CONTEXTUALISATION AND GLOBALISATION IN THE BIBLE TRAINING MINISTRY OF THE CHRISTIAN BRETHREN CHURCHES OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA (PART 4 OF 4)

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PART 4:   EDUCATIONAL METHODOLOGY

This series of articles has endeavoured to analyse the theological education of the Bible schools of the Christian Brethren churches of PNG, using the concepts of globalisation and contextualisation. In previous articles, we looked at the issues of curriculum and the communication of theology. In this article, we address some issues of educational methodology.

The question, "How do we teach what we teach?" alerts us to a number of factors influencing the decisions about educational methodology. It is impossible, in the confines of this article to adequately treat all the factors involved in good learning methodology in theological education. We will, therefore, restrict ourselves to certain key issues.

At the risk of simplifying complex issues, we discuss them under the headings "global" or "contextual", on the basis of their principal orientation. Three sets of global issues are raised – theological orientation, models in theological education, and theories of educational practice. Theological orientation is focused on the impact of the Brethren denominational tradition. We then review models of theological education – schooling, extension, and

apprenticeship. Since each of these models has strengths and weaknesses on its own, we propose a multi-model approach. Global theories of educational practice are then raised. We outline a Christian response to secular theories that allows us to incorporate insights from such theories, but embraces overall Christian commitments. Brian Hill's curriculum model for teaching in the church appears to do this. However, a broad Christian perspective must be modified by the special insights from "andragogy",[1] and learning in cross-cultural contexts.

Contextuality necessitates examining Melanesian socio-cultural environments for educational methods. We address the issue of the orality-literality contrast, and then outline three examples of Melanesian learning situations: how skills for daily living are learned, initiation as an extractive "rite of passage", involving special learning for entry into adulthood, and the transfer of land rights from father to son (a time of heightened awareness and intensive learning). These learning situations offer insights into three learning contexts, relevant for theological education, in terms of parental modelling, extractive and intensive learning in context. From these, we draw out a summary of important contextual implications for the CBC Bible schools.

We then ask whether the Brethren commitment to a scriptural basis for life offers a distinctive approach for educational methodology, looking at Jesus' teaching methods, from both global and contextual perspectives. The article concludes by discussing the balance between global and contextual orientations in Bible school educational methods.

A.   GLOBAL ASPECTS OF LEARNING

The impact of global factors on educational methodology has been immense. Theorising about teaching methods has emerged as a separate discipline within the Western tradition.[2] The emergence of different options, and debate between them, is part of the training offered to most teachers within the formal, state-recognised Western educational system. The fact is that, with

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[1] Andragogy is the study of how adults learn.
[2] See, for example, Kenneth O. Gangel, and Warren S. Benson, *Christian Education: Its History and Philosophy*, Chicago IL: Moody Press, 1983.

theological education generally, and denominational Bible schools, like those of the CBC, in particular, thinking about educational methodology is frequently by-passed, or caught up in the assumptions made about content, rather than methodology of Christian communication. This is partly because theological education is outside the formal educational system. There are few criteria, by which teaching ability is measured, or what good teaching practice is. Many teachers rely on their own observations, and on the experience of others. Others, sometimes, make the rather dubious assumption that, because someone is a good platform preacher, or Sunday School teacher, they will make a good Bible school teacher. Some missionaries, and probably even national teachers, assume that because they "feel called" by God to undertake this ministry, they are, therefore, well equipped (perhaps by the Holy Spirit) to do so. Sadly, that is not the case.

Good teaching methods emerge from a complex of interactions, involving individual personality, awareness of the range of educational alternatives in theory and practical techniques, and training and experience in the educational process. Cross-cultural factors also impact methodology. In a new context, for example, teachers rapidly become aware that some techniques that have worked well in previous contexts are less effective in the new one. Similarly, the level of maturity of the student clientele impacts effectiveness. A good primary school teacher is not automatically competent to teach adults.

The Western Bible school model, as a means for equipping Christians, and training leaders within the CBC, has provided an environment for adopting Western educational methods as well. Study of traditional teaching-learning techniques, with a view of learning from them, is rarely undertaken.[3] As a result, the dominant methods of teaching are derived from the West, and, as a result, are implicitly global.

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[3] The PNG Association of Bible Colleges discussed the issue in 1978, when Revd Walter Hotchkin produced a paper on traditional Huli teaching methods. See also Kevin G. Hovey, *Before All Else Fails . . . Read the Instructions*, Brisbane Qld: Harvest Publications, 1986, pp. 209-225.

1.   Theological Orientation and the Impact of a Denominational Tradition

To what extent should theological orientation influence teaching methods? Some would answer "everything". Certainly, a Christian approach would ground educational methods in foundational Christian doctrines, such as, the Trinitarian nature of God, as Russell Thorp has sought to demonstrate.[4] Beyond that, denominational traditions influence the way people teach.[5]

The broadly-Western tradition of theological education, as a form of "schooling", has influenced the approach missionaries have taken in establishing Bible schools, and making curriculum choices. Educational methodology has been equally influenced, reinforced by the personal educational experience of missionary teachers, whether or not they themselves attended a Bible school or theological college as part of their training for missionary service.[6]

One aspect of the Western influence is the impact of denominational tradition. Richard T. Hughes and William B. Adrian brought together a series of essays that draw out (in an American context) the contribution of a range of denominational traditions in "Christian higher education".[7] Using this broad term to include university as well as theological colleges, Hughes and Adrian have collected essays relating to both the broad theologies and the experience of specific institutions, covering Roman Catholic, Lutheran, Mennonite, Evangelical/Interdenominational, Wesleyan/Holiness, Baptist, and Restorationist traditions. While none of these specifically includes the Brethren tradition, several can be seen to be theologically and experientially similar enough to be of interest for our purposes. In particular, the

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[4] Russell Thorp, "The Doctrine of the Trinity and Christian Education", in *Melanesian Journal of Theology* 14-2 (1998), pp. 28-44.

[5] Richard T. Hughes, and William B. Adrian, eds, *Models for Christian Higher Education: Strategies for Success in the Twenty-first Century*, Grand Rapids MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1997.

[6] Several of the key expatriate leaders in the formation and running of CBC Bible Schools did not, themselves, undertake formal Bible training before coming to Papua New Guinea. It seems fair to say that those with teacher training have been generally more alert to issues of educational methodology.

[7] Hughes and Adrian, eds, *Models for Christian Higher Education*.

Evangelical/Interdenominational,[8] Baptist,[9] and Restorationist (i.e., the Church of Christ)[10] traditions bear important similarities.

For example, Harold Heie cites biblicism,[11] conversionism, and evangelistic activism as the distinctive features of the evangelical tradition, but he points to a number of ways in which these should be deepened and enlarged to make a more effective contribution to higher education.[12]

Another significant contribution to educational methodologies is by Harold W. Burgess.[13] Although his discussion focuses on the broader field of religious education, rather than theological education, Burgess argues for a significant relationship between historical and contemporary models of religious education and educational practice, as informed by these models. Burgess devotes a chapter to the "Evangelical/Kerygmatic"[14] model, and

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[8] Harold Heie, "What can the Evangelical/Interdenominational Tradition Contribute to Christian Higher Education?", in *Models for Christian Higher Education: Strategies for Survival and Success in the Twenty-first Century*, Richard T. Hughes, and William B. Adrian, eds, Grand Rapids MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1997, pp. 245-260.

[9] Bill J. Leonard, "What can the Baptist Tradition Contribute to Christian Higher Education?", in *Models for Christian Higher Education: Strategies for Survival and Success in the Twenty-first Century*, Richard T. Hughes, and William B. Adrian, eds, Grand Rapids MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1997, pp. 367-382.

[10] Richard T. Hughes, "What can the Church of Christ Tradition Contribute to Christian Higher Education?", in *Models for Christian Higher Education: Strategies for Survival and Success in the Twenty-first Century*, Richard T. Hughes, and William B. Adrian, eds, Grand Rapids MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1997, pp. 402-411.

[11] For Heie, "biblicism" views the Bible "as the primary vehicle for God's revelation of the nature of Christian faith and practice".

[12] Heie, "What can the Evangelical/Interdenominational Tradition Contribute?", pp. 247-251. He faults evangelicals for undervaluing other sources of knowledge about Christian faith and living, especially if the Bible is viewed as the sole source; for, sometimes, an intuitionist epistemology, which undervalues serious study of theology; and for a too-narrow view of the meaning and significance of the biblical record involved in a literal hermeneutic.

[13] Harold W. Burgess, *Models of Religious Education: Theory and Practice in Historical and Contemporary Perspective*, Wheaton IL: Victor Books, 1996.

[14] Burgess groups together the Evangelical/Protestant and the Kerygmatic (Roman Catholic) traditions under one heading, because of the similarity he sees in their approaches in the relationship of theology to educational methodology.

another to the "social science" one. In each, he overviews some representative educational theorists,[15] and then outlines the respective model, under five headings: aim, content, teacher (including here teaching methods), learner, and environment.

Several significant aspects of the evangelical ("proclamation") model emerge. With regard to *aim*, Burgess states that, for evangelicals, "Aim is not a working construct, to be changed, as experience or culture dictates; it is ultimately determined by divine purposes." This aim focuses on a desire to transmit the content of the Bible to others. Evangelicals also recognise a supernatural element, facilitating an encounter between the learner and God, through communicating a divine message, the role of knowledge in shaping a godly life, bringing people to a conversion experience, and growth to Christian maturity. Burgess believes that the role of "aim", in measuring student progress, has received "scant attention" by evangelicals, and offers two reasons for this: "(1) that aims, rooted in divine purposes, are difficult to translate into meaningful phenomena, which are subject to measurement; and (2) that stated aims often lack here-and-now specificity".[16]

In relation to *content*, Burgess notes that "teaching method is often subservient to the message (or content)".[17] Evangelicals are very content-focused, affirming that "the Bible is the textbook for Christian teaching",[18] or "[t]hat it is 'the only basis of an adequate curriculum, in true Christian education' ".[19] While Christ is the central theme, faithful transmission of a verbally-accurate saving message is critically important. Subject matter is arranged so that this message is clearly transmitted. Not only are teaching

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[15] The evangelical theorists he selects are: Frank E. Gaebelein (1907-1983), Lois E. Bar (1907-), Clarence H. Benson (1879-1954), Charles Burton Eavey (1889-1974), Harold Carlton Mason (1888-1964), Herbert W. Byrne (1917-), Kenneth O. Gangel (1935-), Roy B. Zuck (1932-), James DeForrest Murch (1892-1972), Lawrence O. Richards (1931-), Donald M. Joy (1928-), Findley B. Edge (1916-), Robert Pazmino (1948-).

[16] Burgess, *Models of Religious Education*, pp. 161-166.

[17] Ibid., p. 166.

[18] Ibid., p. 167, referring to C. B. Eavey, *Principles of Teaching for Christian Teachers*, Grand Rapids MI: Zondervan, 1968, p. 13.

[19] Ibid., p. 167, quoting Roy B. Zuck, *The Holy Spirit in Your Teaching*, Wheaton IL: Scripture Press, 1963, p. 99.

methods subject to content, but, for the learner, "[t]he core educational process is a supernatural one".[20]

Significantly, for our purposes, Burgess highlights that the environment "as a usable construct in day-to-day practice" is largely ignored by evangelicals, because Christian schools "attempt to ameliorate an environment that is generally perceived to be unfriendly to Christian values".[21] He claims that evangelicals view the typical Christian school environment as the learners' opportunity to tighten their grasp upon the Christian message, so that they will be enabled to "live the Christian life" when they "go out into the world", since the Christian is not at home in the world.[22]

Despite the specific reference here, by Burgess, to Christian schools, and Christian education, rather than Bible schools, and theological education, his evaluation seems to coincide with some views of the latter.[23] If so, such perceptions place the Bible schools of CBC, and their educational methods, very firmly at the global end of the spectrum. The emphasis on cognitive understanding of the contents of the Bible is a global evangelical concern. The Bible, viewed as the primary text, and focus of the curriculum, as we have earlier shown, is viewed as global. Theologically, other elements, such as the Christocentric focus, the role of the Holy Spirit, the requirement for (a prior) conversion and growth to personal Christian maturity, are also global in the evangelical view of the Bible schools' communication task. When this is combined with the subordinate significance of the learner, in relation to

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[20] Ibid., pp. 169-172, 180.

[21] Ibid., p. 183.

[22] Ibid., pp. 182-183. This would seem too narrow a view for some evangelical establishments.

[23] For example, the Sydney NSW, Emmaus Bible College distinctives are:

"The Emmaus combination of a solid core of Bible teaching, Christian doctrine and a range of elective studies will help equip you, whatever the direction your future life and service may be.

All Emmaus programmes are strongly Bible based and Christ centred.

All faculty are committed to the Lordship of Jesus Christ, and the authority of the Bible.

As a College, we are committed to following the example of the Lord Jesus who, on the Emmaus road, 'explained to them what was said in all the scriptures concerning Himself' (Luke 24:27)." Emmaus Bible College, *Student Handbook 1999-2000*, Epping NSW: Emmaus Bible College, nd, p. 9.

content, and with a generally negative view of the social, cultural, and physical world, local contextual factors also become less significant.

There are other elements of a globalised, educational methodology. Brethren, along with other evangelicals, have put high value on the role of preaching, understood as verbal communication of the message, particularly in the monologue style of the preached sermon.[24] The lecture form of teaching, in CBC Bible schools, appears to derive from the dominance of the evangelical "preaching" model. However, this is probably less of a conscious process than assimilation or imitation of others.

Producing duplicated lecture (or blackboard) notes to supplement the lecture method is also often felt necessary. The written form is more permanent, and, for literates, a means for later study and revision. It relies less on memory, but this is both an advantage and a disadvantage in the oral context of Melanesia.

A crucial issue of educational methodology in theological education is the balance of Burgess' five factors, which can be reduced to whether the focus is on the communication of content, or on the learning process of the learner. If the faithful transmission of the Bible and its message is the focus, then primary attention is on content. Since that content is often viewed as being "received" from others, the teacher easily becomes the source and standard for understanding this content. When that happens, in cross-cultural contexts, not only the text is seen as global, but also the understanding of the teacher.

If, however, the focus is on the learner, in his or her context, including background, insights, needs, growth, and the learning process, these issues tend to refocus the content of the curriculum, and creative options about educational methodologies open up. Learner-centred education is much more focused on the context end of the spectrum.

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[24] Brethren frequently quote Rom 10:14, "And how can they hear without someone preaching to them" in support of the monologue sermon, with v. 15 as placing this in a missionary context.

2.   *Global Models in Theological Education*

Before we discuss learning, in relation to context, it is important to look at "global" models of theological education. Three, in particular, seem relevant to the CBC Bible school scene – the schooling, extension, and apprenticeship models.

(a)   *The schooling model*. The schooling model emerged as the dominant one in the Western world for formal education. It is based on a building, suitably divided into teaching rooms of appropriate size, with a selected group of more-or-less homogenous students.[25] Classes of students are taught by qualified teachers, for specified periods of time. The schooling model assumes that, when a student has completed one level of education, they will progress to the next higher level.

The schooling model is essentially extractive and formal.[26] Students are removed from other community and family settings, and given specialised training in preselected subjects in a classroom-based format. Even where there are electives, and personalised programmes of study, there are limits to the range of options in both content and learning mode. Frequently, tests and examinations, in which students demonstrate their knowledge or skill, in relatively standardised ways, measure success.

Certain strategies and methods operate effectively under the schooling model. The teacher is the professional guide of student learning, and the learning process is content-focused.   While teachers' personal

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[25] This may be by age, as in primary or secondary school, by educational attainment, as in a university, or by future occupational objective, as in a professional training college. Bible schools are in the latter category.

[26] Describing the schooling model as extractive is not intended pejoratively. We use it to distinguish a mode of education that has strengths and weaknesses. It is similar to some traditional Melanesian modes of learning, including initiation (see below). It is extractive, in the sense that, for fixed periods of time, it removes students for the specific task of "learning" from the cycle of traditional activities that would otherwise occupy them in roles related to their status and social relationships within the wider community.

styles affect class dynamics, this model is broadly teacher-centred and driven.

Writing a number of years ago for Christian teachers in an Indian context, Herbert Hoefer helpfully compared options, within the schooling model.[27] He distinguished, within this model, a "factory-type school, and a "laboratory"-type school. The factory treats all students in similar fashion, and is organised to produce the desired results. Set subjects, timetables, and order are important issues. The teacher functions as a factory supervisor. The "laboratory" considers each student as unique, but the school as a cooperative and exploratory venture. Individuality, creativity, and cooperation are important issues. The teacher focuses on the learning and growth of the students. Both the factory and the laboratory are thoroughly within the schooling model, but represent wide variations in teaching style.

The schooling model is so thoroughly a product of Western education, including theological education, that, when missionaries established Bible schools for leadership training in receptor countries, the schooling model was adopted almost without question as the right way to train indigenous leadership. A weakness of this model, for Brethren Bible training, is that it implicitly assumes completion of the course will provide automatic entry into church leadership roles. Brethren disavowal of a clergy-laity distinction, creates tensions for the trained Bible school student.[28]

(b) *The extension model.* The extension model emerged in the two-thirds world, in theological education settings, as a result of frustration with the slowness of seminaries to provide adequate numbers of potential

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[27] Henry Hoefer, *Teacher as Parent*, Madras: Christian Literature Society, 1976, pp. 59-75.

[28] Considerable effort, during student selection, training, and graduation, is taken to stress that completion does not automatically lead to church "employment". The model tends to contradict this.

leaders, with the skills they needed for Christian ministry for a rapidly-growing church.[29]

By developing courses, based on programmed self-study manuals, and weekly or fortnightly group meetings of students with a tutor, it became possible to provide basic ministry-related knowledge far beyond the location of the central training institution. Theological Education by Extension (TEE),[30] therefore, provided in-service training for a large number of practising leaders, without the academic knowledge and professional qualifications of seminary-trained leaders. In countries, with mushrooming church growth, it complemented this growth, by providing an alternative avenue for leadership training.

The extension model is less formal than the schooling one, offering opportunity to a wider range of clients than the formal application and acceptance procedures of the institutional Bible school or seminary. Extension offers in-service training, in contrast to pre-service training, in the schooling model. It, therefore, overcomes problems in the schooling model that provides large amounts of unapplied knowledge, and somewhat contrived skills training.[31] Extension is able to relate manual-based instruction to concurrent ministry experience, and the attraction of the weekly tutorial to enhance motivation. A weakness is that this ministry experience is not usually monitored in a formal, credit-worthy way.

The extension model changes the focus from the teacher to the manual. The manual replaces the teacher, as the source of information, and moves the process of interaction from interpersonal dialogue to a more

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[29] Virgil Gerber, ed., *Discipling Through Theological Education by Extension*, Chicago IL: Moody Press, 1980; C. Rene Padilla, ed., *New Alternatives in Theological Education*, Oxford UK: Regnum Books, 1988.

[30] Theological Education by Extension is increasingly being termed Distance Theological Education (DTE).

[31] For example, preaching classes, as a method of training in preaching, with a captive student audience, is structured to suit the schooling model, and is, therefore, dissimilar to the "live" setting of the Sunday congregation.

literary student-manual one. An advantage is that this process is less extractive. The student is not removed from the daily-life situation of ministry, and, although the study facilities are often less than desirable, and the time allocations have to be built around the pressures of ministry and family, the student learns the disciplines of continuing education, and time allocation, in ordinary life. By contrast, the schooling model is weaker in the transfer of skills from classroom to later life. Strength lies in the cost factors. Accessibility, for relatively low cost, is an asset of the extension model. It is, therefore, appropriate for the two-thirds world. But there are weaknesses. It may deprive the student of some research skills, such as effective use of library resources, because answers are implicit in the manual, and reinforced by it. It is also weaker in developing listening skills.

The learning dynamics are moved from the large classroom, and teacher-student interaction, to the small-group tutorial. The seminary can, of course, also utilise this dynamic, but the extension model is crucially dependent on it. The tutorial not only increases motivation to continue studying, it reinforces the bridging of learning to ministry, and of student to institution. Tutor training is an essential ingredient of the extension model.

A further weakness, perhaps, is that training is necessarily spread out over a long period of time. Unless high value is placed on the ministry aspects of training, completion of academic credit may take a number of years. It is a feature of the extension model, having grown up alongside the "schooling" model, that it regularly has to substantiate its equivalence to seminary training, rather than *vice versa*.

Finally, a major weakness of the extension model is its heavy dependence on literary skills of reading, comprehension, and writing. In some places, like rural Papua New Guinea, where literary skills are much less significant than oral ones, the requirement to learn, by interacting with a written text, may limit successful leadership

training.[32] TEE is not an option for the current less-literate leadership of the CBC churches, although Pidgin TEE opens a window of opportunity for some of these leaders.

(c) *The apprenticeship model.* A third model, which appears to have relevance for CBC church leadership training, is the apprenticeship model. This was the principal method Jesus used. It has been significant, in the history of ministry training, in several different denominations. As a model in theological education, it has often operated at the informal level. An experienced minister, preacher, or Bible teacher "recruits" one or more, generally younger, but certainly less experienced, "students" to mentor and train into ministry.[33]

The apprenticeship model is frequently "whole of life", and may not be for a specified period. The students eat, sleep, pray, and study with their leader. The leader shares his/her life, character, goals, ministry, and disciplines with the trainee, and encourages them to adopt similar roles. More than either of the other models, the apprenticeship model is student- and relationship-oriented. Although some of the learning may take place in class settings, and the content of studies may be book-oriented, this model is essentially mobile, and action-oriented.

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[32] Leadership training may be limited in this model by its heavy emphasis on this particular learning method. It may skew it by assuming that church leadership involves mastery of this particular set of skills over other equally important ones in the affective and relational domains.

[33] The Wesleyan-Methodists in America used an apprenticeship model for their early ministerial training. Among the New Zealand Brethren, Peter Lineham, in *There We Found Brethren*, Palmerston North NZ: GPH Society, 1977, pp. 121-124, records the use of Bible carriages (later termed Bible vans), for evangelistic tours into the outback by two men at a time. Where these involved a more-senior man and a less-experienced one, informal apprenticeship training seems to have occurred. Lineham records that a number of these men became overseas missionaries. Commencing in the late 1970s, Mr Malcolm Barrow engaged in formal mentoring of some NZ Assembly Bible School male graduates, sharing his home with them, and mentoring them into ministry.

Learning takes place in any location, at any time, and as the "teachable moment" arises. Flexibility is one of its strengths.[34]

This model focuses on character formation, and skills development. It is student-centred. Book-oriented learning may need to be consciously built into the process, if academic credit is to be achieved by this method.[35] On the other hand, this method is strong on empowerment for ministry. As a follow-on from pre-service training, or built around an internship-style process, this model comes into its own.

There are dangers and weaknesses in the apprenticeship model, too. The teacher, if unaware of his or her weaknesses, may well pass them on to students. Dangerous emotional dependencies, and interpersonal rivalries may develop, thereby affecting intrachurch politics. There are cross-cultural issues, as well, for missionaries to be aware of, when engaging in this approach. It may be more effective, when mentor and "apprentice" are both from a similar culture, but this should not be interpreted to mean that it is inappropriate cross-culturally.

Historically, all three methods have been employed in Bible training within the CBC. While the bulk of training has employed the schooling model, there has been a significant upsurge in the extension model in recent years, using graduates of CLTC, and the services of CLTC's DTE.[36] The apprenticeship model has featured informally in the ministries of a number of missionaries, who have seen the leadership potential of individual Papua New Guinean Christians, for example, a group of elders in an urban or rural Christian centre

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[34] Jesus seems to have employed the apprenticeship model as His primary method of training. For missionaries, committed to modelling their practice on the New Testament as far as possible, CBC missionaries should find this method, or a modification of it, very attractive.

[35] Academic credit is valuable in cases where comparability of learning outcomes is required for cross-credit purposes.

[36] Distance Theological Education. See Jenny Fountain, *To Teach Others Also* (MS), pp. 191-192.

location, or of the staff of a Bible school. Such missionaries have had regular and intensive contact with these key Papua New Guineans, and have built into their lives the confidence that they can lead, teach, or serve God as well as, or better than, the missionary himself or herself. The inspiration and motivation, thus engendered, has continued on in the ministry of such people, long after the missionary has left.

(d) *A multi-model approach*. The discussion, thus far, has contrasted three "models", to highlight their strengths and weaknesses. In practice, these models can be combined, to offset weaknesses that have been noted.

Thought needs to be given as to how the CBC can draw on the strengths of all three models. Each can be integrated into theological training, for the Brethren, but this requires careful study of each model, the range of potential leaders, and the structures already in place. For example, Bible schools, as they exist now, are useful for young people, who have been through the national school system. But there are others, who have not attended schools, or whose literacy skills have slipped since they left. The potential of these leaders can be harnessed by combining all three methods. Key ministries, and specific skills, can be developed by internships, apprenticeships, short courses, and personal mentoring. TEE courses could be available to Bible school teachers, to facilitate lesson preparation. Mentoring will involve other church leaders cooperating with Bible schools.

Having looked at the impact of a global, denominational tradition, and global models of theological education, we now describe more-specific theories of the learning process that are also offered as applicable to all human learning, and, therefore, global in nature.

3.   *Global Theories of the Learning Process*

Some theoretical frameworks for the learning process are implicitly global, attempting to explain the learning process by universal and theoretical categories. A number of these emerge from largely scientific and secular approaches to education. Lynn Gannett distinguishes three major groups of

theories – *behaviourism*, with Ivan Pavlov, John B. Watson, E. L. Thorndike, and B. F. Skinner, as its main theorists; *cognitive learning*, using a developmental model, as promoted by Jean Piaget and Lawrence Kohlberg; and *scientific humanism*, with John Dewey, Abraham Maslow, and Carl Rogers adding major contributions to this theoretical base.[37]

(a) *A Christian philosophy of education.* Although some would argue otherwise, a biblical approach to educational methodology should not over-react against appropriate methods, even if they have been developed by secularists. The Christian perspective should acknowledge that all creation is under the dominion of a loving and caring God. He rules over the whole world, whether human beings acknowledge this rule or not. Such a Christian viewpoint denies a sacred-secular division that restricts teaching and learning methods to a limited number of environments or techniques.

For example, Christians may agree with Skinner that external stimuli do promote learning in human beings, and trigger behavioural change. What they deny is that this is the only, or even the principal, form of learning motivation. And further, they understand that a learning process, resulting from external stimuli, may still be ordained by this benevolent God, who Himself became human in Jesus Christ, and "learned obedience by what He suffered".[38]

Secular theories prove inadequate, and lop-sided, from the perspective of the theological and Christian educator, who poses the question, "Is there a distinctively Christian philosophy of education?"[39] Brian Hill, a leading theorist on Christian education, distinguishes *secularism* from *secularisation*. In secularism, "man is made the measure of all

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[37] Lynn Gannett, "Teaching for Learning", in *Christian Education: Foundations for the Future*, Clark, Johnson, and Sloat, eds, pp. 108-113. Compare Kenneth O. Gangel and Warren S. Benson, *Christian Education: Its History and Philosophy*, Chicago IL: Moody Press, 1983.

[38] Heb 5:8 (NRSV).

[39] Gannett, "Teaching for Learning", pp. 113f.

things . . . a life-stance . . . hostile to traditional religion".[40] Secularisation, he explains, is "a social process, which has been accelerating since at least the rise of science in the 17th century".[41] Hill further states that "secularisation does not involve the creation of an alternative anti-religious canopy, but the removal of all such canopies from public institutions".[42] He welcomes secularisation, not as the privatisation of religion, but as "arguably, a better environment, in which to evangelise, on behalf of the gospel of Christ, than one, in which compulsion of one sort or another . . . pushes people into apparent conformity with a Christian life-stance".[43] Hill admits there is both a bright and a dark side to secularisation. It can be both a threat and an opportunity for Christians.

Hill faults the term "Christian education" as a misnomer, when applied to either a particular form of religious education, or an aspect of the church's specific teaching ministry. He is, therefore, at odds with American usage, as exemplified in Clark, Johnson, and Sloat's *Christian Education: Foundations for the Future*. Instead, he develops a framework for the teaching ministry of the church, involving two principal elements. These are *teaching for commitment,* highlighting the primary objective of the church's teaching ministry,[44] and, *the curriculum process.* [45] In the latter, Hill takes the concepts of

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[40] Brian V. Hill, *The Greening of Christian Education*, Homebush West NSW: Lancer Books, 1985, p. 61.

[41] Ibid., p. 61.

[42] Ibid., p. 62.

[43] Ibid., p. 62.

[44] For Hill, "teaching for commitment" includes both teaching, aimed at helping people change commitment from a self-centred lifestyle to a Christ-centred lifestyle (evangelism), and teaching to continue and strengthen that commitment (nurture). Both tasks, if they can be justifiably separated, are undertaken by communities of committed believers (i.e., churches) and are part of Christian education. Hill, *The Greening*, pp. 85-92.

[45] By using the term "the curriculum process", Hill appears to imply both the process of curriculum *implementation*, in terms of the teaching-learning process, and curriculum *modification* and *development*, as the teaching-learning process, reflects on the adequacy of the curriculum being implemented.

planning, presenting, and *evaluating*, to outline a manageable seven-step continuous procedure, summarised in Figure 1.[46]
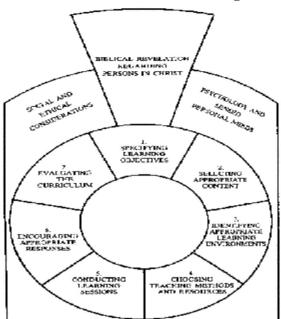
Figure 1: Hill's Curriculum Model for Teaching in the Church[47]

The model offers a global approach, which accommodates three important contextual factors – the local cultural and social context ("social and ethical considerations"), the specifically Christian and ecclesiastical ideological commitments of the schools ("biblical revelation regarding persons in Christ"), and the matrix of factors involved in corporate life, and individual personal maturity and goals ("psychology and sensed personal needs"). It does not isolate Christian or theological education from using the range of techniques and methods, developed in other situations, including so-called "secular" ones, but brings them under the scrutiny of a broadly Christian perspective.

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[46] Hill, *The Greening*, p. 100.

[47] Ibid., p. 100. (Used with permission.)

The importance of this, or a similar, model for Bible schools is great. By adopting its procedure, on-going evaluation of the educational process can take place, and prevent the repetition of ineffective strategies.

However, implementation of an educational methodology, like Hill's, needs to be complemented in at least two ways, to make it applicable to the CBC Bible school context. Firstly, Malcolm Knowles identifies methods appropriate to *adult* education. Secondly, James E. Plueddemann's contrast between "high-context" and "low-context" learning orientations has implications for cross-cultural and non-Western educational settings.

(b)   *Andragogy:* Malcolm Knowles distinguished "andragogy", the teaching of adults, from "pedagogy", the teaching of children, setting out some distinctive features of adult education.[48] Four assumptions in Knowles' thought about how adults learn have been summarised by Perry Downs.[49]

> 1.   Their "self-concept changes from being a dependent person to be more *self-directed*". Adults, therefore, come with a consciousness of their own learning agenda. They desire to participate in curriculum formation, and they require less direction in the learning process.

> 2.   "[A]dults are accumulating a growing *reservoir of experiences* and insights that serve as a rich resource for learning." They have, therefore, more to contribute in group participation, and they personally process new learning in light of that experience.

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[48] Malcolm S. Knowles, *The Modern Practice of Adult Education: From Pedagogy to Andragogy*, revd edn, Chicago IL: Follett Publishing, 1980.

[49] Perry G. Downs, "Adults: An Introduction", in *Christian Education: Foundations for the Future*, Robert E. Clark, Lin Johnson, and Allyn K. Sloat, eds, Chicago IL: Moody Press, 1991, pp. 263-273.

3. "[A]n adult's desire to learn will be oriented increasingly to the developmental tasks of *social roles.*" They tend to know why they are learning, and desire to apply it to the challenges of life, at the stage at which they are. Social roles bring changing tasks, and these, in turn, "serve to set the learning agenda for adults".

4. "[A]n adult's perspective on the use of knowledge changes from postponed application to *immediate application.*" They want to know how, what they are learning, will enable them to resolve their problems. Functional usefulness is important.[50]

The way adults learn has important implications for theological education. Unfortunately, some Bible teachers neglect these differences, perhaps more in cross-cultural settings, where there is an in-built difficulty in communication. In addition, evangelicals are perhaps more focused on imparting knowledge of scripture than effective adult learning.

A transmission orientation fails to harness the experience of adult learners that, in turn, enhances their learning. It risks misunderstanding and misinterpretation of the content, being imparted, because it fails to develop an interactive style that promotes dialogue, feedback, and group reinforcement. Interactive discussion assists the teacher and the learner alike to identify misconceptions and hidden agendas.

(c) *Learning in cross-cultural contexts.* Following ideas developed by Edward T. Hall,[51] James Plueddemann categorised people and cultures into "high-context" and "low-context" orientations.[52] In doing so,

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[50] Downs, "Adults: An Introduction", p. 267.

[51] Edward T. Hall, *Beyond Culture*, Garden City NY: Doubleday, 1977.

[52] James E. Plueddemann, "World Christian Education", in *Christian Education: Foundations for the Future*, Robert E. Clark, Lin Johnson, and Allyn K. Sloat, eds, Chicago IL: Moody Press, 1991, pp. 355ff.

Plueddemann built on his studies about the effects of schooling on thinking in Nigeria, and comparing those learning processes of African and American college students. He pointed out that, while there are "important similarities within all cultures, there are also important differences within each culture."[53] He noted that people, with several years of schooling, think in similar ways, while people within one culture differ in thinking patterns, depending on whether they had formal schooling or not.[54]

" 'High-context' people", as Plueddemann identifies them, "pay special attention to the concrete world around them". Both the physical and interpersonal environments communicate "subtle, but significant", messages for them. Such people tend to be more "person-oriented", and are sensitive to the feelings of others. "Low-context" people, however, "pay special attention to words, ideas, and abstract concepts".[55] Their orientation is more towards *what* people are saying than *who* said it.

Plueddemann is careful to explain that such differences are not only between cultures, but are also contrasts between individual orientations. This suggests that culture is not the only, or even the primary, factor in determining learning styles. He hypothesises that such factors as rural or urban living, industrial/business, or agricultural/subsistence, lifestyles, and the amount of schooling, may determine their orientation. He also offers the important insight that no person is totally low-context or high-context, but each person falls "along a continuum between very high-context and very low-context orientations".[56]

Plueddemann's analysis seems to play down the process of acculturation, involved in formal schooling, and in urbanisation and

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[53] Plueddemann, "World Christian Education", p. 354.
[54] A globalising impact of formal education (reflecting the influence of the skills of literacy) may be implicit in Plueddemann's study here.
[55] Plueddemann, "World Christian Education", p. 355.
[56] Ibid., p. 357.

industrialisation, in the wider society. The introduction of formal education, alongside processes of modernisation, dramatically affects traditional cultures, providing an overlay[57] of a global, Western culture. The problem for theological education, and its teaching methods, is how to develop a balance between a contextual traditional culture and a modern one. Plueddemann's high-context/low-context dichotomy may yet prove to be a Western/non-Western division under a global guise. The changing Melanesian context presents the CBC Bible school teacher with a significant challenge to discern what balance to draw between high-context (i.e., the indigenous, local culture) and low-context (global) methodologies.

A significant insight of Plueddemann's, for our purposes, is a comparison of learning environments.

> Academic schedules are rather abstract concepts, divorced from the unfolding present situation. Training schools that emphasise course schedules, tight syllabi, and the amount of time to be spent on each subject, would tend toward the low-context end of the continuum. Teachers that emphasise authority and relationship building, without particular attention to schedule or agenda, would tend toward the high-context end of the continuum.[58]

Plueddemann made an extensive comparison between high-context and low-context teaching and learning styles in diagram form.[59] His generalised summary oversimplifies a number of issues, but his discussion highlights many of the tensions involved in cross-cultural ministry, and is especially relevant to Bible schools, like the ones we are examining. He offers some valuable suggestions for assisting

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[57] "Overlay" may be too simplistic a word for what is a complex process of adjustment, but the urban immigrant quickly learns to move between the two culture worlds of town and rural areas, gradually becoming more adjusted to act appropriately in the former.

[58] Plueddemann, "World Christian Education", p. 357.

[59] Ibid., pp. 358-360.

learning, in both high-, low- and mixed-context environments. These become relevant, when we look at contextual factors.

B.   CONTEXTUAL ASPECTS OF LEARNING

How far should Bible schools accommodate local cultural expectations and patterns of learning? Can the CBC Bible schools operate successfully on a Western model, using Western approaches, and imported teaching methods? Given that Melanesia has developed a "schooling" model of formal education, should CBC Bible schools accommodate to this? Or are there more appropriate approaches to theological education in Melanesia?

We will focus on two issues: the impact of the orality-literality[60] spectrum on CBC approaches to Bible training, and the lessons from traditional Melanesian teaching-learning styles.

1.   *Orality and Literality in Melanesian Learning*

In a previous paper, we emphasised some aspects of the contrast between oral and literate cultures.[61] We also described the cultural change that was involved in the strong missionary emphasis on learning to read, so that indigenous church members, and their leaders, could read the Bible for themselves.[62]   The impact of literacy, and formal education, has been considerable. Younger adults and school-age children became literate more easily, and, with readier access to the Bible, they tended to threaten traditional leadership.[63]   Kevin Hovey's experimental approach to training

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[60] "Literality" seems a more satisfactory term than "literacy", in contrast to "orality". Literacy relates to the mechanics of reading, rather than the wider range of worldview impacts we refer to here.

[61] Ossie Fountain, "Evaluating Theological Education in an Oral Culture", post-graduate seminar paper, M.Th, Auckland NZ: BCNZ, 1998.

[62] Ibid., pp. 8, 9. See also Jenny Fountain, "Literacy and Establishing Churches in Melanesia".

[63] The fact that women became better readers than many men did, at least among the Huli, allowed women to set up quite strong alternative Bible study and welfare groups. This also sometimes threatened traditional male leadership.

non-literate church leaders is an example of the contrasting methods required in such societies, compared with literate ones.[64]

The orality-literality spectrum suggests that differences in learning styles must be met by appropriate teaching styles. In addition, Bible school students in Melanesia must be able to learn skills, at both ends of the spectrum. They need competencies, related to the literate heritage of Christianity, such as the ability to understand and interpret biblical literature, as well as church history. They must also be effective in tasks related to ministry in the modern world, insofar as their ministry is among those who have been acculturated into that world. But they must equally participate, communicate, and minister effectively in the oral culture of the large majority of the Melanesian population.[65]

With growing diversity in literacy levels in PNG, compounded by diversities, resulting from formal education, urbanisation, and globalising influences, generally, Bible schools will need to become much more sensitive to appropriate educational methods for their respective students. This is a major contextualising task.

2. *Melanesian Teaching/Learning Styles*

Much of Melanesian learning, in pre-European times, took place informally, and in a parental-apprenticeship model. The following examples of this illustrate three categories of learning, with associated contexts.

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[64] Hovey, *Before All Else Fails*, pp. 209-225.

[65] Robert Schreiter makes a perceptive comment on the contrast between oral and literate cultures, when he states, "A heavy use of conceptuality presumes a literate culture, where the analytic paring of metaphors and symbols can be matched with a storage system (written texts) that allows for this clear, though (from an oral perspective) slightly impoverished, way of thinking. Oral modes of knowledge are not inferior to literate ones, but they are different. Oral modes are often more redolent of meaning, and more commendable to memory. Literate modes emphasise clarity and focus. Abstract nouns are the stock-in-trade of literate cultures and of academic theology." "Contextualisation from a World Perspective", in *Theological Education, 1993: Globalisation: Tracing the Journey, Charting the Course* 30, Supplement 1 (Autumn 1993), p. 64.

(a) *Informal learning in daily living.* Much of the action for the social roles of daily living is learned by children, informally. They accompany their parents, from a young age, throughout the day, and observe, then copy, both in play, and then, more seriously, the tasks of their same-gender parents. Girls, in particular, are informally taught such skills as planting, fishing, cooking, caring for the pigs, and making clothes. Boys may accompany their fathers in hunting or fishing, when they are deemed old enough. Thus, the skills of daily living are learned in the informal, parental apprenticeship pattern of the extended family. For this, explanation is minimal; performing the task, repeatedly, is essential.[66]

Personal and group identities are established, and group mores are reinforced by the telling and retelling of stories, histories, and memories. Here, the older people (and ritual specialists) serve as the guardians and transmitters of corporate culture. Morality is reinforced by dialogue and consensus.

Life crises are handled, as they arise. When a person in the village dies, the cause must be investigated, and the appropriate steps taken. Speeches are made at village meetings, and possible causes will be debated. The younger people listen, sometimes with trepidation, in case they have broken some taboo, and may be accused of offending some spirit. When an offence is identified, an appropriate punishment, compensation, or ritual of appeasement may be agreed upon.

(b) *Initiation: focused preparation for adulthood.* Two particular "rites of passage" are of interest. The first is the process of initiation. Though initiation of girls was common in the past, it

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[66] Margaret Mead, *Growing up in New Guinea: A Study of Adolescence and Sex in Primitive Societies*, Harmondsworth UK: Penguin Books, 1942; see also Margaret Mead, *New Lives for Old: Cultural Transformation in Manus, 1928-1953*, New York NY: William Morrow, 1966. Although Mead's overall thesis has been extensively criticised, her observations of social behaviour seem accurate in this regard.

often involved a much more individual series of rituals, since it frequently focused on the girl's first menstruation. For boys, the age-range of initiation was much more flexible, and less related to puberty. It was a more-corporate event. Among the Huli, it sometimes extended to two years of, more or less, continuous exclusion from village and family life, especially segregation from women. An elaborate series of rituals were undergone to test manliness, perseverance, prowess, and to provide protection from magic, especially those associated with women, intercourse, and childbirth. Initiates lived with, and were taught by, male cult specialist bachelors, who also instructed the boys in tribal lore, morality, and male cult secrets. Knowledge of this kind was kept special and secret. Knowledge is power; its power is jeopardised by publication.[67]

Initiation served a number of valuable educational functions. At least one, with implications for CBC Bible school training, is that entry into another phase of life, or greater responsibility, involves learning, discipline, and experience.

(c)   *Land-rights transfer*.   Another important "rite of passage" occurred, for young men, as they grew up. Triggered perhaps by a father's increasing age, sickness, or frailty, a Huli father would take his eldest son for one or more walks through the land, occupied by him and his ancestors. He would point out the landmarks, the planted trees, and boundary markers, and use the opportunity to relate the history of land occupation,

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[67] Initiation virtually disappeared in the colonial period, under at least four influences – the demands of government officers for additional labour on roads, airstrips, and government buildings; the requirements of coastal plantations for labour; the missionary influence, especially when involvement raised conflicts with attendance at church services, and accommodation between the Christian gospel and the spirit world; and the opportunity for formal education. However, although a two-year labour contract on coastal plantations for Sepik men in earlier years was, in practice, a "rite of passage" to marriageable status, none of these alternatives, nor the rite of Christian baptism/confirmation, took the place of the multi-functional initiation. The interest in several parts of PNG in reviving initiation tends to reinforce the point.

distribution, and dispute. In the process, the heir was made aware of his responsibility to carry the knowledge of clan history that accompanied the right to occupy the land.

This individual event was also reinforced by the frequent land disputes and compensation demands. Such disputes are public affairs. Younger male members listen to their seniors, as they dispute the claims of others, and establish their rival histories.[68]

It is thus significant, for this article, that, whereas initiation ceremonies reinforce an extraction model for special learning, this is balanced by significant learning also taking place in land-rights transfer, where the memory is triggered, and repeatedly reinforced, by the natural phenomena of the land.

3. *Contextual Factors in CBC Bible School Methodology*

What can CBC Bible schools learn from contextual factors in the teaching-learning process? There is not space for a comprehensive statement, but some important issues are worth noting.

(a) High value is placed on the apprenticeship model, rather than the schooling model. Apprenticeship is focused on passing on life-skills. Basic Christian disciplines, and even more so, specialised ministries, should be communicated by demonstration and modelling, rather than, exclusively, in classroom theory.

(b) Knowledge is power. Creating an atmosphere of heightened awareness, with attention to memorability, memorising key Bible passages, names and events, and their significance, and communicating a sense of achievement are important. Leaders know more than their followers do. For evangelism, one could argue that the Good News of salvation needs to be treated as

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[68] Laurence Goldman has done the Huli a valuable service by making an extensive study of dispute procedures, and other forms of communication. Laurence Goldman, *Talk Never Dies: The Language of Huli Disputes*, London UK: Tavistock, 1983.

truly good news. Perhaps it should be shared in an impressively "sacred" atmosphere. In this regard, retreats and one-to-one, or small-group studies, may be more significant than "open-air" evangelism.

(c)   If attending Bible school is, in any sense, an initiation into leadership or ministry roles, then attention to the principles behind initiation need to be considered.

(d)   Significant learning should take place outside the classroom. The range of possible settings for learning should be increased. The garden, village, daily life, and travelling, all create teaching events that can be captured for significant teaching moments.

(e)   More attention needs to be given to mentoring and internship possibilities than have been used in the past, in CBC Bible schools.

(f)   Corporate and cooperative learning, and methods appropriate to fostering this, are to be encouraged, rather than the more competitive and individualistic approaches, common in the West.

(g)   Some important aspects of Christian theology, attitudes, relationships, and skills are best learned in Melanesia, it would seem, by a combination of extraction and situational learning.

C.   BIBLICALLY-BASED EDUCATIONAL METHODS

We have observed that a distinctive insight in Brethren theology is the conviction that all of life is to be based on the Bible, including ecclesiology. We build on this conviction, by asking whether there is a distinctively biblical basis for educational methodology. In particular, was Jesus a model teacher? Global and contextual approaches produce contrasting deductions in answering this question.

A global approach was taken by Warren Benson.[69] In discussing Christ as the master teacher, he explained a number of ways, in which Christian educators could discover both principles and specific strategies of teaching, from the teaching ministry of Jesus.[70] But, in developing his theme, Benson is forced to concede that there are ways in which Jesus' teaching ministry is not a model. For one thing, as the second person of the Trinity, He was unique. Then, Benson claims that Jesus is "the quintessential teacher. Being God in human flesh He had no weakness as a pedagogue."[71] However, Benson finds it difficult to distinguish Jesus, as a teacher, from Jesus, as a discipler. Modern definitions of the teaching task do not match those implied in the ministry of Jesus. Jesus used a discipling model of teaching, inappropriate for the context Benson has in mind. To that extent, Jesus is not a globally-valid model of teaching. It seems open to serious question whether more than illustrated principles can be drawn from the teaching ministry of Jesus, by such a global approach.

An alternative would be to view Jesus' teaching ministry from a contextual perspective. This viewpoint argues that Jesus was a highly-contextual teacher.[72] He passed through all the phases of growth to maturity. He spoke His native tongue with a Galilean accent; experienced the range of human emotions, and the gamut of human appetites, and social relationships. But, as a communicator of truth from God, He adopted the role of an itinerant teacher, using the discipling model. He called disciples, and patiently taught them, suffering their ignorance, misconceptions, and desertion, as well as rejoicing in, and affirming, their successes. His methodology was so

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[69] Warren S. Benson, "Christ the Master Teacher", in *Christian Education: Foundations for the Future*, Robert E. Clark, Lin Johnson, and Allyn K. Sloat, eds, Chicago IL: Moody Press, 1991, pp. 87-104.

[70] Benson lists, from a PhD dissertation by Charles H. Nichols, five visual methods, 12 verbal methods, and six "methods with students", in the ministry of Jesus. "Christ the Master Teacher", pp. 100-101.

[71] Benson, "Christ the Master Teacher", p. 89.

[72] A strong basis for a contextual understanding of Jesus' ministry derives from an adequate understanding of the incarnation, drawn from the whole New Testament corpus, but see especially John 1:14; Phil 2:6-8; Heb 4:15; 5:7f; 1 John 1:1f.

contextual as to be unremarkable,[73] even though the content of His words and actions were provocative and impressive.

Jesus' teaching style was occasional, invitational, aphoristic, and dialogical. If His longer speeches, as recorded in the gospels, have not undergone editorial conflation, even in these, He was memorable, and yet flexible, as to topical content.

His mobility led to a simple, dependent lifestyle. He often sat to teach in typical "rabbi" fashion. His accompanying healing and exorcist ministry was unobtrusive, subject-focused, pastoral, and sensitive. His healing and teaching were mutually supportive, and His concern holistic.

However, He was not so contextual as to be insipid. Far from it, His approach retained His confrontational challenge to His disciples and others, at many significant points, so that they asked questions about His being and purpose. Their reactions ranged from attraction to incredulity, alarm, and even amazement. His actions and words frequently broke through the cultural horizons, derived from traditional interpretations of scripture, and through cultural norms, when His disciples needed to develop new vision.

The balance Jesus retained, both as teacher and guide of committed disciples, between contextual conformity, and breaking of traditional norms, emerged from a continual dialogue with His Father, in prayerful dependence (e.g., John 5:30, 36-38), and identification, and interaction with the corpus of revealed scripture (e.g., John 5:39-47).

We can conclude, then, that, if Jesus was so contextual in His teaching style as to be profoundly challenging in His message and purpose, although not in His methodology, His message bearers must also conform to the demands of communicating His message, by a similar contextuality in their teaching methods. The purpose of this contextuality, however, is to increase the impact of the message they are called to communicate. For Bible school

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[73] But see Matt 7:28, 29. When people were amazed, it was the content of His teaching, not His method, that amazed them.

teachers to emulate Jesus' teaching methodology, a high level of sensitivity to the Melanesian context is demanded.

CONCLUSION

Successful educational methodology in CBC Bible schools will involve a balance between both global and contextual factors. Our search for global influences has alerted us to their combined impact coming from the West. Although some Western assumptions are counter-productive to good teaching and learning in the Melanesian context, some influences are desirable, and to be embraced. These include insights coming from an evangelical theology, from denominational history and identity, sensitivity to high- and low-context methods, and alertness to the significant potential in adult learners.

We have also been alerted to the need to sift global assumptions through the sieve of Melanesian cultural perspectives, *and* a thoroughly-Christian educational philosophy. Although traditional teaching and learning processes have some relevance, Papua New Guinea is undergoing rapid acculturation, and increasing diversity of needs. Educational styles, suited to urban situations, may be very different from those that work in rural contexts. Contextuality emphasises diversity. Urbanised contexts, while comparatively more impacted by global forces, will combine these in unique Melanesian ways, requiring sensitivity to appropriate methods there as well.[74]

This study raises the crucial importance of discernment in Bible school educational methodology. A graduate, who merely mimics his teachers, whether expatriate or national, will not be effective in motivating and broadening the experience of his or her students. Bible school teacher-training to an adequate level is an urgent need.

Broadly, global methodologies seem to have been inadequately adapted to the Melanesian environment. There is a need to redress this imbalance.

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[74] Because this series of articles has focused on rural Melanesian Bible schools, educational methods, required for urban contexts, have not been treated in depth.