tracking, or for credentialing, for which academic credit is not awarded, or of personal interest to the learner, for which academic credit is not awarded'.[1] In other words, in industry and in the professional sector, 'continuing education' refers to formal in-service training and personal enrichment courses, neither of which are for academic credit. States Michael Neil:

> In continuing education the learner lays aside his or her daily work and attends sessions where the material discussed has no necessary connection with the learner's immediate problems. Rather, the programme of study is determined ahead of time by what someone else thinks is important … If and when the opportunity for application arises in the future, the task of adapting this knowledge to the learner's situation becomes the learner's new problem.[2]

Several strengths of 'continuing education' are immediately apparent. Traditionally, instruction has been viewed as 'subject-centred', whereas the current movement of most continuing education and training programmes is toward a 'problem-centred' orientation, which p. 256 reflects the notion that adults seek additional learning in order to solve a problem.[3] Continuing education takes a much more comprehensive view of adults and how adults learn, for such components as learning needs, learning outcomes, learning experiences, and assessment of learning outcomes are all part of the field of continuing education.[4] Thus, in continuing education 'learning experiences are designed to facilitate the role of the learner and are organized in such a manner as to provide for appropriate continuity, sequencing, and integration of the programme activity to achieve the specified learning outcomes'.[5]

On the other hand, in continu*ous* education, the basis for the educational programme is the work itself. The need determines the path to be taken, for 'the learning process begins by defining the problem uppermost on the user's mind and follows a well-defined path of defining and redefining the specific method of solution and evaluating the utility of the result'.[6]

Michael Nell again comments on continuous education:

> … continuous education is much more individualized than conventional continuing education. Because it focuses on problems *per se*, it cannot be programmatic. It cannot be preplanned—cooked ahead, so to speak. The learner does not follow a course of study prescribed ahead of time by someone else. In this approach the phrase 'programme of study' does not even occur. Instead, learners study what they need to know to solve their own problems. The paths they follow are not prescribed by someone else; they are not expected to fit their shadows in someone else's outline.[7]

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[1] The Council on the Continuing Education Unit, *Principles of Good Practice in Continuing Education*. Report on the C.C.E.U. Project to Develop Standards and Criteria for Good Practice in Continuing Education. Silver Spring, MD: Council on the Continuing Education Unit. 1984. p.7.

[2] Michael Neil, 'Education of Adults at a Distance: For Whom and Why', in *Education of Adults at a Distance*. Edited by Michael Neil. London: Kogan Page, in association with The Open University Press, 1981, p. 82.

[3] Council on the Continuing Education Unit. *Op. Cit.*, p. 2.

[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 3, 4.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 14.

[6] Neil, *loc. cit.*

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 83.

The problem at this juncture of the discussion is a definitional one. What one writer defines as continuing education, another defines as continuous education. What one defines as formal, graduate school education, another defines as continuing education. One example will suffice. Duane Elmer proposes the following definition: 'Continuing education is designing a life-long process whereby image bearers of God are restored to wholeness'.[8] This definition implies several things: that continuing education refers to designed, planned, or structured learning experiences, that the one who bears the image of God is the focus of continuing education; and that personal growth is the motive p. 257 for continuing education.[9] He also states earlier in his article on continuing education for missionaries that formal schooling may be a small part of continuing education but that it primarily has to do with personal growth and enrichment in the midst of life.[10] Thus, Elmer's definition of continuing education fits closely with Neil's definition of continuous education.

My personal opinion is that continuous education, especially as it relates to missionary life and ministry, is a better, more all-inclusive term than continuing education. Continuing education can suggest three very diverse definitions, referring to mid-career academic training or in-service schooling on the graduate level; non-accredited courses of study for professional or personal development; and learning as a way of life, be it formal or nonformal studies, credit or no credit. To avoid such confusion, continuous education naturally encompasses all three ideas into its definitional domain and serves as the broadest possible umbrella under which the various patterns of adult learning can find shade to take root, grow, and flourish.

FOUR KEY PHILOSOPHICAL FACTORS

Strategic factor

There are at least twelve reasons why continuous education for the missionary is important. The first reason is what I call the Strategic Factor. The trends of nonformal education, in-service training, continuing education, and lifelong learning are now setting the world's educational agenda. This is the direction all education is going in the foreseeable future.

I am familiar with more than 300 organizations based in the USA that have as their primary purpose the furthering of educational ideals of nonformal and continuing education. Those that top the list would include such organizations as the National Society for Internships and Experiential Education in Raleigh, N.C.; the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning in Columbia, MD; the Council for Noncollegiate Continuing Education in Richmond, VA: the International Society for Intercultural Education, Training, and Research in Washington, D.C.; the Association of Experiential Education in Boulder, CO; and the National Association of Private, Nontraditional Schools and Colleges in Grand Junction, CO. p. 258

The historical factor

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[8] Duane Elmer, 'Continuing Education … For Missionaries', in *Emissary*, Vol. IX. No. 2. Wheaton, Ill.: Evangelical Missions Information Service, March 1978, p. 5.

[9] *Ibid.*

[10] *Ibid.*, p. 4.

Much permanent, irreparable damage has occurred on mission fields of the world over the last several hundred years because, to a great extent, much of the Protestant mission thrust was steeped in the Greek model of education which so permeates all of Western civilization. A second reason for missionaries committing themselves to the process of continuous education is that lifelong learning, more exactly patterned after Hebraistic thought, is one way for missionaries, in their spheres of influence, to begin to correct the missiological errors introduced through Hellenistic educational structures into the Two-Thirds World since the time of the Reformation.

Some, like William Ralph Inge,[11] saw the pervading Greek influence on Western education as a very positive contribution. Others, like Edwin Batch[12] and Harvie Conn,[13] have demonstrated convincingly that such influence was anything but an unmixed blessing on the developing world. That Christianity, with its Hebraistic foundation in the First Century, changed drastically by the Fourth Century into something decidely different—Hellenistic in form and content—is not a fact open to debate.[14] States Hatch: 'It is impossible for anyone, whether he be a student of history or no, to fail to notice a difference of both form and content between the Sermon on the Mount and the Nicene Creed.' Hatch cites how Greek education passed from Greece into Africa and the West,[15] first having a special hold on the Roman and then upon the Celtic and Teutonic populations of Gaul; and from the Gallic schools it has come to our own country and our own time. The longstanding strength and durability of the Greek educational system can be seen in the fact that all of Western culture 'retains still its technical terms and many of its scholastic usages, either in their original Greek form or as translated into Latin and modified by Latin habits, in the schools of the West'.[16] p. 259

Harvie Conn more specifically traces this historical shift in the church from Hebrew thinking to Greek thinking as it has related to formal education:

> Under the formulations of the Alexandrian theologians in the second and third centuries of the church's history, this shift became more rigid yet. Clement of Alexandria … combined in his view of ministry the concept of a priestly hierarchy and the pastor as gnostic which placed cognitive knowledge at the pinnacle of the ecclesiastical ladder. Origen … solidified this by transforming the catechetical schools for new converts into advanced theological schools. Theological education had begun the long road of identification with schooling and schooling with the intellectual defence of the gospel.[17]

Conn states how schooling by its very nature came to evaluate students' progress by the satisfaction of a certain quotum of knowledge, becoming content-oriented rather than student-oriented. This, of course, led to schools' obsessive interest in abstract reality on

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[11] William Ralph Inge, *The Platonic Tradition in English Religious Thought*. London: Longmans, Green and Co. Ltd., 1926.

[12] Edwin Hatch, *The Influence of Greek Ideas on Christianity*. New York: Harper and Brothers. 1957.

[13] Harvie M. Conn, 'Theological Education and the Search For Excellence', in *Westminster Theological Journal*, vol. LXI. No. 2. Philadelphia: Westminster Theological Seminary, Spring 1979, pp. 311–363.

[14] Karl Rengstorf sees a radical change in the conception of teaching in the church under the influence of the early Apologists and the Alexandrian school. See his article in Kittel's *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, vol. 11, p. 159.

[15] Hatch, *op. cit.*, p. 325.

[16] *Ibid.*, p. 43.

[17] Conn, *op. cit.*, p. 325.

the part of the professor and student, with their academic debate withdrawn from the daily life of the culture and the church's response to that culture. Conn concludes:

> Within this framework, the teacher-student relationship moved from that of brother to that of father-son, from fraternal to paternalistic. Measurements were taken in terms of cognitive input rather than ministerial gifts. This was the pattern the missionary of the nineteenth century was trained under, a model developed in the exigencies of western history but assumed by the missionary to be usable anywhere in the world.[18]

Jonathan Chao, addressing the failure of Western education in mission contexts in the Two-Thirds World to develop adequate and effective indigenous leadership, lays the blame for this problem at the feet of Western educational institutions with their Western model of ministry. Many outside the West see the 'inherent contradiction between the biblical pattern of the ministry through exercise of spiritual gifts and the western model based on professional clericalism'.[19] Chao summarizes this dilemma for missionaries who were blind to the deadening effect that Western education, rooted in Hellenistic rationalism, elitism, intellectualism, and dualism, had on the maturing of the church worldwide: p. 260

> The pattern of the Protestant ministry as practiced in most Third World churches is basically a replica of the Catholic and Reformation model of ministry developed within the context of western church history. It has been faithfully transplanted to the mission fields through the various mission agencies. Until very recently it was accepted as the standard model for emulation in the Third World, seldom being questioned by either national leaders or missionaries. The continuous dependence of the Third World churches on this western pattern has determined the shape of their ministry.[20]

What does all this mean, specifically as it relates to the Historical Factor? Simply stated, the Western missionary, educated in Western schools, passed on a worldview and form of ministry to the mission fields of the world which he perceived to be 'biblical', but now upon closer analysis the legacy he passed on turns out to have been, in many cases, a Hellenistic philosophy of man and ministry far removed from the actual Asian or Hebraistic thinking of the Bible. According to Ramsay, Greek education 'was narrow in its conception, shallow and unreal in its character, and destitute of any vivifying and invigorating ideal … As for the Roman imperial system, its one educational aim seems to have been to prevent the mass of the people from thinking too much …'[21] The consequence of all this has been the creation of a form of Christianity very different from that of the First Century Church.

For missionaries to commit themselves to a lifelong pursuit of education would not only subtly but relentlessly change their philosophy of education but would invariably modify their philosophy of ministry as well. What one learns in formal schooling is usually lived out in ministry later. History has shown that there is a direct link between schooling and ministry. People live out only what they know.

Such a change in one's philosophy of ministry would lead missionaries to begin to correct some of the missiological errors of the past. Instead of seeing knowledge and

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[18] *Ibid.*, p. 328.

[19] Jonathan Chao, 'Education and Leadership', in *The New Face of Evangelicalism*, edited by C. René Padilla. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1976, p. 195.

[20] *Ibid.*

[21] William M. Ramsay, *The Education of Christ*. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1902, p. 65.

scholasticism as the goal of education, they would more strongly stress application and obedience. Their ministries would be more inclined to be people-oriented rather than content-oriented, practical rather than abstract, for the masses, rather than for an elite few, based on spiritual gifts and not clericalism. Education would be perceived as continuous and for life, just like ministry, and not something that one obtains when one is young so p. 261 that he can then hopefully do ministry later. To keep learning, to keep ministering, to keep living is the essence of the Hebraistic way of life.

The cultural factor

A third reason why continuous education for the missionary is important focuses on the cultural factor. A commitment to lifelong learning for the missionary can help to correct the past errors which were perpetrated in the colonial approach to missions. We do not blame the heroic early missionaries who took the gospel bravely to the ends of the earth. But like people of every generation, their mission was conditioned by the times in which they lived.

In the dramatic era of European colonial expansion in the Two Thirds World, when Western missionaries followed in the footsteps of Western colonialists, it was inevitable that missionaries, possessing the colonial technology, educational system, and worldview, would approach non-Western cultures in a similar fashion as did colonialists, and that those colonized would frequently confuse missionary with colonist. Thus, much of what was transferred from the missionaries to the colonized peoples was not biblical Christianity *per se*, but Western culture and values. Many of the churches that grew up in those contexts have, at least until recently, been dependent and weak. And the primary way in which a Western style of Christianity was transferred to those being colonized was through the formalized, institutionalized educational system of the West. Our Western schools, as much as anything else, have contributed to the crisis of leadership development and slow maturity of the developing church.

Formal schools have had at least three main functions in a colonial society. First, schools have a role in formalizing societal relationships. Says Martin Carnoy: 'In its colonialistic characterization, schooling helps develop colonizer-colonized relationships between individuals and between groups in the society. It formalizes these relationships, giving them a logic that makes reasonable the unreasonable'.[22] However, in a colonial setting, schooling brought about no true social transformation, 'since a person is simply changed from one role in a dependent system to a different role in the same system'.[23]

Second, schools have a role in maintaining social order. Centuries p. 262 ago the feudal organization broke down in Europe and later in Latin America. An institution was needed to hold things together under new and disruptive conditions. Thus schooling served to preserve the moral fabric of society and to socialize children into it.[24]

Third, as a general statement, schooling helps the few to control the many. In a colonial hierarchical society, schooling limits individual choice by defining well-specified and uncreative roles in the social and economic hierarchy.

> Schooling defines people's potential for them on the basis of the hierarchy's needs, not their own. Schooling for a hierarchical structure is therefore a colonizing device which

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[22] Martin Carnoy, *Education as Cultural Imperialism*. New York: David McKay Company, Inc., 1974, p. 19.

[23] *Ibid.*, p. 56.

[24] *Ibid.*, pp. 21–22.

> sometimes changes the *kind* of choices people have, but still serves to limit control over their own lives.[25]

The educational system brought to the Third World by the colonizing powers had a very narrow social base, because the colonialists feared the threats that would arise from a system of mass education. And according to Vassar, even today in 'most Third World countries, aid from the West continues to perpetuate the existing educational set up, also promoting the brain drain'.[26] But even if the educated national leaders do stay in their own home countries they have learned well from the system and know how to stay on top. Asserts Clive Nettleton: 'It is a problem for Third World countries that intellectuals … become artificial when they have been educated. They are often worse than those who have educated them'.[27]

Thus, time has shown us that some of the mission work during the colonial period, and especially that which was attached to the educational enterprise, was less evangelization and more cultural imperialism. Paulo Freire is correct when he says that an invader seeks to penetrate another culture and impose his system of values on its members, to the degree that he reduces the people in the situation he invades to mere objects of his action.[28] Freire argues: 'Cultural p. 263 invasion through dialogue cannot exist. There is no such thing as dialogical manipulation or conquest. These terms are mutually exclusive'.[29] Instead, indigenous Christian leaders, training under Western missionary educators, were in many cases inculcated with the illusion of acting when in reality they were merely acting within the action permitted by those who controlled the system. Many of their societies were never truly transformed, because in reality they never were permitted to make their own choices and decisions.

How can continuous education for the missionary begin to rectify some of the unintentional errors of the past which were tied to the colonial approach to missions? There are at least three ways in which continuous education can help, and they revolve around the three concepts of learner, servant, and catalyst. As missionaries commit themselves to a life-long learning path, they will see that change of mindset alter the ways in which they are perceived and received by others.

First, by communicating non-verbally to others that there are still many new and important things that require learning and mastery, the missionary will demonstrate to all a role of learner. 'Learner' projects quite a different image to the people than colonial administrator or missionary teacher does. Donald Larson recognized how important this role of learner was for the missionary when he wrote that to the non-Christian, the roles of teacher and seller may not be viable. The non-Christian may expect the outsider to learn the insider's viewpoint before he can teach effectively about the outside. A principle of

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[25] *Ibid.*, p. 346.

[26] Gunduz Vassaf, editor, 'Aid and Development in Crisis: What Role For Education?'. A Report on the World University Service International Workshop held in Nantes, France, July 1984. Geneva: World University Service, December 1984, p. 13.

[27] Clive Nettleton, editor, 'Education, Human Rights, and Development'. A Report on the World University Workshop held in Hatare, Zimbabwe on August 25–29, 1982. Geneva: World University Service, 1984, p. 30.

[28] Paulo Freire, *Education for Critical Consciousness*, New York: The Continuum Publishing Company, 1973, p. 113.

[29] *Ibid.*, p. 115.

order is important here: learner before teacher, buyer before seller.[30] Dr. Charles Kraft has commented: 'Indeed, if we do no more than engage in the process of language learning we will have communicated more of the essentials of the Gospel than if we devote ourselves to any other task I can think of'.[31] Kraft has expanded on this concept in a number of his writings.[32]

The late Tom Brewster and his wife Betty Sue based much of their innovative ministry together on the truth that 'the learner posture might continue to be the most effective communication base not only for p. 264 short-termers but also for those who invest their entire lives ministering as guests in another country'.[33] The notion of the missionary as learner is especially crucial to the Brewsters' argument for their mission strategy in their well-known *Language Acquisition Made Practical* and in the booklet *Bonding and the Missionary Task*.[34]

The learner role symbolizes many important things to local residents that are essential in the communication of the gospel. States Donald Larson, 'The learner's dependence and vulnerability convey in some small way the messages of identification and reconciliation that are explicit in the Gospel'.[35] Also, since the early followers of Jesus were called 'disciples'—the root meaning of which is 'learner', and since in the Great Commission our Lord told these original Christian learners to go and make disciples or learners in all the nations (Matthew 28:18–20), the learner posture dramatizes the cost of discipleship and the kind of ministry that Jesus' gospel requires.

Second, continuous education for the missionary will further help to build an attitude of humility into the Christian worker and in so doing demonstrate to others his or her role as a servant. As missionaries continue to learn, to gather more new ideas and information that can be of help to their people, they show a servant's role, one quite different from many during the colonial era who ministered out of a position of strength, control, authority, and superiority.

Recently Ajith Fernando of Sri Lanka warned EFMA and IFMA members: 'The message of the cross brings salvation to the people, but the incarnation of that message in the messenger prepares the messenger to give the message. If we have not incarnated the message in ourselves, our message will not be heard'.[36] Living out an incarnational message, showing onself to be a servant of the Servant, is basic to an effective missionary strategy. In one of the most important missions articles ever written, Charles Kraft said:

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[30] Donald N. Larson, 'The Viable Missionary: Learner, Trader, Story Teller', in *Missiology: An International Review*. Edited by Arthur F. Glasser. Vol. VI, No. 2. April 1978, p. 158.

[31] E. Thomas and Elizabeth S. Brewster, 'Language Learning *Is* Communication—*Is* Ministry!' Published originally by the Brewsters. 1981, p. 1.

[32] For example, see Charles H. Kraft in 'Communicating the Gospel God's Way' in the *Ashland Theological Bulletin*, Spring 1979.

[33] Brewster and Brewster, *op. cit.*, p. 2.

[34] E. Thomas and Elizabeth S. Brewster, *Language Acquisition Made Practical*, Lingua House: Colarado Springs, CO. 1976; and *Bonding and the Missionary Task*. Lingua House: Colorado Springs, CO. 1980. Also see the Brewsters' article entitled 'How to Learn a Language and Culture', in *Evangelical Missions Quarterly*, Vol. 14. No. 2, April 1978.

[35] Larson, *op. cit.*, p. 162.

[36] Ajith Fernando, 'Servanthood: Jesus' Model For Missions' in *OMS Outreach*. OMS International: Greenwood, IN, 1988, p. 27.

> … God had a choice of roles in his approach to men. He could have remained as God in heaven, or even come to earth as God, and retained p. 265 the respect and prestige that is his right as God. He would have continued to have admirers but not friends. The risks would have been far fewer, but the real impact very low because the predictability would have been so high. But God chose not to go that route, choosing rather to become a human being within the frame of reference of human beings, so that, in spite of the tremendous risk involved, he might earn the respect of and, therefore, the right to be listened to by human beings. Likewise we as missionaries may choose to remain as gods above or as gods in the midst of people we work among. Or we may seek to follow God's example and establish a beachhead within the frame of reference of the people to whom God has called us—a beachhead of 'human beingness' according to their definition.[37]

As God has demonstrated in Christ, and as Paul declared in 2 Corinthians 12:9–10, there is tremendous power in weakness. A commitment to lifelong learning reminds missionaries continually of their weaknesses, inadequacies, and information deficiencies. But it is exactly at these times of weakness that God chooses to reveal himself and his love to us. Rosemary Haughton comments: '… it is characteristic of the work of divine love in our world that God breaks through at the weak spots. The barrier is the barrier of sin … It is the nature of divine love to desire to break through that barrier. But it is also the nature of divine love … that it cannot coerce. Incredibly, it waits in endless patience for the moment at which there is a weak spot in the human defences where it can break through'.[38]

Third, continuous education for the missionary will make it easier for the cross-cultural worker to assume his or her role as a catalyst or change agent. In the colonial approach to missions, missionaries often tried to make their converts into what they thought or hoped those converts should be. Often that meant that the society was not truly transformed, because the people themselves were not always choosing Christ but modern technology, Western culture, or the values being imposed upon them. William Smalley notes that true 'transformation occurs differently in different societies, depending on the meaning which people attach to their behaviour and the needs which they feel in their lives. Missionaries generally approve of and strive for culture change which makes people more like themselves in form … p. 266 An indigenous church is precisely one in which the changes which take place under the guidance of the Holy Spirit meet the needs and fulfil the meanings of that society and not of any outside group'.[39]

According to Dake Kietzman and William Smalley, this missionary role as catalyst is absolutely crucial in the overall missionary effort, with continuous education as an important link in that development process:

> The missionary's basic responsibility is to provide the material upon which the native Christian and church can grow 'in grace and knowledge' to the point where they can make reliable and Spirit-directed decisions with regard to their own conduct within the existing culture. This involves a complete freedom of access to the Word of God, with such encouragement, instruction and guidance in its use as may be necessary to obtain a

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[37] Charles H. Kraft, 'God's Model For Cross-Cultural Communication—The Incarnation', in *Evangelical Missions Quarterly*, Summer 1973, p. 212.

[38] Rosemary Haughton, 'Divine Love Breaking Through Into Human Experience', a paper presented at the OWME commission meeting of the World Council of Churches in Bucharest, Romania, in May 1981.

[39] William S. Smalley, 'Cultural Implications of an Indigenous Church', in *Readings in Missionary Anthropology II*, edited by William A. Smalley. Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1978. Also see Smalley's article 'The Missionary and Culture Change', in *Practical Anthropology*. Vol. 4. No. 5. 1957, pp. 231–237.

> healthy and growing Christian community. The missionary's role in culture change, then, is that of a catalyst and of a source of new ideas, new information.[40]

As missionaries play out the roles of learner-servant-catalyst, rather than the earlier, less effective colonial roles of teacher-authority-controller, an acceptable level of identification between the missionary and the host people will be reached. David Hesselgrave[41] and William Reyburn[42] have written extensively on missionary identification. As such, identification is not the goal but communication. But if the former occurs, the latter is sure to follow.

The theoretical factor

A fourth reason why continuous education for the missionary is important focuses on the theoretical factor. A commitment to continuous education for the missionary—an educational pathway of p. 267 lifelong learning—better fits the various theories on how adults best learn.

Several distinctions must be stressed in order to appreciate fully the importance of the theoretical factor. The first distinction is between schooling and education. Albert Einstein said, 'Education is that which remains after you have forgotten what you learned in school'.[43] Duane Elmer amplifies that thought. 'Our society has equated schooling and education. They are not synonymous. Schooling is only one means toward education and many are arguing that it may not be the most effective means.'[44]

Others, suggesting that a more precise distinction is between learning and education (which puts education and schooling in the same category in contrast to learning), state: '… learning is one of the fundamental ways and formal means to enhance learning'.[45] This distinction is even termed by some as maintenance learning vs. innovative learning.[46] I personally favour Ted Ward's Interaction-Growth Model which places 'learning' as the outside circle, with 'education' being the inner circle and 'schooling' being one of many rings within education.[47]

One of the main reasons many educators, employees, parents and students have become frustrated with the results of schools is that the skills required to be a good student are not necessarily the same skills that one needs to be successful in life. The main skills required and reinforced in school include listening, writing, asking questions,

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[40] Dale W. Kietzman and William A. Smalley, 'The Missionary's Role in Culture Change', in *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement*, edited by Ralph D. Winter and Steven C. Hawthorne. Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1981, p. 506.

[41] David J. Hesselgrave, 'Identification: Key to Effective Communication', in *Evangelical Missions Quarterly*. Summer 1973.

[42] William D. Reyburn, 'Identification in the Missionary Task', in *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement*. Edited by Ralph D. Winter and Steven C. Hawthorne. Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1981, pp. 465–475.

[43] Duane Elmer, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

[44] *Ibid.*

[45] James W. Botkin, Mahdi Elmandjra, and Mircea Malitza, *No Limits To teaming: Bridging the Human Gap*. New York: Pergamon Press. 1979, p. 8.

[46] *Ibid.*, pp. 9–10.

[47] Ted Ward, 'Schooling As a Defective Approach to Education'. East Lansing, Michigan: School of Education, Michigan State University, no date, p. 5.

remembering, and reporting. But additional skills for effective life and ministry would include: decision making, observation and hypothesizing, application of knowledge, discernment, critical thinking, inquiry and self-discovery, communication, self-understanding, inter-personal relationships, and the ability to cope with stress and teach oneself. Thus, Duane Elmer summarizes all of this by concluding:

> So let's destroy the myth right now that continuing education is basically getting more formal schooling. It may include formal schooling but that should not be the major thrust. To develop the skills necessary for more p. 268 effective living, and therefore, more effective service as missionaries we must look beyond schooling.[48]

A second distinction that must be stressed in order to fully appreciate the importance of the theoretical factor is the distinction between pedagogy and andragogy. The literal rendering of 'pedagogy' is 'the leading of children'.

Most definitions of pedagogy have omitted the reference to children, thus it has become 'the art and science of teaching' (Webster). Most educational systems are still child and youth oriented, treating students as children. One educator suggests that the reason continuing education has been slow to develop has been that most teachers can teach adults only as though they were children.[49]

In a pedagogical orientation, the information to be learned is determined by someone other than the learner, with learning primarily a passive experience. Paulo Freire calls this the 'banking system', in which the main transaction in education is the act of transferring information from the teacher's head and depositing it in the students' heads, so that the students are thus depositories and the teacher is the depositor.[50] At the heart of the problem for Ivan Illich is the exaggerated importance attached to credits and certification, the educational monopoly claimed by schools, the tendency to 'confuse teaching with learning, grade advancement with education, a diploma with competence, and fluency with the ability to say something new'.[51] The system educates, but do students learn?

On the other hand, andragogy is the term recently coined to refer to the art and science of helping adults to learn. The recent research on andragogy is forcing educators to re-evaluate their long-held traditions on schooling and education. As Duane Elmer affirms: 'The adult is more than a grown up child; therefore, the principles and technology of educating children are not equally effective for the education of adults'.[52]

Adult education seeks to respond to the needs, interests, and concerns of the learner. Terms like 'facilitator', 'coordinator', or 'resource person' more accurately describe the role of one who would p. 269 teach adults. Learning is primarily an active experience, self-defined, self-motivated, and self-directed. Malcolm Knowles' theory of andragogy sees teachers not forcing their will or view on adult learners. Rather, suppressing the compulsion to teach (as they would teach children), they should place responsibility for learning in the hands of the adult learners themselves. Knowles states that teachers should ensure that the learning environment is rich enough for the group to extract

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[48] Elmer, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

[49] *Ibid.*

[50] Lyra Srinivasan, *Perspectives on Non formal Adult Learning: Functional Education for Individual, Community, and National Development*. Boston: World Education, Inc., 1977, p. 5.

[51] Ivan Illich, *Deschooling Society*. New York: Harper and Row. 1971, p. 1.

[52] Elmer, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

significant learning. 'Good teaching is good management of the interaction between two key variables: the learner and his environment'.[53]

HOW ADULTS LEARN AND HOW TO TEACH THEM

According to Srinivasan the ideas of two earlier-mentioned educators, Ivan Illich and Paulo Freire, have been among the most influential in these new and growing fields of andragogy and nonformal education. But others who have made significant innovations to these fields of learning would include Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow of the humanistic school of psychology, B. F. Skinner, the behavioural psychologist, and the educators Jerome Bruner and Malcolm Knowles.[54]

The most commonly held position presently regarding adult learning theory is eclectic in nature, seeing various adults learning in a multiplicity of ways and means. Mary Jane Even summarizes this position:

> In regard to learning theory and resultant instructional practice, it is assumed that adults learn through an interaction process, must be motivated from within, must have a share in deciding what is to be learned, and must set their own goals. All learning has cognitive, affective, and psycho-motor dimensions, which simultaneously interact on the learning experience. Perceptions are based on former experience and the interaction with new learning and, thus, are holistic in form. Each individual views new learning from his or her own perspective and need. Adult learning theory has its roots in phenomenology, cognitive, or gestalt views of learning and is consistent with the interactive or holistic philosophy. This theory could be applied to all human learning, not just adult learning.[55] p. 270

In his summary chapter in *Helping Adults Learn How To Learn*, Smith acknowledges that fostering critical thinking, orienting adult learners to institutional programmes, and developing skills of collaborative learning may be discreet and very separate activities. Learning to learn is certainly not equivalent to learning to study or to succeeding in institutional contexts, and it may well be that the development of critically analytic capacities results in adults coming to regard sceptically the very educational institutions they were previously so eager to enter.[56] In other words, lifelong learning can become more important to adults than merely formal education, though Neil would admit that besides wanting to update or upgrade their professional or vocational knowledge and skills and wanting to study for the pleasure and satisfaction of learning, many adults continue their education to obtain specific qualifications (e.g. a degree or diploma).[57] Therefore, each adult, expressing his 'individuality and defining and taking what is needed

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[53] Srinivasan, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

[54] *Ibid.*, p. 5.

[55] Mary Jane Even, 'Why Adults Learn in Different Ways', in the *Journal of Lifelong Learning*. Vol. 10. No. 8. Washington, D.C.: American Association for Adult and Continuing Education, June 1987, pp. 23–24.

[56] Robert M. Smith, editor, *Helping Adults Learn How to Learn*. New Directions for Continuing Education. No. 19. San Francisco: Jossey-Boss Publishers, 1983, p. 101.

[57] Michael Neil, 'Education of Adults at a Distance: For Whom and Why', in *Education of Adults at a Distance*, edited by Michael Neil. London: Kogan Page, in association with The Open University Press, 1981, p. 48.

for one's professional development',[58] should actively pursue a pathway of lifelong learning.

In summary, how does the theoretical factor discussed above argue for the importance of continuous education for the missionary? Continuous education as a concept is in harmony with the various theories of how adults learn best. Adults learn best when they are problem-solving, asking questions, setting their own goals, actively involved, personally motivated and directed, interacting with others and their environment, deciding what needs to be learned, analysing and reflecting. And continuous education is the learning format that best fits the theories and realities about how adults learn.

As missionaries commit themselves to a life of continuous learning, many of the following benefits will be evident to them: intellectual stimulation, broadening of perspective, solutions to problems in ministry, immediate applicability of information, a growing network of like-minded professionals, academic credit, the attainment of realistic goals, and the thrill and satisfaction of directing one's own learning path. p. 271

EIGHT KEY PRACTICAL FACTORS

We have already investigated four key philosophical factors which directly impact the argument for missionaries cultivating a lifelong learning approach. The next eight factors are practical in nature. The discussions of these next factors take into account the biographies of various missionaries, all of which are associated with the missions programme of my church. Instead of footnoted evidence from the vast body of literature on the subject of continuing and continuous education, I will let the true stories of these missionaries speak for themselves.

The contextual factor

The contextual factor emphasizes a fifth reason why continuous education for the missionary is so important. A lifelong approach to education most easily and naturally seeks to make one's ministry more relevant to the local scene. The contextual factor is illustrated by three men: Renato, a former missionary in Argentina, who is presently a pastor of missions in his home country of Brazil; Paulo, a missionary candidate and former pastor in Brazil, who has also lived and worked in Europe and the United States; and Bob, a missionary to North Africa.

The elders of Renato's church recently voted to send him, his wife, and three children to the USA for one year as an investment for their church's future. Renato and his wife are diligently learning English six hours a day in non-accredited university courses in Los Angeles. Their three children are attending grammar school. None of the five spoke English when they came to America but they all learned remarkably fast. His elders were especially concerned that Renato learn English, so that he could take advantage of the wealth of audio-visual and printed materials in English to assist him in his preaching and teaching ministry. While in the USA he interned in a large non-denominational church very similar to his in Brazil. This helped him to internalize ministry principles better, to see his own church's strengths and weaknesses more clearly, and to interact with others as he plans his future ministry in Brazil. His time in America also gave him opportunity to visit other churches and meet church and missions leaders around the country.

Paulo is a missionary candidate preparing to work in Eastern Europe. After seven years as a pastor in Brazil, he spent a year in Europe working with the Billy Graham

[58] Jean Erdman, 'Reflecting on Teaching and Adult Education', in the *Journal of Lifelong Learning*, Vol. 10, No. 8. Washington, D.C.: American Association for Adult and Continuing Education. June 1987, p. 21.

Association. He then brought his wife p. 272 and three children to the USA where he completed his seminary training at a church-based school. Though he had been a successful pastor in Brazil, he knew he would need more theological training to successfully serve church leaders in Iron Curtain countries and he wanted his schooling in a local church setting. Studying in English was a first for him and his grammar school-aged children. These cross-cultural experiences in the midst of their studies have prepared this family for the next step in their ministry career.

Bob and his wife participated in a 12-unit graduate-level study abroad programme in North Africa several years ago after graduating from seminary. Upon successfully completing that programme, they returned to California where Bob interned for a year in a small community church. Recently Bob began a Master's programme in public health at a local university. He and his family are returning to that North African country this fall. He returns officially as a graduate student doing research on his degree, but unofficially as the member of a mission agency. Bob is using his schooling as a means to build friendships and a working network, to further their cultural adaptation, and to assess needs and future ministry possibilities. He already has an open invitation from his host country's Washington, D.C. consulate. Like Renato and Paulo, Bob is continuing to blend ministry and schooling together in the immediate context. He knows that the more relevant his schooling is to the local scene, the more dynamic will be his ministry in the present and in the future.

The organizational factor

The sixth reason why continuous education for the missionary is so important revolves around the Organizational Factor. Simply stated, missionary agencies are eager to have more flexible, better trained field staff and home office personnel. They know that better educated missions leaders mean more efficient, effective ministries within their organizational long-range plans.

No missionary organization in the world understands this factor better or has applied this principle more fully than Wycliffe Bible Translators. Missionary candidates with Wycliffe must survive the rigours of at least two years of formal and nonformal training—three semesters on the graduate level in linguistics, one month of QUEST, an orientation course, and five months in 'jungle camp'. As many as possible of their Bible translators are encouraged to earn graduate degrees (which is done in conjunction with their field work). At least p. 273 217 current members with Wycliffe hold doctoral degrees and 1155 have Master's degrees.

Richard, a Bible translator in Latin America and Africa, earned a second Master's degree through his work with Wycliffe over the years. One extended furlough was all that he needed to finish the programme. Randy, also a Wycliffe member, is leaving soon with his family for a translation project in Africa. He has already begun work on his D.Miss. degree, so that during his first term he will work on several courses by extension, choose his dissertation topic on the language he will be learning, and hopefully make much progress on his doctorate during his first furlough. Darrell and Debbie, also with Wycliffe, leave soon for West Africa. They have already earned their Master's degrees in linguistics and intercultural studies before they leave for the field on their first term. More than 20 units of Debbie's degree was earned through field study courses in North Africa, India, and Papua New Guinea.

Tim is a new missionary with Sudan interior Mission in West Africa. Before going on a short-term assignment with SIM, he started an Ed.D. programme. While working in the Caribbean as a short-term missionary and as a conference teacher in Asia, Tim was able to earn many graduate units towards his degree, gaining practical experience and

academic training at the same time. Now SIM is granting him a one-semester study leave to return to California to finish the coursework for his doctorate. His studies and invigorating ministry have already been a real encouragement to SIM's work in Africa.

The institutional factor

A seventh reason, the institutional factor, also stresses the importance of continuous education for the missionary. Many schools, Bible institutes, colleges, seminaries, and graduate schools are anxious to offer innovative programmes to candidates and veteran missionaries. The 'market' is a substantial one—at least 40,000 short-term and career Protestant missionaries from North America working overseas presently, with thousands more in various stages of preparation. And many of the major evangelical institutions across the continent are now offering special majors, degrees, extension programmes, field studies, and 'study abroad' projects to capture new student interest and at the same time provide them with good opportunities to apply practically their missions training.

One of the most innovative of all the institutional programmes being offered currently involves a 'study abroad' programme in North Africa. p. 274 The project is jointly sponsored by: a graduate school (Biola's School of Intercultural Studies), a university (William Carey International University), a Bible college (The Master's College), a mission agency (Wycliffe Bible Translators), and a local church (Grace Community Church). Students can earn up to 15 units of undergraduate or graduate credit through a husband-wife team that are adjunct professors of all three institutions, and members of the mission agency and the local church. Students live in the homes of non-Christian host families, learn some Arabic, conduct original research, enjoy wonderful personal ministries, and are tutored in such courses as intercultural adjustment, introduction to linguistics, and applied anthropology. Each student's missionary aptitudes are assessed, with a written evaluation provided at course end, and each is personally discipled through the course by veteran missionaries with 25 years field experience. Already at least 7 'graduates' of the course are returning for longer service in that Muslim country. More than twenty are participating in the 1988 programme. After six years of excellent results, this programme is a winner. But it would not be possible without the support, assistance, and encouragement of the educational institutions.

The missiological factor

The world of missions continues to need more research, more books and articles, more reflection upon and stimulation of missiological themes and issues. This introduces an eighth reason why continuous education for missionaries is important. A commitment to lifelong learning provides one the ongoing opportunities to collect, analyse, disseminate, and interact upon important information crucial to the task of world evangelization.

Larry was one of our missionaries in Latin America for 13 years and is now a missions executive. While working in Brazil, he became increasingly aware of the growing number of non-Western mission agencies in Latin America and elsewhere. He began corresponding with many of them and collecting data on their ministries. He was helped by earlier writers on this subject,[59] and he was anxious to update the missions world on matters they had initially reported on in the early 1970s. Ultimately the fruit of his

[59] For example, Marlin Nelson, *The How and Why of Third World Missions*. Pasadena: William Carey Library. 1976.

research resulted in the p. 275 publishing in 1983 of his D.Miss. dissertation,[60] adding an important contribution to the field of missiology. He had been allowed by his mission agency and supporting churches to use one of his furloughs to complete his doctoral studies, and the whole world of missions was helped in the process.

Another veteran missionary in France, Howard has taken Master's degree coursework on furloughs and by arrangement in Europe. However, apart from his formal studies, due to his burden for church growth throughout France Howard began collecting data on the status and locations of every denominational local church in his country. This project was recently published by World Vision's MARC European office.[61] His effort has contributed a much-needed tool for French church planters in the overall strategy to evangelize that needy country.

The human factor

A ninth reason why continuous education for the missionary is important centres on the human factor. People need to keep learning, thinking, and growing to avoid stagnation and to reach their human potential. A commitment to lifelong learning stretches them, helps them see new facets in their make-up, new abilities, new possibilities.

Connie, a 25-year veteran missionary now in North Africa, recently earned her Master's degree. She had taken her coursework on furloughs and by arrangement on the field, and her thesis was a statement of much that she had learned in ministry on the field. Many candidates and missionaries each year have benefited from her studies as she continues to grow as a teacher, linguist, and coach.

Misko is a church-planting pastor in Eastern Europe, and is considered a key evangelical leader in his country. However, after more than 20 years of successful ministry in Europe, he felt the need to upgrade his ministry skills and Bible knowledge. The president of his European mission agency encouraged him to attend seminary in the USA. While working on his Master of Divinity degree, his first opportunity to study in English, he is working in an American church, stimulating the congregation and taking ministry teams from the p. 276 church to Europe for summer ministries. It is also proving to be a great experience for his children, too, as they are schooled for the first time in an English-speaking environment.

Some of our missionary wives, like Becky in Papua New Guinea or Kathy in Belgium, either has a Master's degree or have already taken at least three semesters of graduate school. But Bible knowledge is what they really need or lack. Schools like Moody Bible Institute provide an invaluable service to people like these who can take Bible correspondence courses at their own pace and in areas of their own interest or specialization.

The geographical factor

A tenth reason why continuous education for the missionary is important focuses on the geographical factor. A commitment to lifelong learning best fits the lifestyle of today's missionary. With one furlough near one's home church and the next near the children's college, with yearly board meetings back at the home office, and a few regional and international gatherings sprinkled in, missionaries today are travelling more over shorter

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[60] See Lawrence E. Keyes, *The Last Age of Missions: A Study of Third World Mission Societies*. Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1983.

[61] See Howard Foreman, *A New Look at Protestant Churches in France*, MARC Monograph Number 9. Bromley, Kent, England: Cosmos House, MARC Europe, 1957.

periods of time. Even the length of furloughs is changing. In our own church experience, more of our missionaries come home on furlough every two or three years for 3 to 6 months (usually during the summer when kids are out of school) than the traditional one year furlough every 4 or 5 years. Such regular travel makes continuous education just that much easier to incorporate into one's lifestyle. All that is required is a little planning regularly to coordinate opportunities with learning experiences.

Al, a missions pastor at our church, was a missionary for 14 years in Central America. Throughout his missionary career, his college and graduate school education spanned three different decades and included 6 schools and seminaries in 3 countries. Bob, a missionary in Hong Kong and Indonesia, was able to plan his Ph.D. studies in California around his home church and his frequent board meetings in the USA. Daryl, a missionary for 20 years in Latin America, completed the coursework for his D.Miss. degree in California where his school, home churches, and mission agency are located. Even the content of his dissertation dealt with cities in Latin America where his agency works or is planning new ministries.

The geographical factor has been an important one in my own life. Over the last seven years in my doctoral studies, nearly half of all my units were directly tied to overseas trips, consultations, congresses, and other events I had to be at anyway. I was able to utilize every p. 277 ministry opportunity to advance my schooling goals, and at the same time my doctoral programme immeasurably enriched my life and ministry. For me, schooling and ministry have become the two rails of the same track, keeping me balanced, on target, and moving ahead.

The modelling factor

The modelling factor presents yet another argument why continuous education for the missionary is important. A missionary committed to lifelong learning makes a very strong statement to one's constituents, and especially to those in one's ministry that learning, ministry, and life are synonymous.

Harold holds dual citizenship in the USA and his South American homeland. He is academic dean at one of the major seminaries in Venezuela. Having completed his doctoral programme recently while working at the seminary, he served as a positive example to the students that even a missionary of 40 years experience still has things to learn. Years ago at another Bible institute in the same country, Harold's mother, at age 79, learned Greek on her own and began teaching Greek courses to her students.

Paul works with church leaders in Eastern Europe. At the same time he is completing his Ph.D. work there. Men in Iron Curtain countries know what a commitment he has made to train them, and when they see him also continuing to study and learn himself, it encourages them all the more to learn the Bible and give their lives for the sake of Jesus Christ.

On the other side of the continent, Cecil trains students in a formal Bible school in Belgium. He is a tremendous example to his students, for he also oversees the T.E.E. programme of his school, coordinates the summer missionaries of his mission working in the country, and has helped plant 2 churches. He is completing his doctoral work at a Belgian school and models to everyone that learning is for a lifetime and that education takes place both inside and outside the classroom.

Henry oversees the first city-wide theological education by extension programme in Spanish in the USA. With hundreds of students now in the programme throughout Greater Los Angeles at many different church sites, the potential for other cities like New York and Miami is enormous. But as Henry meets regularly with these lay leaders and pastors who have no formal Bible training, Henry continues himself to learn and grow. He is finishing

up his Ed.D. programme under Ted Ward and models for his students the impact that a commitment to lifelong learning can Have on others. p. 278

The doxological factor

The twelfth and final reason why continuous education for the missionary is important focuses on the doxological factor. Though last, this really is the single most important factor of all. Because all of life continues to change, the only way that anyone can excellently serve the Lord and others is by continuing to learn and grow. A commitment to excellence in life and ministry befits a God of excellence. A life lived fully to the glory of God reflects to others a life of inquiry, creativity, discipline, humility, and perspective. The final goal of all education and learning is the glory of God.

Duane Elmer comments on this final factor:

> It is possible to provide educational experiences for missionaries so that they can better serve the organization but without their becoming better people. Such outcomes only serve to undermine the image of God in man and tarnish His glory. The Christian organization must recognize that only as it promotes this life-long process of restoring wholeness to God's image bearers will it meet its ultimate objective of glorifying God.[62]

I reflect again on what has been said previously on schooling and education. Some of the greatest experiences of my life have been in formal school settings. Schools will continue to have a central place and role in all we do in the future. But we are forced to think beyond schooling if we have grasped the need for lifelong human growth and development. Learning is a lifelong commitment. Most of my truly life-changing and significant learning experiences, though, have not been in the classroom. 'Schooling will continue to be one means of learning, but the educator of adults sees it as only one part of a larger comprehensive plan.'[63]

CONCLUSION

By taking into account all these factors that so heavily bear upon this crucial issue of lifelong learning, our lives and ministries will be transformed as God works in us. By planning for growth on all levels—personal, cultural, organizational—missionaries will help correct errors of the past, will learn better, will more creatively interact with life situations, will be more flexible, relevant, and stimulating in their ministries, will have lives more fully integrated and balanced, will tend to have fewer and less serious problems and not stagnate in their P. 279 missionary ruts, and will be a blessing to everyone else and God too. Each missionary has the personal and corporate responsibility to work with God in restoring his image in his people all over the world.

> We proclaim Him, counselling and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ; to this end I labour, struggling with all the energy he so powerfully works in me. (*Colossians 1:28, 29, NIV*)

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Rev. Brewer is ministering at Grace Community Church, USA. p. 280

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[62] Elmer, *op. cit.*, 6.

[63] *Ibid.*