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Holistic and Transformative:
Beyond a Typological Approach to Theological Education

Perry Shaw

I The Typological Approach

One of the most widely referenced texts on theological education is David Kelsey's *Between Athens and Berlin*.[1] The title intentionally alludes to Tertullian's famous quote, 'What has Athens to do with Jerusalem … or the Academy with the Church?'[2] For Tertullian the question was either/or: the authoritative teaching of scripture and the teachings of philosophy are incompatible; it is not possible for the church to embrace Greek philosophy, the latter being the major source of sub-Christian heresies. Tertullian's question has always been with those concerned about training leadership for the church of Jesus Christ, and the debate has continued throughout the centuries—most strikingly in the rivalry between the monastery/seminary and the university.

Kelsey changed the direction of the discussion, seeing the more ecclesial model as reflective of an 'Athens' education in which personal formation is central, as against the 'professional' scholarly emphasis of the university model, epitomized in the Humboldt University of Berlin. In his review of the works of Farley,[3] Hough & Cobb,[4] Stackhouse,[5] and Wood,[6] Kelsey sees all of theological education as somehow coming under one of these two

1 David Kelsey, *Between Athens and Berlin: The Theological Debate* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993).

2 Tertullian, *De praescriptione haereticorum*, in A. Roberts & J. Donaldson, eds., *The Ante-Nicene Fathers: Translation of the Writings of the Fathers, Down to AD 325* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), Vol. III, 246. (Original work published ca. 220.)

3 Edward Farley, *Theologia: The Fragmentation and Unity of Theological Education* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983) and *The Fragility of Knowledge: Theological Education in the Church and the University* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988).

4 Joseph Hough & John Cobb, *Christian Identity and Theological Education* (Chico: Scholars, 1985).

5 Max Stackhouse, *Apologia: Contextualization, Globalization, and Mission in Theological Education* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988).

6 Charles Wood, *Vision and Discernment: An Orientation in Theological Studies* (Atlanta: Scholars, 1985).

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rubrics, and the two as 'unsynthesizable'. There are inherent limitations to Kelsey's dichotomistic typology, not least in Kelsey's apparent assertion that (as one friend described it) 'you cannot be both godly and a scholar'. Consequently, a number of adaptations has been suggested, perhaps the best known being that suggested by Edgar,[7] in which Jerusalem and Geneva paradigms are given as additional possibilities.

At first glance the typological approaches suggested by Kelsey, Edgar, and others sound very reasonable, and are widely referenced and used. However, I would suggest we need to move beyond this sort of typological understanding of theological education. At the very least we should access these sorts of typologies with great caution.

II Foundational Problems

There are numerous problems with taking a typological approach to understanding theological education. The first is common to many typologies: the tendency to see the various patterns as discrete entities, oftentimes seeking to force items to fit into distinct elements in the typology. This is not unique to Kelsey: in my own specialization of education it is seen in the attempts to create typologies of learning. The famous cognitive-affective-behavioural typology, for example, while being a helpful corrective to the traditional cognitive focus of education, is nonetheless totally artificial as the elements are inextricably intertwined. Thus also with Kelsey and Edgar: while perhaps a helpful starting point for discussion the distinctions drawn are artificial.

In Edgar's lucid article he uses a variety of catch-phrases for each of the suggested paradigms: transforming the individual (classical—Athens); strengthening the church (vocational—Berlin); converting the world (missional—Jerusalem); knowing God (confessional—Geneva). In point of fact a healthy approach to theological education will wish to say, 'All of the above'. God has created us as whole people and each of these elements is so inextricably linked that to separate them out into discrete components serves only to create an artificial fragmentation that is the commonly-cited bane of higher education.

One paradigm without the others does not work: a healthy church is a missional church, and such churches cannot be strengthened without the transformation of the individuals within the community, and this in turn cannot take place without nurturing a knowledge of God. And the conversation between the suggested facets can be turned around: personal Christian formation is invalid outside the community, and a Christian community can find its true identity only by looking beyond itself. The elements are profoundly interwoven, and any healthy approach to theological education, irrespective of the understanding embedded within the use of the term, must involve a vigorous interaction between these paradigms. In truth, the goal of integration undergirds most healthy typological taxonomies: the point of the taxonomy is not to create discrete categories, but to correct undue focus on one element and to emphasize the

7 Brian Edgar, 'The Theology of Theological Education', *Evangelical Review of Theology* Vol. 29, no. 3, 2005, 208-17.

essential necessity of all facets in dialogue with one another.

I recognize that both Kelsey and Edgar caution their readers in the use of their analyses. This appears to be the central message of Kelsey's final epilogue chapter, in which he draws a distinction between end goal and practice: for Kelsey a 'teleological' focus in theological education should place the Athens-Berlin dichotomy as a secondary issue. Edgar is perhaps the clearer at this point, emphasizing the primary value of typologies as possible self-evaluative mirrors, and in the concluding words of his article urging extreme caution in the use of his model. However, I have heard too many people justify a fragmented and traditional curriculum by referencing the typologies of Kelsey and Edgar to embrace the typological approach uncritically.

We need also to acknowledge the thoroughly western origin and shape of the typologies. All of the texts which Kelsey uses as primary source material were written in North America, and with one exception by white males in mainline Protestant schools. While acknowledging the limited nature of this sample, Kelsey nonetheless feels comfortable in asserting the global nature of his analysis. Edgar's broader adaptation brings in an evangelical perspective, but the voices are still largely white, western, and male. As is so common, white western male understandings of education are seen as normative. The unspoken assumption is that the rest of the world should follow the West and be measured according to western standards.

We must also keep in mind that with the possible exception of the so-called 'Jerusalem' approach, all of the suggested paradigms emerged in a context where the relationship between the church and the wider society was largely in a 'Christendom' paradigm—that is, the assumption was that the church could and should have a level of power and influence in society. The 'Christendom' paradigm has never been relevant in the non-western world and is no longer relevant in most of the West. Hence an undue focus on a more traditional paradigm is unlikely to be a meaningful approach in the twenty-first century. As Cannell[8] puts it,

> A structure formalized in the medieval period, modified to suit the theological shifts of the Reformation, influenced by the scientific methodology of the Enlightenment, shaped by the German research university, deeply affected by modernity, and assumed to define true theological education today is likely not adequate for the challenges of contemporary culture and the education of Christians who have been shaped by that culture.

Elsewhere[9] I have raised concerns about the hegemony of western educational paradigms, rooted as they are deeply in the Greek philosophic heritage, among which is the tendency to categorize and separate study into 'disciplines' and 'branches of learning'. There is no question that the Aristotelian approach of breaking things down

8 Linda Cannell, *Theological Education Matters: Leadership Education for the Church* (Newburgh: EDCOT, 2006), 306.

9 Perry Shaw, '"New Treasures with the Old": Addressing Culture and Gender Imperialism in Higher Level Theological Education', *Evangelical Review of Theology*, Vol. 38, no. 3, July 2014, 265-79.

into the constituent parts has done much to create discipline in the fields of the physical sciences, but its value in other forms of knowledge is more questionable. Typologies are another face of the Greek approach of studying the bark on the trees to understand the forest.

In contrast, the preferred approach of much of the non-western world is to focus on the beauty of the forest as the starting point for seeing the trees and their bark.[10] A call for more holistic understandings is an essential element of the growing post-modern critique of modernist approaches to education—not only in the humanities and the so-called 'people professions', but even in the scientific academy. If these questions are being raised in the West, how much more should we be guarded about a typological approach in regions such as Asia and Africa with their strong heritage of holism and connectedness.

Perhaps the most significant concern I have with the typological approach is that what was originally intended as a descriptive approach has become for many a prescriptive basis for preserving questionable practices in theological education. Paul Sanders' refrain too often rings true: 'The problem with much of theological education is that it is neither theological nor educational.'[11] More than once I have heard people say to me, 'Ah, so you use the Jerusalem approach; well, I use the Berlin approach'—as though all of these approaches are equally valid.

There is a difference between religious studies and theological education: in the former it is valid to view the studies as somewhat disconnected from issues of faith commitment; in the latter the title 'theological' necessitates a theological reflection on what we are doing. Unfortunately, particularly in the university faculties of 'theology', there has oftentimes been a confusion at this point, and what is delivered is not genuinely an education shaped by theology but rather a program in which religion and religious texts are studied. If we wish with integrity to call our program 'theological education' then a theological undergirding to our pedagogy is required.

I am often surprised to hear otherwise thoughtful theologians do little in the way of theological reflection on theological education, or biblical scholars justifying a traditional approach to theological education by engaging in an eisegetical approach to Scripture that they would never accept from their students. It is natural to want to affirm one's own education, and hence it is not surprising that those trained in European universities advocate this approach as the best, and those trained in American seminaries advocate this approach as best.

We are all prone to teach as we have learned and to develop schools along the models of the schools where we were trained. Consequently, there are scattered across the globe a plethora of little Trinitys, Fullers, Dallases, Princetons, and occasionally Oxfords, Edinburghs and Tübingens—despite the fact that these models are generally irrelevant to the context of the Middle

10 Richard Nisbett, *The Geography of Thought: How Asians and Westerners Think Differently …. And Why* (New York: Free Press, 2003).

11 Paul Sanders, 'Evangelical Theological Education in a Globalised World', presentation delivered at Centre for Theological Education, Belfast, Northern Ireland, 17 November 2009.

East, Africa, Asia or Latin America.[12] And yet, no model or approach should be seen as adequate unless it begins with solid reflection on the foundational purpose of our existence—as individuals, as communities of faith, and as schools.

III Centring Theological Education on God and his Work

I believe that the final chapter of Kelsey's book is the strongest section of his work. After 200 pages and more of a rather convoluted journey from Athens to Berlin, Kelsey seeks to draw the threads together in a critical-reflective epilogue by reinterpreting Schleiermacher's notion of a 'teleological' approach to understanding theological education. Kelsey suggests our end should not be clergy-training or individual formation, but rather the development of an approach that allows theology to shape the faith community and engage meaningfully with society. While at no point using the term 'missional', the essence of what Kelsey advocates bears many similarities to the contemporary understanding of a 'missional' approach to theological education.

This missional approach is seen clearly in the 'logic model' developed by Rupen Das.[13] Adapting the language of community development, Das suggests a process whereby we have 'inputs' (physical plant, book resources, finances, and people), which support the 'activities' (the curriculum), that we hope will lead to desired 'output' (graduates who have changed as a result of their studies), that in turn leads to positive 'outcomes' (churches that are more faithful and effective in their missional calling), that result in 'impact' on society. The goal is not so much personal formation or clerical preparation but Christian impact. The resources, the curriculum, the students, and the churches are not the reason for our existence but key elements along the path to that end.

A genuine 'teleological' understanding of theological education would focus not on our ends but on God's ends—a theological education that is shaped by theological considerations: good theology should drive our pedagogy. Unfortunately, in the past this process has tended to devolve into a theological evaluation of current practice. A genuine theology for theological education would begin not with practice but rather an investigation of the implications of our theological affirmations for what we do educationally and administratively.

The Scriptures themselves point to an understanding of theological reflection that begins with God and his declarative acts. The Scriptures open with the words, 'In the beginning God …' (Gen 1:1) and close with the hope of consummation (Rev 22:20-21). It is not surprising, therefore, that virtually every text in systematic theology across the confessional spectrum begins either with a discussion of the meaning of revelation or with theology proper. In either case the realization—

12 Perry Shaw, *Transforming Theological Education: A Practical Handbook for Integrative Learning* (Carlisle: Langham, 2014), 19.

13 Rupen Das, *Connecting Curriculum with Context: A Handbook for Context Relevant Curriculum Development in Theological Education* (Carlisle: Langham, 2015).

whether intuitive or intentional—is that the starting point of theological understanding is not with humanity seeking God, but with a God who reaches out to us to be known and loved and worshipped. As Wright[14] describes it,

> The whole canon of Scripture is a missional phenomenon in the sense that it witnesses to the self-giving movement of this God toward his creation and us, human beings in God's own image, but wayward and wanton. The writings that now comprise our Bible are themselves the product of and witness to the ultimate mission of God.

Consequently, with Banks,[15] Cannell,[16] Cronshaw,[17] De Gruchy,[18] Kirk,[19] Wright,[20] and numerous others, I believe that the starting point for theological reflection on theological education must be with the missionary character of God. The central message of the Scriptures is of a God who reaches out in creation and redemption, and who invites us to participate in his great missional work individually and corporately. This should be the warp and woof of all that we do—understanding God and his acts and responding accordingly. As Cronshaw[21] so eloquently expresses the missional nature of the church and seminary, '[I]f we want to be in step with the Spirit, then we want to be part of [the] Trinitarian movement of being sent into the world.'

This understanding of a 'missional' foundation to theological education is worlds away from Edgar's description of 'mission' as 'converting the world'. The biblical message is not so much that the church has a missionary program but that God is a God of mission and has the church to fulfil that mission.[22] The missional mandate of the church is no more nor less than an outworking of the missional character of God. As articulated in the Lausanne Movement's Cape Town Commitment,[23]

14 Christopher Wright, *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2006), 48.

15 Robert Banks, *Reenvisioning Theological Education: Exploring a Missional Alternative to Current Models* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999).

16 Cannell, *Theological Education Matters*.

17 Darren Cronshaw, 'Australian Reenvisioning of Theological Education: In Step With the Spirit?' *Australian eJournal of Theology* Vol. 18, no. 3, December 2011, 223-35, and 'Reenvisioning Theological Education and Missional Spirituality', *Journal of Adult Theological Education*, Vol. 9, no. 1, 2012, 9–27.

18 Steve de Gruchy, 'Theological Education and Missional Practice: A Vital Dialogue', in D. Werner, D. Esterline, N. King, & J. Raja, eds., *Handbook of Theological Education: Theological Perspectives—Regional Surveys—Ecumenical Trends*, (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2010), 42–50.

19 J. Andrew Kirk, 'Re-Envisioning the Theological Curriculum As If the Missio Dei Mattered', *Common Ground Journal*, Vol. 3, no. 1, 2005, 23–40.

20 Chris Wright, 'Effectiveness and Impact in Theological Education From a Biblical Perspective'. Plenary lecture delivered at the triennial consultation of International Council for Evangelical Theological Education, Antalya, Turkey, 6 November 2015.

21 Cronshaw, 'Australian Reenvisioning of Theological Education'.

22 Jürgen Moltmann, *The Church in The Power of the Spirit: A Contribution to Messianic Ecclesiology* (London: SCM, 1977), 64.

23 Lausanne Movement, 'The Cape Town Commitment: A Declaration of Belief and a Call to Action', 2011, II.F.4 < www.lausanne.

'The mission of the Church on earth is to serve the mission of God, and the mission of theological education is to strengthen and accompany the mission of the Church.'

It is not primarily about what we are doing but about what God is doing, and then us getting in tune with his agenda. For this to be effective we need all of the so-called paradigms: a people who know and worship God and are thereby able to reflect adequately his character and his purposes, transformed individuals and communities who are able to be salt and light in the world, empowered and empowering leaders for a strong church that can best impact the world for God's Kingdom, and a missional vision that reflects God's own missional character.

The role of theological education is not merely to equip those preparing to serve *in* the church, but those called to serve *as* the church in the world,[24] to prepare people who are able to claim the whole of private and public life for Christ and his Kingdom.[25] Cronshaw[26] illustrates this holistic understanding by suggesting an integrative typological approach, in which he adds two further paradigms ('Auburn' and 'Delhi'), and places 'Jerusalem' as the hub around which all other paradigms revolve.

IV From Theology to Theological Education

It is beyond the scope of this article to give a comprehensive discussion of the movement from theological affirmation to pedagogical implications. However, as a step along the path, and as a small sample of the approach which needs to be appropriated, let me present a few suggestions. These all point to the need for a holistic and transformative approach to theological education which is both integrated and missional.

1. The Mission of God

The mission of God is the starting point of our identity and calling. The important thing is not what we are doing but what God is doing in this world. God's creative and redemptive agenda is the consummate restoration of the good. In the revelation of his divine Triune character of love and holiness, and in as much as we are attuned to his nature, we are able to discover our true identity. God entrusts us to partner with him in the accomplishment of his mission—the extension of his *shalom* Kingdom.

The implications of such an affirmation for theological education are numerous:

1. Our shared understanding of the purpose of our institutions and programs should clearly express God's mission and character. If our 'Vision Statement' is focused on our students or even on the church, then something foundational is missing. Yes, we want our students to learn and grow and we want strong churches, but these are merely means to an end—which is the acknowledgement of the Triune God

org/en/documents/ctcommitment.html > accessed 12 August 2013.

24 Charles Sherlock, *Uncovering Theology: The Depth, Reach and Utility of Australian Theological Education* (Adelaide: ATF Press, 2009), 111-2.

25 Lesslie Newbigin, *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 231.

26 Cronshaw, 'Reenvisioning Theological Education and Missional Spirituality'.

and his Kingdom.

2. Theology proper (the study of the nature and character of God) should permeate the curriculum. In that our curriculum should help people discover what God is trying to do through them, we must ensure that students have a clear knowledge of his character and ways.
3. On the path to facilitating the students' personal and corporate understanding and growth instructors need to be attuned to what God is doing in and through the learners in the class they are leading. As such prayer and listening to God are appropriate elements in the classroom.
4. Leaders in theological education need to be aware of what God is doing in this place and at this time. If God is truly at work in this world and not simply a distant and inscrutable deity, then we need to be able to read the signs of the time (cf. Mt 16:1-3).
5. God's missional character means that we must take context seriously. Curriculum cannot be generic but needs to be responsive to what God is seeking to do in the specific context in which the education is being delivered. There also needs to be flexibility in the curriculum such that it can respond to what God is doing today in response to the changing world over which he is sovereign. This would probably imply a shift in focus from the current tendency to focus on 'text to context' courses to an increasing number of 'context to text' courses.[27]
6. The central missional message of the Scriptures is of a God who seeks to reconcile and restore. Consequently our curricula should give substantial space to training students to lead God's people in being restorative agents in this broken world. The theory and practice of peace-making should therefore be core to our curriculum. Moreover, in contrast to the highly competitive nature of much of the academy, theologically-grounded theological education needs to ensure that our educational institutions have in place quality processes of peacemaking and conflict resolution that encourage and sustain hospitable community.[28]

2. The People of God

God has chosen to reveal himself through his people. Both in the Old and New Testaments the people of God are seen as an essential part of the accomplishment of God's mission. Probably the most articulate explication of this theological affirmation is found in Chris Wright's seminal *The Mission of God*.[29] Early in his text Wright summarizes his 'missional hermeneutic' as proceeding from the understanding that 'the whole Bible renders to us the story of God's mission through God's

27 Shaw, *Transforming Theological Education*, 103, 137.

28 Perry Shaw, 'A Welcome Guest: Ministerial Training as an Act of Hospitality', *Christian Education Journal*, Series 3, Vol. 7, no. 1, Spring 2011, 8-26; Davina Soh, 'The Motif of Hospitality in Theological Education: A Critical Appraisal with Implications for Application in Theological Education', PhD Dissertation, Asia Graduate School of Theology Alliance, 2015.

29 Wright, *The Mission of God*.

people in their engagement with God's world for the sake of the whole of God's creation' (51).

Some possible implications of this affirmation for theological education would include:

7. A missional ecclesiology must undergird our programs and institutions. Both our students and the people whom they will subsequently serve need help in understanding their identity and calling as the people of God. Consequently both the classroom and non-classroom components of the curriculum need to retain a vision for a church that understands its calling to impact society.
8. Programs of theological education need to recognize their *parakletic* relationship to the local church. I recognize that there is definitely a prophetic aspect to impactful theological education. However, the theological affirmation of God's mission through his people necessitates the recognition of God's wisdom in choosing the local church as his agent—even when our natural tendency is to question God's wisdom in choosing the church. As such it is imperative that we listen to the local church and not just tell them.
9. A vision for an empowered people of God may entail a rethinking of our faculty recruitment policies. A highly qualified academician who is disconnected from church and society will be ill-prepared to prepare men and women for a church that impacts society. The most needful is a cadre of scholar-practitioners who have the intellectual, reflective, and instructional skills to train leaders in church and society for theologically-informed impact.
10. Theological education should serve the whole church—not an elite few. God calls people not just for religious vocations but for vocations in science, business and education.[30] A theological affirmation of the role of God's people in God's mission urges on theological education patterns and processes that empower the whole people of God to discover and live out their missional calling in family, community, education, health, politics, media, and finance.

3. Incarnation

Central to the Mission of God is the 'enfleshment' or 'incarnation' of his nature, character, and will—most perfectly in Jesus Christ, but also in his people. The character of the Triune God is of essence relational, and hence from the beginning he has reached out to make himself known in tangible and understandable ways. The *shalom* inaugurated through Christ's incarnation and redemptive work is both the salvation from sins and the model of what the life of divinity-become-humanity looks like.

Our fundamental nature is that we have been created in God's image but that image has been distorted by the fall. In as much as we reflect the character of God we rediscover our true identity. God chose to become incarnate in Jesus Christ. Consequently, while recognizing that Jesus came into a particular context and time, nonetheless we must see his life and teaching as pointing towards who we were

30 Cronshaw, 'Australian Reenvisioning of Theological Education'.

meant to be as teachers and leaders.

The implications of the incarnate nature of our message for our practices of theological education are legion.

- In that the message has always been 'enfleshed' in particular times and places, context must be taken seriously. Context drove Jesus' teaching. Jesus' teaching has been described as 'incidental' in that most of his teaching emerged out of specific events and people he encountered. Likewise Paul wrote to specific churches or people in specific contexts, and the particular needs of those churches and individuals were foundational to his theological reflection. All theology is contextual;[31] the question is whose context—Augustine's? Luther's? Calvin's? or ours? Das[32] observes:

  > For a long time theological education has focused on training students on the core and essence of the Christian faith, essentially Biblical and Systematic Theology. It was believed that this, along with the skills of preaching, teaching and counseling, is all that a pastor needed to know to be effective. … However God is perceived and understood through the lenses of one's own culture, gender, social and economic status, life experiences, season of life, political ideology, and value system. Therefore theology has to translate the truth about God into specific cultural, social and political contexts.

- Using stories is one of the most effective and appropriate means for incarnating the eternal message of God's *Missio Dei* in the world. Jesus used stories as the foundation of his teaching. While recognizing that this was natural in a largely oral society, it was also a product of Jesus' practice of seeing his 'learners' as whole people for whom the connection between text and context was an imperative. While Paul did not use story as much as Jesus did, nonetheless his commitment to embodied faith is consistent with a case study approach to theological education. Stories are an ideal educational methodology for driving learners to make connection between text and context. Local case studies are particularly relevant and significant.
- In Christ 'the word became flesh'—not 'the word became text'. While critical reflection on texts certainly has value, equally significant is the critical dialogue between text and life—what has often been termed as 'reflective practice'.[33] Since the early nineteenth century theological education has been 'landed' within the humanities, alongside fields such as literature, philosophy, and history. The location of theological education within the humanities is seen clearly in the close parallels with these other fields in the traditional emphases in theological edu-

31 Stephan Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2002).

32 Rupen Das, 'Can Theological Education Influence Society?' < imeslebanon.wordpress.com/2014/03/06/can-theological-education-influence-society > accessed 6 March 2014.

33 Chris Argyris & Donald Schön, *Theory in Practice: Increasing Professional Effectiveness* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1974).

cation: biblical studies (literature), theology (philosophy), and church history (history). It is not surprising that in many cases the 'professional' component of preparation for ministry has often been separated out from 'academic' studies, sometimes being seen (either consciously or unconsciously) as peripheral or even irrelevant.

In light of the imperative of 'enfleshment', a more adequate location of theological studies would be with professional fields such as medicine, education, and social work. In these fields, while there are often studies in philosophy and ethics, there is a certain urgency that every element should be preparing more effective practitioners—whether they be better doctors, teachers, social workers, or the like. Elements drawn from the humanities and the social sciences are referenced only in as much as they serve to better prepare people for the task that lies ahead.

- An 'enfleshed' understanding of theological education would see the need to view intellectual knowledge as a step towards practising and applying the message. Jesus differed from the Pharisees precisely in that his teaching, deeply rooted in the Old Testament Scriptures, called for a life that reflects heart action in tune with God's purposes.

  The Great Commission to make disciples saw at its heart a teaching that led to obedience—not simply the knowledge of information. Whenever Paul writes theology, it is always followed by extensive application. In that the ultimate test of obedience comes not in the academy but in the field, it is crucial that a close relationship be built between the theological school and the communities it serves.
- In recognition of our being created as whole persons, and not simply 'disembodied information systems called brains',[34] there needs to be a close interaction between intellectual excellence, heart formation, and practical application. The goal of Jesus' teaching was ultimately for the hearer to enter into a relationship of love of God, 'heart, soul, mind, and strength' (Mk 12:30). Integration and integrity are related words, and likewise Jesus' approach to the authentic life was always integrated and multidimensional—head, heart, and hands (cognitive, affective, and behavioural). In a similar ilk, Paul's teaching always involved an invitation to a multidimensional relationship of love for God. An incarnational and authentic approach will see in every academic course reflection through formational and ministerial lenses. However, there will equally be an emphasis on profound biblical and theological reflection in the students' formational and ministerial experiences.
- The quality of life of our teachers is important. Paul's invitation to the Corinthians to 'be imitators of me as I of Christ' (1 Cor 11:1) is equally significant in the theological school. Gibson[35] has observed, 'God is fun-

34 Ted Ward, 'The Teaching-Learning Process', in M. Anthony, ed., *Introducing Christian Education: Foundations for the Twenty-First Century* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001), 123.

35 Drew Gibson, 'Being Trinity' < teachingtheology.org/2012/08/01/being-trinity > accessed 14 August 2012.

damentally relational. Our theological education is therefore most Christian when it is the same.' One piece of research[36] discovered that

> … what most people coming into theological institutions desire is the opportunity to get to know their teachers personally, and learn from them in ways that will help them grow spiritually and minister effectively…. While as teachers we regard academic concerns as the most important, students are equally or more interested in the personal and practical implications of what they are learning.

If we are serious about nurturing Christian attitude and character, it will not occur through maintaining a formal emotional distance in the classroom but rather through a relationship of love in which we mentor and model a life of quality to those God has called us to develop as future leaders of his church.[37]

The above is simply a sample of how we might move beyond a typological understanding of theological education towards approaches that are shaped by theological affirmations. There are many other significant theological lenses that could be brought to bear on such a discussion: the Lordship of Christ, the *kairotic* experience[38] of living between redemption and consummation, the *perichoretic* nature of the Trinity, the covenantal people of God as light and salt, cruciform living and leading,[39] to mention a few. Quality theological education would engage these and other theological affirmations as the starting point for building pedagogical understandings, rather than simply seeking theological justification for current practice.

V Conclusion

Particularly in light of the global shift of Christianity from the West to the South and East, it is no longer adequate to evaluate theological education through lenses that have been shaped and designed in the West. While the paradigms suggested in the typologies of Kelsey, Edgar, and others may to some extent be helpful dialogue partners, if seen as discrete and/or normative they can become profoundly destructive to our endeavors.

In light of the fundamentally missional nature of our God, integrative and incarnational approaches to understanding theological education need to be embraced and encouraged. The time has come for the global non-western church to recognize the strength of its holistic and relational educational traditions for the development of quality theological leaders. The main thing preventing significant creative change is the courage to challenge the white western male hegemony of the world of theological education and to affirm the possibility of alternative approaches to accomplishing our missional purposes.

36 Banks, *Reenvisioning Theological Education*, 227.

37 Shaw, *Transforming Theological Education*, 72.

38 M. Robert Mulholland, *Shaped by the Word: The Power of Scripture in Spiritual Formation* (Nashville: The Upper Room, 2001).

39 Michael Gorman, *Cruciformity: Paul's Narrative Spirituality of the Cross* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001).