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## Evangelical Review of Theology

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publications worldwide for an international  
readership for the purpose of discerning the  
obedience of faith*

EDITOR: BRUCE J. NICHOLLS



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4. Drawing on all the expertise available, let us initiate a special joint international research project, to study in depth the more complex and difficult aspects of the renewalist agenda, where assertion of need has proven easier than actual implementation—such as the call for an emphasis in accreditation on spiritual formation. How do you write an effective standard for such a focus, and how do you undertake to measure its attainment?
5. As we all too well know, and perhaps too well represent, most people are given leadership roles in theological education not because of any particular training in the field of education, but because of some academic attainment in the field of theology. As a result most of us are not adequately equipped for this vocation in which we are called to bear responsibility. Let us therefore fashion a series of special seminars, designed for the top levels of international leadership in evangelical theological education, to bring such leadership effectively into appealing contact with the renewal agenda, with its rationale and with its practical implications. Let us design for ourselves and our fellow leaders a first-class learning experience of this sort, tapping the best expertise available, and then let us lead the way in humbly and cooperatively exposing ourselves to this experience.

Let us open ourselves and our newly emerging accreditation movements to renewal, so that we may in turn become effective mediums for an urgently needed renewal in evangelical theological education worldwide, for the sake of our Lord and the establishment and edification of his church.

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**Dr. Paul Bowers of Harare, Zimbabwe is a lecturer at the Theological College of Zimbabwe. He is a long-time missionary to Africa and works closely with the Accrediting Council for Theological Education in Africa (ACTEA). He is also a staff worker for ICAA. p. 248**

# The Future of Theological Education

Robert W. Ferris

The topic of this article lends itself to development in either of two ways. One could undertake an exercise in futuristics, spinning out various scenarios and their implication for theological education. Such an approach can be extremely helpful, and others have developed it thoroughly (Hoke: 1978). The alternative strategy would be to focus on theological education—its task, process, structures and controlling values—and derive from these a sense of direction for the period immediately before us.

Sometimes insight springs from unanticipated contexts. In a technical discussion of brain function, neuropsychologist Karl Pribram touches on processes related to linguistic and cultural understanding.

To man's view of himself the biologist's position has at least this much to offer. The mystery of man is biological and shared with other complex organizations which are never comprehended in their totality but only in [sic] piecemeal. Man's brain is so constructed that piece by piece he apprehends the whole through the operations of coding and recoding. Languages, verbal (linguistic) and nonverbal (cultural), are constituted of these

pieces. When, because of linguistic and cultural affluence, the means ends reversal occurs, these languages begin to live lives of their own. Thus complexity is compounded and the original organization can easily be lost sight of. Biological processes have, however, built-in renewal mechanisms. When the linguistic and cultural structures become too cumbersome or conflict with each other, they are often degraded, pruned back to their more essential roots. Clearer vision is then attained of the basic organization which gave rise to the process originally; historical comparison can be made between the primitive and the sophisticated version of the language or culture. (Cited in Padgham: 1983, p. 136f.)

I would submit that this is a helpful description of the current state of the field of theological education. Joe Bayly has quipped that the only similarity between modern training and Jesus' training of the twelve is that both take three years (Richards: 1975, p. 163). That is certainly an overstatement, but it is impossible to p. 249 deny that what Pribram terms 'the means ends reversal' does characterize much of Western theological education. In the name of equivalency and 'academic standards,' furthermore, those of us engaged in ministry training in non-Western societies have often emulated these complex and self-conflicting structures. The seminary's servanthood to the church is belied in our actions and our rhetoric. Professionalization of theological education has resulted in standards oriented primarily to schooling and technical proficiencies. Not only the content of theological education, but also its structuring, has developed a 'linguistic and cultural affluence' which permits accepted patterns 'to live lives of their own'. In compounded complexity, original organization is lost to view. A functional equivalent of the biological process of 'degrading' is much needed. I believe the instigation of Theological Education by Extension (TEE) in 1962 affords encouraging evidence that such a process is at work.

Nevertheless, I am concerned. In 1982 we observed the tenth anniversary of the introduction of TEE in the Philippines. On that occasion I reviewed the development of TEE in our country mission by mission and church by church (Ferris: 1982). The report provided little occasion for celebration. In the ensuing discussion I was asked whether our experience had, somehow, been different from that of TEE practitioners in other areas of the world. Feeling unprepared to speak for the world, I wrote to TEE leaders of international reputation in several countries. Some did not respond to my inquiry, but all those who did indicated that our experience in the Philippines was much more common than anyone had dared to admit. Wayne Weld specifically stated that many TEE programmes listed in his *World Directory of Theological Education by Extension* and its first supplement failed to respond to requests for current data when he was working on the second (1980) supplement. His conclusion is that most of those programmes no longer exist. Despite the enthusiastic reports which continue to emanate from some areas, in much of the world TEE has sputtered and burned out.

At the same time, TEE is enjoying unprecedented acceptance among residence school educators. Certainly the swelling commitment to renewal of ministry training among evangelicals, witnessed in our own 'Manifesto' (ICAA: 1984), helps to account for this acceptance. A second look at the circumstances of TEE's newfound acceptability, however, may lead to a more jaundiced appraisal. One might even conclude that, in some cases, TEE has become acceptable to residence educators because it has been effectively domesticated.

I would submit that the issues with which we wrestle are much larger than the significance of theological education by extension. Ten years from now, fifty years from now, TEE may or may not survive as an approach to ministry formation. My greater concern is for the 'degrading' process present in TEE. If that process is thwarted, it is the future significance of theological education itself which is in jeopardy. In the hope of

avoiding that risk, I would [p. 250](#) invite you to re-examine, with me, some of the foundational issues in theological education.

## THE TASK OF THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

Traditionally, religious educators have viewed the instructional functions of the church from two aspects. 'Christian education' usually refers to those teaching functions which are directed broadly to all church members. 'Theological education,' on the other hand, represents specific training aimed at preparing pastors and leaders for congregational ministry. Sometimes the distinction has been maintained for the wrong reasons. When participation in ministry has been contingent upon attainments in theological education, the expansion of the church has been stifled and distinction between clergy and laity has been heightened. There is no biblical justification for separation of 'theological education' from 'Christian education' if the purpose is to enhance a clerical elite.

Another reason for distinguishing between 'Christian education' and 'theological education,' however, is rooted in the nature of the church. The church is represented in the New Testament as a ministering community. Those who lead this community are primarily responsible for nurturing persons under their care. Nurturing includes the teaching functions identified above as 'Christian education'. The task of 'theological education,' on the other hand, is to nurture these gifted leaders who, in turn, nurture the church.

A careful reading of [Ephesians 4:11-16](#) supports this understanding. The fact that God has gifted saints for ministry does not preclude their need to be 'equipped' to exercise those gifts. By the same logic, the fact that God has gifted some to be 'equippers' does not automatically ensure their readiness for an equipping ministry. Since giftedness is both recognized and confirmed in a context of ministry, those who are encouraging, enabling and promoting the participation of others in ministry are appropriate trainees in 'theological education'.

This rationale for theological education is familiar ground for all of us, yet experience indicates that danger lurks on both sides of our path. Some TEE programmes have failed in their mission specifically because they did not distinguish their task from that of 'Christian education'. Perhaps, like me, you know of TEE programmes which confused large enrolments with success. When nearly the whole church was enrolled in TEE, someone belatedly recognized that the few missing individuals were the leaders the programme had intended to train. Failure to define programme focus and establish appropriate admission criteria has led to the failure of many TEE programmes. If we and our programmes wander in that direction, we can expect the same fate.

The danger which lurks on the other side of the path is, if anything, even more subtle. The quest for excellence in education is a value which is rarely challenged today. The underlying concern for honouring God with our best is rooted in the biblical concept for stewardship. I like to focus on stewardship since it [p. 251](#) reminds me that 'excellence' is not an objective quality which some programmes possess and others lack. Excellence pertains to persons, not programmes. It describes the way members of a learning community steward the relationships and resources at their disposal.

On the other hand, a wrong view of excellence, combined with failure to recognize the real task of theological education, has led to many travesties in the name of ministry training. In our desire to develop programmes which honour God, all of us have at times adopted admission criteria which gave more consideration to schooling attainments than to demonstrated gifts for ministry. Rather than nurturing those who nurture the church, we have focused our energies on those who correspond most closely to our own academic

and theological interests. In the process, we have trained the wrong people. Those who are gifted for ministry have struggled on without training, and the church has suffered. Without anyone's even realizing it, programmes which appear to be thriving models of excellence in theological education are, in fact, models of failure. They have failed in their task and they have failed the church. Only by careful and constant attention to our task can any of us avoid the popular and professional allurements which beckon from the side of our path.

As we plan theological education programmes for our churches today and in the future, let us ever bear in mind what the task before us really is. Those programmes which train functioning church leaders require no other endorsement or justification. Those which ignore or exclude functioning church leaders must be evaluated in terms of the total needs and resources of the national church. Validation of such programmes is most difficult, perhaps impossible, if the more fundamental task of theological education is inadequately served. Our first responsibility is to identify and nurture those who nurture the church. Serious commitment to this task may challenge our assumptions and will strain our creativity. Creativity for the sake of creativity is barren, but creativity bent on more faithful fulfilment of our task is urgently needed. TEE was born in a burst of that kind of creativity. Assessment of present and proposed programmes of theological education in light of this task can guard against failure. It can also assure impetus for developing even more effective approaches to ministry formation.

## **THE PROCESS OF THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION**

The processes of education inevitably flow out of perceptions about its purpose and goal. The New Testament teaches not only that the purpose of theological education is to nurture those who nurture the church, but also that its goal must be to present every church leader 'perfect' (i.e. 'mature') in Christ'. Maturity, or Christ-likeness, must be defined across several dimensions. Holiness, justice and love loom large among those dimensions, and therefore theological education is concerned with moral and spiritual formation. The capacity to apprehend, embody, communicate and **P. 252** defend God's revelation—also essential to Christian maturity—is appropriately reflected in the priority given to biblical and theological studies in our ministry training programmes.

Often it is not the content of our teaching which is problematic, but the processes we employ as we work toward these ends. Despite McLuhan's reminder that 'the medium is the message,' we have too often focused only on the content of training. While teaching truth with our lips, we frustrate our larger goals by the way we relate to our students.

One aspect of maturity is the capacity to acquire information and resources and to initiate a strategy of action. In other words, the mature person is able to learn and to act. Unfortunately, traditional schooling processes teach us to be taught, but they do not teach us to learn. Residence and extension programmes alike typically assign initiative to a teacher for planning, directing and evaluating learning. Whenever this occurs, our programmes risk cultivating dependency rather than the capacity for self-directed learning.

Research on adult education conducted over the past forty years has confirmed that procedures effective in teaching children are often unsuited to training adults. To facilitate discussion, assumptions and procedures most appropriate to adult education have been designated 'andragogy' (from the Greek *anēr*, meaning 'man, not boy'), to distinguish them from those of 'pedagogy' (from the Greek *pais*, *paidion*, meaning 'child'). Knowles has presented a comparison of andragogy and pedagogy in the chart which follows.

Knowles warns that pedagogy and andragogy should be seen ‘not as dichotomous but rather as two ends of a spectrum, with a realistic assumption in a given situation falling in between the two ends’

Figure 1.

| <b>A Comparison of Assumptions of Teacher-Directed<br/>(Pedagogical) Learning and Self-Directed (Andragogical)<br/>Learning<br/>(Knowles: 1975, p. 60)</b> |                                  |                                       |                              |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------------|
|                                                                                                                                                            | <i>Teacher-directed Learning</i> | <i>Self-directed Learning</i>         |                              |
| <i>Concept of the learner</i>                                                                                                                              | Dependent personality            | Increasingly                          | self-directed organism       |
| <i>Role of learner's experience</i>                                                                                                                        | To be built on more than used    |                                       | A rich resource for learning |
| <i>Readiness to learn</i>                                                                                                                                  | Varies with levels of maturation | Develops from life tasks and problems |                              |
| <i>Orientation to learning</i>                                                                                                                             | Subject-centered                 | Task- or problem-centered             |                              |
| <i>Motivation</i>                                                                                                                                          | External rewards and punishments | Internal incentives, curiosity        |                              |

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(Knowles: 1980, p. 43). The purpose is not to force learners into prefabricated boxes, but to acknowledge that they often are more ready to participate in the direction of their own learning than teachers allow. Furthermore, Knowles' proposal for andragogical education serves as an appropriate reminder of our obligation to facilitate growth from teacher-directed to self-directed learning—from dependence to maturity.

Altered assumptions about learners call for corresponding alterations in training strategies. Adopting a new view of our task and our learners is not sufficient; we must also enlarge our educational repertoire. Fortunately, significant help is available.

### Paulo Freire

From Freire we can learn the power and importance of ‘problem posing’ as a method of training for life. Freire is a Brazilian, a writer heavily influenced by Marxism, and an educator of substantial significance. Foundational to the development of Freire's educational method is recognition that one person may oppress but cannot liberate another. Liberation, development, and self-direction are realizable only through the participation of ‘the oppressed’.

The starting point for organizing the program content of education or political action must be the present, existential, concrete situation, reflecting the aspirations of the people. Utilizing certain basic contradictions, we must pose this existential, concrete, present situation to the people as a problem which challenges them and requires a response—not just at the intellectual level, but at the level of action. (Freire: 1970, p. 85).

It is the task of the 'dialogical teacher' to 're-present' the sources of oppression to the people with whose help they were identified—and 're-present' them not as a lecture, but as a problem (Freire: 1970, p. 101). To do this requires that the problem first be 'codified', that is, expressed in a visual or verbal depiction which links the concrete situation and the underlying problem. As they discuss the codified problem, people articulate their perceptions and, in the process, come to understand their situation, themselves, and their perceptions. This recognition, which necessarily includes commitment to action, is designated by Freire as 'conscientisation'.

To initiate dialogue with church leaders so as to enter into their perceptions of reality, to 'codify' that reality, and to struggle patiently with church leaders until they come to awareness of their perceptions and 'name the world'—these are unfamiliar and highly demanding procedures. We may recognize the importance of reflection, but reflection in process calls for perceptiveness and discipline. Yet the theological educator who learns about problem-posing from Freire can contribute much to the development and self-directedness of pastors and their churches.

### **Jean Piaget**

From Piaget we can learn the formative significance of crisis and critical cases for growth and development. Until his recent death Piaget lived in his native Switzerland. Trained in **p. 254** biology and psychology, he preferred to describe himself as a 'genetic epistemologist'. As that term implies, his professional interests focused on the development of intellectual structures and knowledge.

Piaget's observation and research led him to recognize important parallels between the development of biological life and human intelligence (Piaget: 1971). Just as living organisms seek homeostasis, so intellectual development gives evidence of a need for balance among cognitive structures. Piaget terms this mechanism 'equilibration' (Piaget: 1977). Much of Piaget's research was related to observing the development of intellectual structures from earliest childhood through adolescence. He was able to discriminate distinct stages in development by analyzing children's descriptions of critical cases. Piaget's theory of intelligence suggests that major factors in cognitive development include biological maturity, experience, social interaction, and equilibration. Of these four, physical development and equilibration are internal functions inaccessible to manipulation. While experience, both general and social, may be ordered, Piaget cautions that experience alone does not ensure cognitive development. Actions aimed at facilitating development need to precipitate disequilibrium (which Piaget called 'disequilibration') among the learner's current cognitive structures. Since the organism cannot tolerate this condition of disequilibration, it begins to seek a new state of equilibrium which can accommodate the new experience. This process is designated 'reequilibration' (Piaget: 1980).

The challenge which Piaget presents to us as theological educators is clear. It is not adequate for us to classify church leaders according to schooling attainment without attention to their cognitive or moral processes. The most effective strategies for developing these processes, furthermore, will include experiences, either immediate or presented as critical cases, designed to challenge existing understandings.

Again, it is easy for us to shun these processes as unfamiliar and threatening. I once had a student tell me, 'Sir, it's hard to think.' To that I would add: it is hard to understand how students think. It is hard to recognize the critical points at which their mental and moral categories deviate significantly from normative biblical patterns. It is hard to isolate segments of experience within the life of the church or the church leader which brings those conflicts into sharp relief. It is even hard sometimes to recall or generate

critical cases which challenge the inadequate processes and categories we encounter. Yet these skills are important within the training repertoire of those called to nurture church leaders. By cultivating these disciplines we can facilitate development toward maturity and self-directedness.

### **Robert Carkhuff and Arthur Combs**

From Carkhuff and Combs we can learn the value of trainer modelling and experiential learning. Carkhuff is an American psychotherapist and educator who has published extensively throughout most of the past-two decades. Professionally, he has [p. 255](#) given himself to understanding those factors which most directly contribute to training for effectiveness in counselling. Combs is an American psychologist and educator whose life has been invested in improving teacher education. Although Carkhuff and Combs have pursued their research independently, their findings corroborate and supplement each other. Counselling and teaching both fall within the genre of 'helping professions', and the implications of research conducted by Carkhuff and Combs extend far beyond their own specific disciplines.

Carkhuff discovered that trainee effectiveness in counselling correlates with level of trainer functioning (Carkhuff: 1969, p. 238). Trainers who were, themselves, practising therapists stimulated maximum development toward effectiveness among trainees. Trainees exhibited lower levels of effectiveness as counsellors, on the other hand, when their trainers were absorbed in research and scholarly pursuits. Combs supports this finding with the observation that the procedures modelled by teacher educators are as important as the content they teach, since trainees learn not only subject matter, but how to teach it (Combs, Blumen, Newman & Wass: 1974, p. 58).

A second aspect found to correlate significantly with trainee development is the role of experience in training. Traditional counsellor training programmes tend to be either exclusively didactic and lecture-oriented or exclusively experiential. Carkhuff's research indicates that the most effective programmes of counsellor training integrate didactic, experiential and modelling modes of learning (Carkhuff: 1969, p. 151). Carkhuff found that this can best be accomplished in counsellor education through the use of role-play (Carkhuff: 1969, p. 215). Teacher education traditionally provided 'practice teaching' near the end of the training programme, to allow students to gain experiences, applying skills learned at the university. Combs recognizes classroom encounters with school children as the indispensable experiential base for effective teacher education. Accordingly, he advocates a training model which includes field experience throughout the period of training (Combs: 1978, p. 560).

In the light of research on training for helping professions, we can understand why many students find it easier to visualize themselves as theological educators than as pastors and church leaders. We need to model the pastoral role before our students. One of the greatest strengths of TEE must be seen as its capacity to reach church leaders in the context of continuing church ministry. Yet how have we capitalized on the experiential resources of our learners? Where is that integration of didactic, experiential and modelling modes of learning which contributes most to effectiveness in 'helping professions' (i.e. ministry)? Some of us have much to learn about the instructional use of supervised field experience, role-play, simulated professional encounters, and the associated skills required for effectively debriefing learner experiences. Carkhuff and Combs challenge us to acquire these skills for the sake of our students. [p. 256](#)

### **Malcolm Knowles**

Having begun this section with Knowles, we now return to him. Knowles occupies a position at the forefront of American studies in adult education. From him we can learn the strategic use of 'the learning contract'. Although Knowles has distilled several procedural principles from the andragogical assumptions listed above, there is one training method he has found especially suited for use with adults. He recommends it enthusiastically:

Finally, I would like to share with you a discovery that has solved more of the problems that have plagued me as a facilitator of learning over the years than all the other methods and techniques put together. It is a truly magical way to help learners structure their own learning—the *learning contract*. (Knowles: 1980, p. 243.)

The use of a learning contract recognizes that it is appropriate and important for adults to assume responsibility for their own learning. The learning contract provides for the differences in previous experience and learning styles which are so significant in adult education. And it provides a guided opportunity for adult learners to explore learning resources, design a learning programme, and define criteria for evaluating competency and achievement.

The simplicity of Knowles's approach to the learning contract masks its genius. Learners are provided with a contract form consisting of five vertical columns. From left to right, the columns are headed 'Learning Objectives,' 'Learning Resources and Strategies,' 'Target Date for Completion,' 'Evidence of Accomplishment of Objectives,' and 'Criteria and Means for Validating Evidence' (Knowles: 1980, p. 381). Minimal objectives for the learning experience are either stated by the instructor or (better) negotiated with all participants as a group. Individual learners desiring higher than minimal achievement then have the freedom to propose additional objectives which build on their unique experience and address their specific interests and needs. As the term 'contract' implies, learner proposals must be either approved by or negotiated with the instructor.

Knowles warns that learners may require special support and encouragement from their instructors and peers when first developing a learning contract.

Many students find that the idea of constructing learning contracts for the first time is so strange that they become overanxious. They have been so conditioned to having teachers tell them what they are to learn and how they are to learn it that they become confused and worried when confronted with the responsibility of thinking through what they want to learn and how they will go about learning it. (Knowles: 1975, p. 129.)

Knowles might well have added that instructors employing learning contracts for the first time also tend to become anxious. We are so accustomed to being in control of the learning which takes place in our classrooms, it is frightening to surrender significant measures of that control to inexperienced students. Nevertheless, the issues are large enough to provide the motivation we need. We are committed to training for maturity and self-directedness, [p. 257](#) rather than dependency. We hope our students will assume responsibility for their own learning sooner or later—better that they do so in an environment of encouragement and support. Better yet that we act as facilitators in this important process. The learning contract can become an important means toward realizing that objective.

My purpose in focusing upon Freire, Piaget, Carkhuff, Combs and Knowles in the paragraphs above has been to illustrate that help exists for any who wish to enlarge their educational repertoire. I certainly have not exhausted the resources available. Nor is it necessary to look for others. Although we can learn much from these and other educators about procedures which cultivate maturity and self-directedness, we must also be willing

to interact creatively with our own churches and their leaders to develop methods appropriate to our contexts.

As I survey the developments of TEE over the past twenty years, one of my greatest concerns is the extent to which we have replaced one rigid and stylized training approach with another. Most often, TEE has been defined methodologically. In April 1976 Wayne Weld asked the readers of his monthly newsletter, *Extension*, 'What do you consider to be the essence of TEE?' Responses printed in the May issue came from a virtual 'Who's Who' of the international TEE community. Although a few respondents took a broader perspective, most identified the convergence of three factors as critical to TEE: first, self-study materials; second, practical work in the student's own congregation; and third, regular (usually weekly) encounters with tutors or 'centre leaders.'

In my work in the Philippines I have referred to this as 'the Guatemala model' of TEE. I applaud the effectiveness this model has demonstrated in meeting the training needs of the Guatemalan church (Mulholland and de Jacobs: 1983). Whenever this model has been transplanted to other soils and has proved productive, I have rejoiced. But in the Philippines I have argued long and hard that we must see 'the Guatemala model' as only one model of TEE.

I would propose that the essence of TEE lies not in a methodology, but in *the distinctive context in which ministry formation is undertaken*. TEE is church-based, versus campusbased, training for ministry. Any method may be employed which is appropriate to our leaders-in-training and to our task of equipping them for ministry in the context of their congregations. As I consider the future of TEE, I am challenged to reexamine the methods I employ and to enlarge my training repertoire. I want my educational processes, as well as my lesson content, to contribute to fulfilling my task and realizing my training goal.

## THE STRUCTURE OF THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

TEE educators have often had much to say regarding the importance of the 'structure' or design of training programmes. I should warn you, however, that I have no intention of reopening the debate about the **P. 258** relative advantages of residence and extension education. I believe the issues facing us are larger than the limited scope of that discussion. The dichotomizing nature of that debate has the effect of narrowing, rather than expanding, our view of potential alternatives. I am not concerned about the structures we choose, so much as the way we go about choosing.

Theological educators commonly acknowledge that the seminary exists to serve the church. It is uncommon, however, to explore the meaning and implications of that acknowledgement. Service and servanthood are biblical themes which directly challenge many of our assumptions and traditions. Jesus identified himself as a servant and clearly designated servanthood as the normative pattern for leadership in his church. There is something interesting about servant leadership—it can be taught only by example. That is why it is imperative that we, as theological educators, set aside the elitist postures so common in academia, and model servanthood in our relationship with our students. At an institutional level, that is also why it is both appropriate and necessary for our theological education programmes truly to serve the church.

There are several dimensions of the biblical concept of servanthood which would merit consideration, but at least one which is essential. This is the fact that servants never establish the agenda for those they serve; they do not exercise control. Control is power and, as such, is inimical to a commitment to servanthood.

Most of us are not used to thinking in these categories. As theological educators, we position ourselves over against the church and seek to develop ministry training programmes which will meet the needs of the church. We accept this role as a calling from God, and we seek to fulfill our responsibilities in ways that honour God and build up his church. The more we are inclined to take this view of our ministry, furthermore, the more likely we are to want to control the design and operation of these programmes. After all, we reason, God has called us to this ministry. He has gifted us as teachers and provided us the education needed to make the best training decisions. To surrender control of ministry training to others who are less qualified would be irresponsible.

There is at least one thing wrong with this kind of reasoning. By insisting on control of ministry training, we belie our commitment to servanthood. However benevolent our motives, however carefully we assess the needs and expectations of the church, however attentive we may be to the issues of context and community, our ministry training programmes will always be patronizing and oppressive. In other words, they will always belong to us. Because they belong to us, they serve us. As our Lord pointed out, 'No man can serve two masters.' The church may benefit from our ministry training programmes (few evils are unmitigated), but our programmes serve us; they do not serve the church.

For ministry training to serve the church, it must belong to the church. It must be controlled by the church. This suggestion frightens us, because [p. 259](#) we assume that control by the church means we will no longer have a voice in shaping theological education structures. But this reflects an inadequate view of the nature of the church and the nature of educational planning. We do not stand over against the church, but within it. And educational planning is best seen not as a technical exercise, but as an artistic and political process (Huebner: 1975).

If we permit the church to control the design and operation of ministry training, we can take our place within the church and participate in that process. As we articulate our values and observations, we must resist any tendency to assume a posture of power, intimidating others with our erudition and academic degrees, or manipulating others into concurrence with our precommitments. We speak, instead, as members of the body of Christ. We attribute value to the expressions of other members of the body, and listen carefully to them before we speak. By laying aside the prerogatives of power and taking the place of a servant, we emulate our Lord and obey his Word. Not only do we demonstrate servanthood, we also make it possible for ministry training structures to be owned by, and to serve, the church.

In addition to our theological commitment to servanthood, there are at least two other considerations which commend this approach to developing training structures. One is a philosophical recognition of *the critical role of context in shaping training programmes*. A report on the future of education prepared for the Club of Rome warns against undervaluing the importance of context.

There is a myth to be dispelled: the idea that real knowledge and learning may be attained only when they are 'purified' of their contexts.

We submit that many of the difficulties of learning today stem from the neglect of contexts. Statements, norms, values, cultural artifacts, technology and information are circulated or transferred from one place to another, from one group to another, and from one individual to another, with the pretension that they are comprehensible without regard for the contexts in which they were created or received. (Botkin, Elmandjra and Malitza: 1979, p. 23.)

Failure to recognize the critical nature of context contributes to and supports an informational and educational model which presents society as consisting of two parts—those who produce new discoveries, theories, beliefs and solutions on the one hand, and

those who consume this knowledge on the other. Those who generate knowledge, furthermore, live and work in centres of concentrated competence. The report continues:

The unavoidable consequence of this view of societal learning is elitism, technocracy, and paternalism. What is omitted is the fact that meaning and values—decisive for learning—are products of society at large, not of specialized centers. Despite all their technical advantages, the bodies of knowledge, technologies, know-how, and theories produced by such centers contain inherent shortcoming—they are too often divorced from the social context. (Botkin, Elmandjra and Malitza: 1979, p. 81.)

It is imperative that we develop [p. 260](#) ministry training structures *with* (rather than *for*) the church, therefore, because it is only through the participation of the church that those structures are endowed with meaning and value.

Another reason that we must develop ministry training structures with the church pertains to *ownership*. We noted above that ownership of any programme belongs to those who create and control it. That ministry training should be owned by the church is of utmost importance to the church itself, to theological educators, and to trainees. It is important to the *church*, because only by developing and directing its own programmes of training for ministry can the church ensure the appropriateness of ministry formation. It is important to use as *theological educators*, because only as we observe the church assuming ownership of its ministry training structures can we be sure we are not cultivating or contributing to dependency within the church. And it is important to *leaders-in-training*, because only as they see the church assuming ownership and control of training can they be assured that their ministry will be suited to and accepted by the church.

As we give ourselves to participation in the church's task of developing structures of training for ministry, we must beware of three kinds of assumptions. First, we must beware of *colonial assumptions*. Whenever we are inclined to believe Western solutions are inherently better than non-Western ones, we exhibit a colonial mentality. It is worth noting, furthermore, that one need not be a white-skinned Westerner to succumb to colonial thinking. Some of the more bizarre manifestations of colonial thinking I have observed have been exhibited by non-Westerners who had studied abroad. My purpose is not to point a finger (we are all guilty of colonial assumptions at times), but rather to warn that colonial assumptions destroy the bases of mutual respect and trust which are essential to develop ministry training with the church.

Second, we must beware of *institutional assumptions*. By rights, this could be considered a subset of the colonial mentality mentioned above. Western societies are totally enamoured of institutional solutions. The drive toward institutionalization of every creative advance, and institutionalized responses to every problem, is so powerful, however, that assumptions merit special attention. Let me clarify my point of concern: I do not mean to imply that institutions are necessarily a bad thing per se. On the other hand, I reject the suggestion that institutional solutions are necessarily good. As a matter of fact, I know that many creative and useful responses to particular problems have been killed by institutionalizing them. When we develop ministry training with the church, we do well to allow form to follow function without seeking institutional expressions. We can even afford actively to resist institutionalizing tendencies, knowing that absence of such resistance will leave us far beyond the golden mean.

Third, we must beware of assuming *that our fundamental needs are financial*. This is another fallacy of which we are all guilty. Those of us from the West tend to throw money [p. 261](#) at our problems, while our non-Western colleagues too often excuse inaction by pleading a lack of funds.

A number of years ago, when the Wesleyan Church opened its mission in the Philippines, it underwrote salaries of evangelists and pastors and supplied funding for construction of a Bible school. Missionaries soon became convinced that this infusion of dollars was doing irreparable damage to the church, so they changed their policy to one of completely indigenous support. Initially, some who had benefited from the mission's largesse expressed resentment and anger. The national leadership of the church possessed the maturity, however, to recognize that the move was beneficial to the church. In the years that have followed, the Wesleyan Church in the Philippines has not only paid its own way, it has also purchased from the mission those buildings which were constructed with mission funds. Today there are only two Wesleyan Bible colleges in the Philippines—one in Rosales, Pangasinan, and the other in Kabakan, North Cotabato. These schools do not have 30,000 volumes in their libraries. There are other schools in the Philippines which are better painted and more beautifully landscaped. Wesleyans in the Philippines are predominantly rural people in a nation with a *per capita* income of less than \$500 per year. But no other church could more fully own its ministry training structures—not only the land and the buildings, but the training programmes themselves. Their missionaries widely recognize that money cannot build the church, and the church refuses to heed those who argue that they cannot grow or provide training for ministry without Western money.

Any of these assumptions—colonial, institutional, or financial—will distort, undermine, and ultimately destroy the potential for developing ministry training structures within the church. Yet the only alternatives to participative development *with* the church are, first, to develop theological education structures *for* the church, or second, to abandon the task of training for ministry. Both alternatives are theologically, philosophically, and educationally untenable. As we take our place within the church, our training and incumbent roles impose upon us unique responsibility for the success of this undertaking. We can best discharge that responsibility by assuming the position of servants. By modelling servanthood in our own relationships, we open up the potential for developing ministry training structures which truly serve the church.

## THE CONTROLLING VALUES OF THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

I should not wish the heading of this section to be taken to be suggesting that the concerns discussed above are not controlling values. To nurture those who nurture the church is a task to which I am deeply committed. To relate to church leaders in ways that promote maturity and facilitate self-directed growth and ministry is my constant objective. To develop ministry training structures with the church—structures which belong to both and also serve the church—is my most earnest prayer. I **P. 262** believe all evangelical ministry training programmes should be shaped by these values.

Beyond these, however, there are three other values I would nominate for promotion and celebration in all our theological education programmes. First, *ministry training must ever be rooted in and growing out of ministry experience*. This is not simply because of the pragmatic concerns of trainee selection or an andragogical emphasis on experiential learning. The underlying issues are the relationship of the creative and redemptive orders, and the biblical view of truth.

Our educational traditions have been heavily influenced by the ancient Greeks. As their philosophers struggled with the problems of pain and brutality, some of them concluded that temporal and material existence was essentially evil. Good, on the other hand, was associated with the realm of the spirit and of ideas. This type of thinking about reality led the Greeks to assign high value to intellectual and philosophical activities, while

the necessary tasks of life were consigned to those unqualified for nobler endeavours. This is most graphically seen in Plato's *Republic*, where the philosopher is king and the lowest orders of society are occupied by slaves and artisans.

The biblical view is strikingly different. The creative order is marred by the effects of the fall, but it is not essentially evil. Because the God of the Bible is the God of both creation and redemption, the Hebrews made no qualitative distinction between manual and intellectual, physical and spiritual pursuits. Physical labour is an act of obedience to the God who commanded us to tend the earth. To this day every Jewish rabbi learns a trade.

The educational implications of these contrasting views of truth and reality are striking. The Greek view leads toward isolation of the academy from the world, whereas the biblical view recognizes the world as our classroom. The Greek view tends to ignore experience in its preoccupation with ideas, whereas the Scriptures honour righteousness and justice in human relations, and call it wisdom. Educational systems rooted in the Greek view are characterized by *a drive to know*; those grounded in the Bible seek not only to know, but also *to do* and *to be*.

Christian educators are committed to representing a biblical view of being and truth in our ministry training programmes. All of us decry the 'ivory tower mentality,' characteristic of much of academia, toward which we so naturally gravitate. I would submit that the surest way to resist that mentality and to maintain our commitment to truth is to tie our training programmes—and our teaching—closely to ministry experience. A keen discipline can be developed through interfacing *reflection* and *experience*. Biblical and critical reflection corrects and informs experience; life and ministry experience corrects and informs reflection. Through this dialectic we can experience growth in knowledge and understanding, in wise and just living, in ministry effectiveness, and in conformity to the image of Christ.

I believe one of the great contributions of TEE to the field of theological education is its capacity to relate [p. 263](#) significantly training and ministry. Too few of our campus-based programmes have done this adequately. That is why we must affirm this value again. Ministry training must ever be rooted in and growing out of ministry experience. In our thinking for the future, we cannot afford again to compromise this principle.

A second value I want to affirm relates to style of leadership. *Ministry training must always be training for servanthood*. I have touched on the 'servant' theme above and will not belabour it here. The plain fact is, however, that our ministry training programmes are often more adept at preparing leaders for elitist roles than that of a servant. Our Lord must be grieved.

Sometimes specific actions are critical to being a servant; but more often it is attitudes embodied in one's view of oneself and others—that distinguish servants from tyrants. There is one thing that is certain about attitude formation: Positive attitudes are 'easier caught than taught.' That is why our relationships with students must model servanthood.

TEE has also helped us bring into focus the issue of servanthood. It is extremely difficult (although not impossible) to model servant attitudes and relationships in an institutional academic context. The formal relationships of classroom and campus, the limited life and ministry contact between faculty and students, and the preoccupation with courses and degrees, all cultivate and reinforce elitist values. TEE has provided opportunity to demonstrate servanthood by avoiding these patterns. Unfortunately, we have not always chosen to do so. That fact justifies raising the issue again. Being servants, and training others for servanthood, must constitute a controlling value for theological education in the future.

The third value I would lift up pertains to the search for alternative training models. I believe *the legitimacy and necessity of that search must always be affirmed*. The concerns

undergirding this commitment are closely akin to those reflected in the Reformation watchword, *semper reformanda*.

Several theological themes converge to illustrate and validate this point. On the one hand, we live as children of the Kingdom in a world marred by sin. As men and women created in God's image, it is our duty to work toward the progressive implementation of Kingdom values in this age. Until the Lord returns and establishes his reign, that task will not be finished. Because our educational structures are also marred, we must incessantly search for training models which more effectively reflect and cultivate Kingdom values.

Not only upon this world but also upon our persons lies the mark of sin. Through the redemptive power of the Word and the Spirit we experience progressive sanctification in this age, and yet the noetic and relational effects of sin persist. Because they persist, we must constantly resubmit our understandings and our relationships to the corrective scrutiny of the Word. This necessarily includes the theoretical and relational dimensions of our ministry training programmes. Until redemption is complete, we cannot p. 264 be satisfied with intermediate structures.

Even eschatology supports the search for alternative training models. If eschatology provides a teleological view of history (and it does), then it also establishes an agenda for the present age. Until that agenda is complete and the eschatological vision is realized, we cannot rest.

It is interesting to speculate whether growth and development will cease in the age to come or will extend into eternity. Is perfection necessarily a static state? My view of God is different from that of Aristotle and Thomas; I certainly do not believe God is static. If this is true, then our search for alternative training models, like our commitment to growth and development in every area of life, reflects something of God's nature. It honours God and brings him pleasure. To abandon that search is to abandon our calling to be like him.

TEE was born of a desire to find a better way to train church leaders. The forms of TEE which exist today reflect the commitment of some to seek alternative training models. The church has benefited greatly, but that search is not over. By God's grace we must commit ourselves to resubmit our training programmes to the scrutiny of the Word, to reflect and promote more adequately Kingdom values, to advance the teleological agenda we have received, and to honour God and bring him pleasure.

In focusing upon the three values discussed in this section, I have argued that nothing less than these values should characterize our training for ministry. Ministry training should be rooted in and growing out of ministry experience. Ministry training should be training for servanthood. And we should continue to search for alternative training models. Commitment to the Bible and the God of the Bible renders these statements issues of obedience. The short history of TEE has demonstrated both the importance of these values and the necessity of affirming them again.

## **MINISTRY TRAINING, CHANGE, AND THE FUTURE**

At the outset of this essay we proposed to focus on theological education—its task, process, structures, and controlling values—and derive from these a sense of direction for the period immediately before us. As I survey the issues discussed, I recognize that TEE has contributed much toward the 'degrading' process (mentioned above) which is so much needed in theological education. Yet the things we have done well still require doing, and others which are also important are still lacking.

Our view of the future is inextricably bound up with our view of change. And so futuristics has much in common with education, since education is planned change. In an

article of immense importance, William Doll challenges us to reexamine educational practice in light of recent recognitions about the nature of reality and change. Doll writes:

I believe it is possible to organize the history of western thought into three broad epochs, each with its own view of change. These would be: (1) the classical view, represented by the p. 265 ancient Greeks, with its perspective of change as cyclical; (2) the scientific, represented by Newton and Darwin, with its perspective of change as determinate and progressive; and (3) the modernist view, represented by quantum physics, with its view of change as indeterminate, systemic, and interrelational. (Doll: 1983, p. 8.)

Under the classical view change occurs within a closed system, always limited by preexisting boundaries. Doll illustrates this from both Aristotle and Plato. In the former it occurs in the relationship between actualities and potentialities, in the latter, in his 'myth of the metals'. In his *Republic*, Plato asserts that each individual is born to a particular level—bronze, silver or gold. Education's task is to help each individual actualize the potential of his level. Justice or harmony exists when each individual is doing well that for which he is best fitted or naturally preordained.

Newton introduced a radically different view of change when he presented the universe as a collection of atoms, accounting for all that is observed, and the movement of which can be described mathematically. It is easy to see the logical step from Newton to Laplace, who held that the course of the future could be known if the state of the universe at any one moment could be determined. The order which Newton described in the physical realm, Darwin saw in the biological. And then Spencer added to Darwin's notion of 'descent with modification' the sense of progress.

Newton's model of the universe, subject as it was to exact mathematical description, gave rise to a scientific method which equates quantification with understanding. Within the field of education, this is known as behaviourism. Through quantified observations, the behaviourist expects to control and assure learning. B. F. Skinner provides the most extreme expression of this 'scientific' view in this development and defence of programmed instruction.

Darwinian influences can also be seen in some theories of education in the mystical value assigned to competition. Since the processes of natural selection—'the survival of the fittest'—have yielded progress and higher-order development in the biological sphere, they are incorporated into our learning programmes as well. Individual competition is viewed as a valid, if not prime, vehicle for bringing about growth, development and learning.

The modernist view of change has received little attention, but holds far-reaching implications. Because most people have so far continued to live in a world of Newtonian physics, Einstein's theory of relativity and Heisenberg's principle of indeterminacy are little understood. The world of advanced physics has been shaken by the recognition that absolute understanding of the material world is beyond our grasp. The observations we make are influenced as much by our perceptual vantage point as by the phenomena which exist. Beyond that, the advanced physicist has surrendered the particulate and atomistic universe of Newton for a systemic view of existence which acknowledges the significance of interrelationships.

For more than a decade a growing p. 266 number of educators has voiced dissatisfaction with the direction and assumptions of programmes based on a 'scientific' view of change (cf. Kliebard: 1970). What makes Doll's article so significant is the rationale it affords for more creative approaches to learning and training. The role of perception in understanding substantiates Piaget's contention that learning takes place through the transformation of cognitive structures. Training focused on mastery of facts or skills may have significance in particular cases, but is less than truly developmental.

Furthermore, programmes for human development will incorporate a systemic view of life and the universe which is interactive and interrelational. These programmes will not be characterized so much by prescribed curricula as by a *curricularizing approach* to human development—an approach which creatively transforms human experience into opportunities for growth.

An interesting parallel can be drawn between Doll's three concepts of change and historic views of God's relationship to creation. The cyclical view of change corresponds to mythical theologies which include gods and men in their own prescribed places within the created order. The 'scientific' view of change reflects a deistic, 'clockmaker' god who set creation in motion but is uninvolved in its operation today. But it is the modern view of change, with its systemic and interrelational perspectives, which can best be identified with the personal, active, immanent yet transcendent God of the Bible.

As we look to the future, we face the challenge of developing approaches to ministry training which correspond to our understanding of God, of the nature of the church, and of human development. If we rest on the patterns of the past, we have failed to fulfill our God-given mandate. I believe that through clarification of our task, of appropriate structures and processes for training, and of our controlling values we can gain invaluable—indeed, indispensable—guidance for the path ahead. We need creatively to seek more effective ways of equipping mature servant-leaders in the church. May God help us be faithful to this calling.

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**Dr. Robert Ferris, of Columbia, SC, U.S.A. formerly a missionary educator in the Philippines, is a professor at Columbia Graduate School of Theology. He has written extensively on various approaches to theological education. p. 268**

# Accreditation and Excellence

Emilio A. Núñez, C.

## INTRODUCTION

This paper is practical rather than theoretical. It is to a large extent the product of personal observation and experience in the field of theological education in Latin America for the last forty-three years. It is also an expression of hope for better times to come in the ministry of training servant-leaders in close fellowship and cooperation with the church and for the church in Latin America, to the glory of God.

We are not called by the Lord to mediocrity in our lives and ministry, but to strive for excellence. The New Testament is clear in regard to the character, conduct, and Christian service of those who have a position of leadership in the Church: excellence is the goal established for them by the Lord. The servant-leader has to be blameless and effective in his life and ministry ([1 Cor. 4](#); [2 Cor. 4](#); [2 Tim. 3](#); [1 Pet. 5:1–5](#)).

Theological education has therefore to be a pursuit of excellence. Accreditation can help in the effort to achieve such a goal.