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Volume Editorial

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Within my own fellowship (Assemblies of God, USA), there have been a couple of recent closures/consolidations of institutions of higher learning that had historically produced a significant number of the ministers and missionaries for this fellowship. All the while, the explosive growth of training centers via geographical districts of churches has increased across the United States. Reflecting on the history of Pentecostalism in North Dakota (mine and my wife's home state), one discovers that the Church of God (Cleveland, TN) once operated a Bible school and had a growing number of churches, but chose to consolidate this outlying training center (of which my father-in-law and several other family members are alumni) in favor of a move toward a centralized university. That move meant that many of the congregations were incapable of finding locally trained pastors and eventually led to the closing of many of the churches in the state. A number of the ministers who received their training in this regional Church of God institution have since received credentials with the Assemblies of God, USA (which continues operating several colleges in the region). Our broader Pentecostal congregations are indeed being impacted by such shifts in Pentecostal educational approaches and continue to shift. In this inaugural issue of *The Pentecostal Educator* are several stimulating articles intended to offer cursory entrée's on the potential future of Pentecostal theological education.

William Kay's contribution offers a brief summary of theological education leading to a survey of developments within Pentecostal theological education proper. This historical piece frames the discussion of the future of our educational practices by locating the developments within history and practice. Kay notes the movement from the educational orientation of Pentecostals along a trajectory from bible schools primarily intended for missionary/ministry training, to liberal arts colleges, and finally to universities.

Velli-Mati Kärkäinen addresses the various "cities" which have been proposed for conceptualizing the aims of education and associating each aim with various modalities for achieving such aims. Kärkäinen locates his discussion within the contemporary milieu of postmodernity that admits the philosophical context rather than ignoring or reverting contexts (as if the modern and postmodern impact were nil). Ultimately, Kärkäinen proposes a critical movement within Pentecostal theological education toward "authentic Pentecostal spirituality and identity" rather than an uncritical co-opting of other forms of Christian tradition and practice.

Byron Klaus's brief article is adapted from his message to the 2014 doctoral graduates of the Assemblies of God Theological Seminary. He calls for doctors of the Church to fully engage in mission with knowledge anointed by the power of the Spirit. His use of pictures to illustrate this call to respond to the needs of the wider church and the world offers a prophetic testimonial (something Pentecostals have a penchant for) to the continuing need to work with all our might toward the coming of our Lord Jesus.

While each of these articles suggest a manner in which Pentecostal theological education might be conceived and accomplished in the university or seminary settings of our Pentecostal fellowships, there still needs to be further engagement with the more widely available approaches as church-based, Bible school/institution, distance education, and schools of ministry. How might our fellowships be impacted by the institutionalization and accreditation of our colleges, seminaries and universities? Is there an increasing loss of specifically Pentecostal identity? What impact is there in Pentecostal theological education that is focused specifically on ministry preparation and/or credentialing? It is our desire that we might continue a fruitful dialogue toward enriching Pentecostal theological education and the various ministries of our wider stream of the Church in these last days.

In this vein we welcome potential contributions for future issues with content pertaining to all facets of Pentecostal theological education.