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need collaboration in the pursuit of excellence. A case in point is the need to provide training in cross-cultural missions for the young Latin American people who have dedicated themselves to serve the Lord in another culture. Shall we establish two or three independently-functioning missionary training centres in Guatemala City (for example), or shall we combine our efforts to meet this need in a more effective way to the glory of God? It is not duplication we need, but collaboration, in the Lord's work. An accrediting association may help us achieve excellence, recognition, and cooperation for the benefit of theological education, to the glory of God.

In conclusion, we may talk about the renewal of the church and the renewal of theological education; but what about our own renewal as educators, as servants of God? The renewal must start in us. We need to be transformed by the renewal of our mind to be agents of renewal in theological education today.

It is possible to say that there is a renewal for practical sanctification, for a holy life in the presence of the Lord as a testimony to the church and the world; and there is a renewal specifically related to our own ministry. To be renewed in theological education may mean, in the first place, that experience by which our minds are opened by the Lord to a new perception of the biblical standards for the training of servant-leaders in the service of the church and a new perception of our ecclesiastical and social reality. This perception demands relevance and contextualization. When our minds are renewed by the Holy Spirit and his Word, we are able to re-evaluate courageously our educational programmes. Most of all, we are open to changes, even radical changes in what we are all doing for the Lord. To be renewed is in this case to acquire a new mentality, a new way of perceiving and confronting [p. 278](#) reality, to the glory of God and the furtherance of his gospel on earth.

It is obvious that renewal in our ministry has to be a never-ending process, as practical sanctification is also progressive. The opposite of renewal is stagnation, but how can we be stagnant if the Word of God is constantly exhorting us to be renewed in our minds ([Rom. 12:1-3](#))? How can we be stagnant in a world which is in the process of rapid and radical change? In theological education we need both renewal as a *transforming experience* in a given time and place, and renewal as a *never-ending process* in the pursuit of excellence. May the Lord help us to achieve our goals, to the glory of his name!

Dr. Emilio Núñez of Guatemala City, Guatemala is now formally retired although he does some part time teaching at SETECA the major theological institute in Guatemala City. He is regarded by many as the foremost theologian of Latin America. [p. 279](#)

Accreditation and Renewal

Ken R. Gnanakan

The Manifesto on the Renewal of Evangelical Theological Education has done well to admit that evangelical theological education today stands in need of a renewal—‘a renewal in form and in substance, a renewal in vision and power, a renewal in commitment and direction’. Just at the right time it reminds us that ‘there is now emerging

around the world a wide consensus among evangelical educators that a challenge to renewal is upon us, and upon us from the Lord'.¹

Renewals refers to a freshness. The Greek word *kainos* denotes something new, not in time, but 'new as to form or quality, of different nature from what is contrasted as old'.² The quality of the 'new' wineskins in [Mt. 9:17](#), [Mt. 2:22](#) and [Lk. 5:38](#) could most appropriately be described as 'fresh'. [Rom. 6:4](#) (*kainotes*) refers to life of a new quality. Generally speaking then the word refers to a kind of a freshness in contrast to staleness, a newness in quality. The New Testament speaks of a 'new Jerusalem', a 'new song', a 'new heaven and new earth', and a 'new name', all in keeping with a God who desires to make 'all things new' ([Rev. 21:5](#)). It could be the very same thing that is already known; but it appears with an added freshness and vitality which makes it both more relevant and more acceptable.

All over the world God is pouring upon his church a spirit of freshness, and all the activities of the church are steadily falling in step with the Spirit. It is God who renews and we theological educators must come with humble submission to wait for his correction and direction. Any human effort or salvage operation could only be a show of renewal, on the outside, without the freshness which from the inside activates theological education into becoming all that God intended it to be.

God's renewal of his work is seen primarily when there is an urge to return to basics. In this paper we [p. 280](#) shall discuss four basic dimensions of primary concern which accrediting agencies must take seriously. They are:

1. Theological education Must be committed to the imparting of the knowledge of God.
2. Theological education must demonstrate a commitment to *build* people to *reach* people.
3. Theological education must be concerned for the building of values.
4. Theological education must be concerned for relevance.

1. THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION MUST BE COMMITTED TO THE IMPARTING OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD

If we are convinced that theological education is about training up men and women to serve God, our top priority ought to be to impart a knowledge of God. It is this knowledge that forms the basis for communicating truths about God. No matter how much one strives to teach about God and godliness, if it is not producing a deep spiritual impact on the student, there is hardly any difference between theological education and any other form of education.

J. I. Packer's book *Knowing God*, in a chapter aptly titled 'The people who know their God', points out that it is possible that 'one can know a great deal about God without much knowledge of Him', or even 'know a great deal about godliness without much knowledge of God'.³ Packer makes a distinction between *knowing God* and merely *knowing about him*. A renewal in theological education must highlight this difference, and aim for spiritual standards which may not be creditable by secular standards. There is an urgent need

¹ Manifesto on the Renewal of Evangelical Theological Education (ICAA, 1983), see pp. 80ff.

² W. E. Vine, *Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* (London: Oliphant's), p. 109.

³ J. I. Packer, *Knowing God* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1975), p. 22f.

for theological educators to develop criteria in accreditation that will measure how far theology is having its desired effect on the learner.

In one sense, the real impact of theological education will always go beyond the framework of any accreditation procedures. For instance, how does one measure 'godliness' with the accepted criteria for evaluation? Similarly, renewal in theological education cannot be measured merely by an increase in the enrollment of students, or a rise in the number of theological seminaries, or even improved performances. All these are just indicative of a work that is far deeper, and more fundamental to the edifice of theological education. The primary evidence of renewal in theological education is shown in the learner's longing for God himself, as a consequence of which he seeks to learn the word of God. In fact, the burden is not only on the learner but on the teacher as well. If the primary function of teaching theology is seen as the imparting of truths about God, the teacher himself must be so filled and renewed that his teaching becomes revitalized.

Accreditation agencies must be urged to develop criteria that assist in aiding in spiritual growth and godliness, rather than merely pressing for academic excellence. The kind of subjects taught, and the volume of knowledge acquired, should have the p. 281 direct effect of increasing the student's godliness; and criteria should be developed to observe and encourage such standards. Renewal in theological education must reveal its inner compulsion towards such criteria, rather than continuing its emphasis on outward observable standards.

Layman have tended to see the study of theology as a dry academic pursuit, a specialized subject irrelevant and even unintelligible in everyday life. Rightly understood, theology *should* be seen as the study of God, absolutely essential and immensely relevant to every committed Christian. Such an attitude to theology would totally transform the impact of our pulpits on people in the pews. If theological education is to achieve its desired results then accreditation agencies must ensure this factor.

Theology was once the queen of sciences and set the trend for all other pursuits, with the church even providing the stamp of authority to other academic institutions. The knowledge of God was key to all other knowledge. In fact education itself was 'due almost entirely to impulses stemming from Christianity'.⁴ In a drastic reversal of roles, we now have theological institutions subserviently bowing to a non-Christian institution which must provide the stamp of authority for their existence. Even though we accept that academic standards ought to be the same, whether in the church or in the world, we need to be concerned that we do not shift away from our primary distinctives, our call, our goal, our vision and therefore our effectiveness. Renewal in theological education must be evidenced in a longing for an approval that is higher than any other institutional demands for accreditation.

2. THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION MUST DEMONSTRATE A COMMITMENT TO BUILD PEOPLE TO REACH PEOPLE

Institutionalized learning patterns have robbed the learning process of its people-centred approach. Our only concern seems to be 'excellence' in terms of our machinery functioning well, our structures neatly defined and our reports glowing with facts and figures. Accordingly, accrediting agencies and evaluation procedures lay stress on curriculum, library, buildings, and the like, and hardly at all on the developing of people for a mission to people.

⁴ K. S. Latourette, *Christianity in a Revolutionary Age*, Vol. I (Exeter: Paternoster, 1970), p. 141.

If people are important, our curricula and learning processes should be built around people. But the opposite has happened: we have had predetermined curricula forced on to people. Learning in such cases is evaluated only from the perspective of grades and examinations, rather than change in the individual. Accreditation procedures must emphasize learning in the sense of change, so that the impact of values on the individual is given more attention than merely the capacity of the student's mind to store and regurgitate facts and figures.

Commitment to people should go beyond the institutional framework to a 'people' setting. Theological [p. 282](#) education has for too long been subjected to institutional demands in the form of outward factors familiar to any other institution. A commitment to a particular context, and to building people, should show in an openness to provide learning opportunities in 'real life' situations. Extension education has broken away from the four walls of campuses, but still needs to receive acceptance from the more traditionally-patterned educational institutions.

While one has no doubt about the value of the discipline of a campus setting for a theological degree programme, one has only to hear from some students of the shock of reentering the 'real' world after the three- or four-year security of the spiritual shelter of a seminary. Nonformal learning patterns, the open-university system, and such experiments, have received the wide acclaim of educational bodies all over the world, and it is disappointing to see theological institutions continue in traditions handed down the centuries. Theological education must keep abreast of such openness and thereby restore a people-centredness to the learning process by taking education to where the people are.

While standard, traditional structures for education and accreditation may be relevant in themselves, we need to seek a renewal to keep in step with the revolution in educational systems in universities all over the world. We stand in need of a renewal of these structures, not only in terms of the newer trends in education, but also to experience what God is doing in this age. A thorough and honest critical evaluation is needed of all that we are doing in the name of education.

In maintaining a people-centredness in theological education, we provide an atmosphere where the variety of the gifts of the body of Christ will be developed. Our programme has catered too much for developing one particular pattern of ministry, and all levels of leadership have had to go through the same process. If we truly accept the wide variety of people and gifts of the Spirit within the body, then we need to be sensitive to the developing of these gifts. The education process needs to be seen from the perspective of discovering and developing God-given gifts, rather than merely as the adding-on of material foreign to the learner. Theological educational institutions ought to be setting the trend for systems where the individual with a particular gift, called to a particular task, is equipped for service in and through the body of Christ.

The renewal of theological education must demonstrate a burden to develop the rich and wide variety of gifts to equip the total body. Consequently, accreditation procedures should stress the importance of the true development of leadership in its widest context of the variety of people. Building curricula around individuals does not mean having thirty separate packages for thirty different students. What is required is a *sensitivity towards the student* rather than the pressure of a programme. Whatever the context, if the knowledge and skills imparted are not making an impact on the life and witness of the student, learning is a futile engagement. An obvious [p. 283](#) spiritual growth, an increasing effectiveness in communicating our faith, and a witness demonstrating Christian values with the potential to change the world around us, are essential to the theological learning process.

3. THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION MUST BE CONCERNED FOR THE BUILDING OF VALUES

All over the world, life in its totality is being threatened by the decay of moral and ethical values. The revolutions in the areas of science and technology, and the growing influence of materialistic philosophies, have not only dethroned man from his position in creation but have discarded values along the wayside. We as Christians, committed to a God who expects high standards, need to restore the foundation of basic human values into the education process, and thereby restore to education its originally intended purpose.

Early in 1985 the Government of India announced the formulation of a new education policy. One of its objectives, it claimed, was to combat 'the growing concern over the erosion of essential values and an increasing cynicism in the curriculum in order to make education a forceful tool for the motivation of social, ethical and moral values'.⁵

'Value education' is being promoted, the paper claims, to help eliminate obscurantism, religious fanaticism, violence, superstition and fatalism along with the benefits of its orientation towards the unity and integration of people. Such a stress ought to become the motivating factor for all levels of education. For instance, what is the benefit of the learning of science, if values have not been acquired in the learning process to enable the proper use of science? For theological education the pressure is even greater: to impart biblical values that will enable the learner to be a person of integrity, love, compassion, understanding and patience.

The goal of education is betterment and change. This change is not measured merely by the quantity of knowledge gained, but the quality of the values acquired which have become integral to the student. Unfortunately, even the concerns of theological education are so heavily oriented to academic excellence and the acquisition of degrees that accreditation has been forced to focus only on these aspects. Accreditation for theology needs to address its concern to unshakeable values that will strengthen the Christian community in an uncertain world. Recent reminders of our necessary concern for justice can be taken seriously only if value education is developed within the very fabric of the whole theological learning process. Accreditation systems should develop criteria and motivate institutions into this stress, not merely in the form of a few subjects, but as a foundation for the whole curriculum.

If theological education must be concerned for imparting godliness, then the imparting of Christian [p. 284](#) values should have foremost concern. Theological institutions must be concerned to correct the deterioration of standards in the ministry, the growth of corruption right within the church, and the lack of integrity amongst its leaders. Unless and until value education becomes the primary focus in the early stages of one's preparation for the ministry, not much change can be expected despite all the theological learning that is imparted.

Accreditation systems are limited, in being able only to evaluate observable factors with present criteria for evaluation. What is needed is for a process to be set up that will press institutions into building value education right within their curriculum. Efforts need to be made at all levels to compel and urge educational systems into such concerns. Educational institutions naturally tailor themselves to the demands accrediting agencies place on them. Accordingly, the curse of much theological education is its conformity to accreditation procedures, stifling values and attitudes in the learning process which are far more essential to the Christian minister than his degrees and

⁵ *Draft National Policy on Education 1986*, issued by the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India Department of Education, May 1986. Part VIII.

academic laurels. Values and attitudes are seen as the burden of the individual learner rather than being accorded a place in an objective evaluation. If theology must be true to its objective of imparting the knowledge of God, character building through the imparting of values and attitudes should be given importance. If the fundamentals of education are seen as knowledge, skills and attitudes, then knowledge and skills ought to be seen as the cart drawn by the driving force of attitudes.

4. THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION MUST BE CONCERNED FOR RELEVANCE

Theology must be relevant, and hence speak to all situations and to each new generation. Theological knowledge and the methods of communication of this knowledge must be reinterpreted in each generation and to each culture, so as to make it recognizable in each context. Theological education must grapple with this issue so that the student takes away with him a body of learning that will be applicable to his area of ministry. Accordingly, accreditation procedures must struggle to find the kind of criteria that will put pressure on educators to make their curriculum relevant. What is absolutely necessary is that the learner is aware that his study is connected to a real world where problems and issues can be handled correctly only from the Christian perspective.

The prime objective of all theological education must be the effective communication of the gospel to real men and women in a real world. While we do not allow the context to dictate to us the content of the gospel, we ought to be making efforts to be meaningfully proclaiming the good news to men and women in varying cultural socioeconomic and political contexts. Surprisingly, there appears currently to be no such sensitivity either in the teaching or in the communication of the truths of the Bible.

A commitment to relevance must [p. 285](#) start with an awareness of the kind of people to whom we are seeking to minister. We still seem to carry on using unaltered packages transferred (for instance) from America to Asia without seeking to understand local distinctives. It is not at all surprising then that we face the criticism of Christianity being a 'foreign' religion. In most cases, a pastor trained in our urban seminaries comes out equipped with knowledge, skills and attitudes that betray a foreignness which he struggles to adapt into his new context. Also, urban thinking has been carelessly imposed on rural congregations. Evolving theological curricula in context means that we must also evolve accreditation standards that will be contextual. The educational patterns of some countries may need to be considered before importing elements foreign to their context. For instance, ATA accreditation must be cognizant of Serampore University's accreditation procedures in India, and must respond not merely by matching, but by developing and surpassing, their standards in keeping with the local context.

Renewal of theological education places before us the need to evaluate critically the content of our theological education. The crucial question to ask of each course offered is: how will this subject benefit the learner in his effectiveness as a minister of Jesus Christ in his given situation? The subject, the individual and the context must all receive their rightful importance, but above all the goal of the learning process must be fulfilled. Accreditation systems should be renewed to take into consideration the necessity of the stress on relevance, so that education can become meaningful not merely to the learner but to those to whom he prepares to transfer this learning.

Our commitment to relevance will certainly challenge both the *content* and the *structures* of our education and accreditation systems. Questions will arise even of their practicability, and educators must be honest enough to evaluate critically present patterns under the searchlight of God's Holy Spirit. There is no sanctity about traditional patterns so that they cannot be discarded completely, or at least reshaped according to the

demands of the age and the needs of people. Theological education is after all man's attempt to educate himself with the knowledge of God, and needs to be continually assessed and reassessed in the interests of relevance and in the search for excellence.

However, in labelling theological education 'man's attempt', we must not ignore the overall activity of God in this process; which makes it different from any other educational exercise. Accreditation of theological education must take into account the divine involvement over and above all the procedures we set up for human evaluation of our educational systems. There may be a need for a revolutionary attitude to our accrediting procedures if we accept that ultimately our aim is 'to be approved unto God' ([2 Tim. 2:12](#)).

Renewal of theological education and accreditation procedures must demonstrate itself primarily in a longing for the 'word' to become 'flesh' in each generation and in [p. 286](#) each culture. It is God's word, and that word needs to be actualized to the people to whom we educators are accountable. When God renews he does not merely take the old and patch it up with something new. Let us long for the freshness of God's work, as he takes us through the process of renewal, reshaping and reconstruction. Let us ask for a renewed attitude to the Scriptures, a renewed dependence on God himself and a renewed resolution to root out all that hinders God's complete work, through his desire to 'make all things new'.

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The Future of ICAA

Tite Tiénou

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

CELEBRATION

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

ICAA was founded under the auspices of the Theological Commission of the World Evangelical Fellowship in March 1980, at a special international consultation on evangelical theological education held at Hoddesdon, England. The founding members of