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BASES FOR CHANGE IN THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

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Today few people doubt that changes are needed in theological education. Increasing numbers of Bible institutes and seminaries are rethinking and modifying their structures, methods, curricula, and concepts of ministry. The extension movement is both benefiting from and contributing to this process.

Those of us who are involved in theological education by extension have discovered, at least to some degree, a new perspective from which to view the whole task of ministerial formation. This perspective brings out a number of dimensions of the problem which theological educators have long ignored or underestimated. Our purpose here is to lay out several of these areas for study and debate.

From its inception the extension movement has stirred up controversy. Unfortunately both proponents and critics of the extension concept have frequently missed the basic issues,

arguing superficially about residence and extension, posing the ideals and good intentions of one over against the weaknesses and faults of the other, or simply contrasting the visible features of the two systems. It may be that many of those who have embraced the extension alternative, as well as those who reject it, fail to see the real bases for change.

Six areas will be considered here, and each one will be presented dialectically in order to stimulate discussion. Rather than simply point out the need for change we shall deliberately draw a sharp contrast between the residence and extension approaches to theological education in each area. Our purpose is not to pretend that the extension movement has solved all the problems but to demonstrate that radical change is possible. We intend also to bring out the urgency and the nature of the crisis we face, not only in the Third World but on all six continents. We hope that this investigation will stimulate many to work out their own analyses of these issues and formulate their own philosophy of theological education.

Essential for change in theological education, whether this leads to extension or some other alternative, are the following:

1. THEOLOGICAL BASES: *What Is the Ministry?*
2. HISTORICAL BASES: *Can the People. Participate Fully in Theological Study and Ministry?*
3. SOCIOLOGICAL BASES: Wh*o Are the Leaders?*
4. EDUCATIONAL BASES: *How Can the Leaders Be Trained?*
5. ECONOMIC BASES: *What Kind of Theological Education Can We Afford?*
6. MISSIOLOGICAL BASES: *What Are the Goals of Our Training Programs?*

1. THEOLOGICAL BASES: What Is the Ministry?

There are of course many diverse traditions, and we could not hope to define the ministry in a few paragraphs or in an hour's discussion. But we can point out briefly three essential aspects of the ministry which are particularly relevant for theological education. These concepts stand in judgment of our traditional Western patterns of training and provide theological bases for change.

A. First, there continues to be a false dichotomy between clergy and laity in almost all our ecclesiastical traditions – Roman Catholic, Protestant, Independent, and Pentecostal. The Medieval Church and its ministry consisted of the clerical hierarchy and monastic orders; the

people were silent, largely ignorant and superstitious spectators. Since John XXIII there have been improvements in the Catholic Church: the people can hear the mass in their own language and participate in the liturgy; but the essential separation of clergy and laity has not been changed. This heritage shows up rather ironically in a major Spanish dictionary, where the word "laico" is defined "not religious" and more specifically "not of the church."

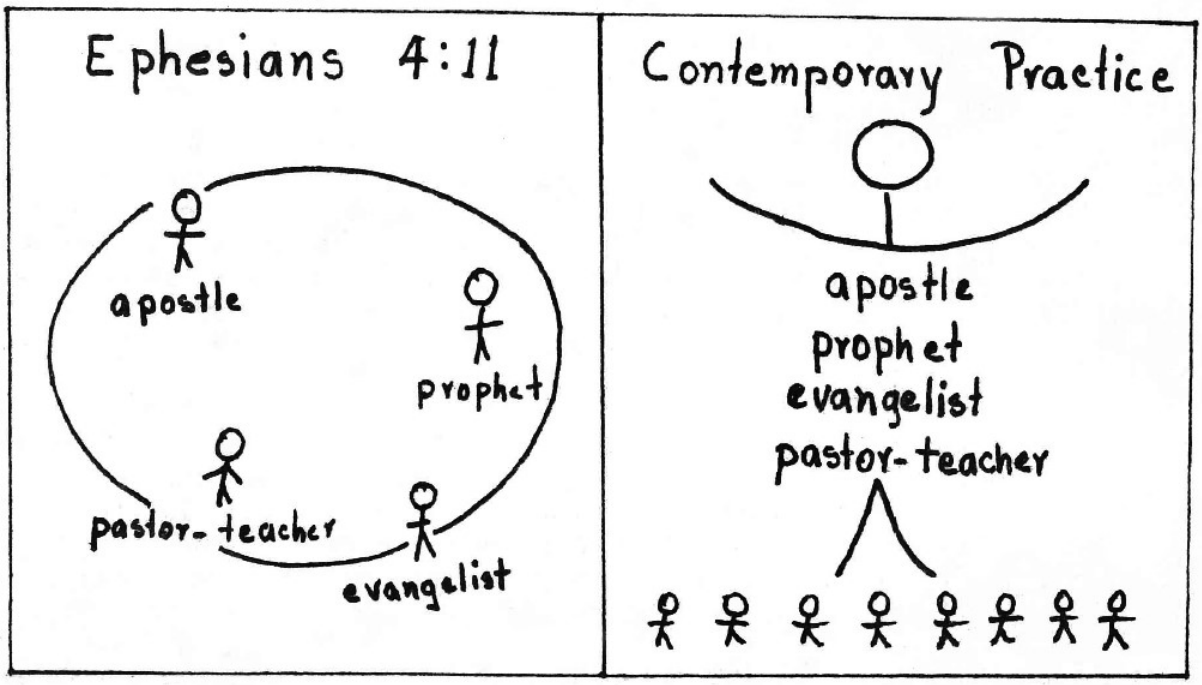
In theory Martin Luther broke this pattern in the 16th Century; one of the major doctrines of the Protestant Reformation was "the universal priesthood of all believers." One has only to observe Presbyterian, Lutheran, Anglican, Methodist, and Baptist churches in Europe and North America, however, to see that this ideal has not become a reality, even in those denominations that grew out of lay movements. When the pastor is away, a visiting clergyman is required not only to preach but to lead the entire service of worship. The members, even though in thousands of congregations they consist of highly educated people and mature Christians, are never permitted to baptize or celebrate the Lord's Supper. And if a small congregation cannot support a professional pastor, it must either be closed or yoked to form a larger parish.

This dichotomy shows up even in the Independent and Pentecostal churches. In some fundamentalist denominations only ordained clergymen occupy the administrative positions and form the governing bodies; in almost all cases the clergy run everything. The Pentecostal churches are noted for their spontaneous development of leaders; among some groups almost anyone can become a pastor overnight. On the other hand Pentecostal pastors at times take on greater authority than in the historic, Protestant churches; in some cases only ordained pastors are allowed to occupy the pulpit or even to ascend to the platform. Some indigenous movements are completely dominated by overpowering charismatic leaders.

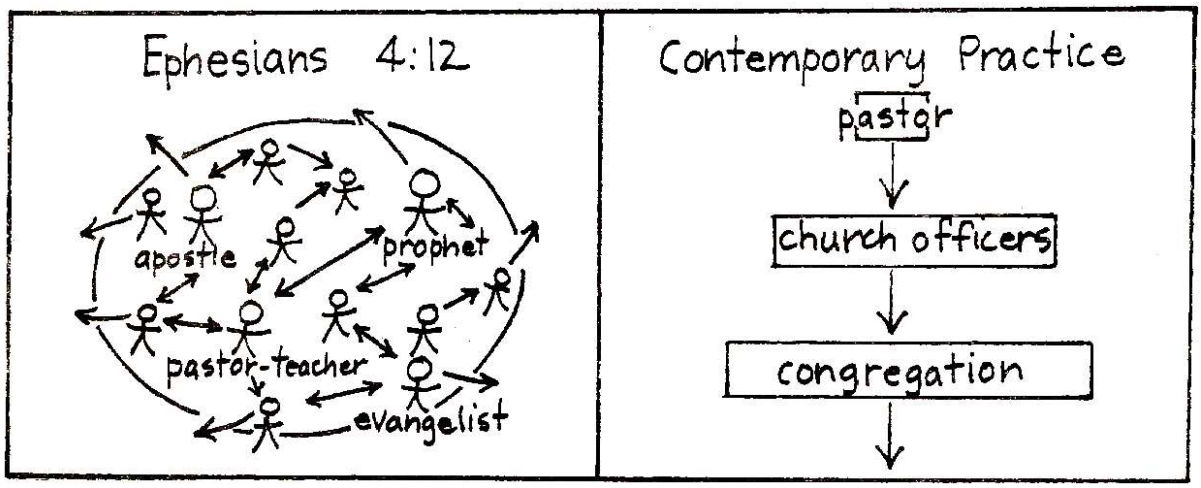
What biblical basis is there for this pervading phenomenon? Certainly there were religious functionaries, clerical classes, and theocratic leaders in Old Testament Israel. But the New Testament does not present any dichotomy between clergy and laity. This problem requires more than a quick study of the word *laos*, and it is not solved by simply stating that this New Testament word means "people of God" and includes all the members of the body of Christ. We must call into question our patterns of theological training and concepts of ministry, even the sacred sentiments of "the call to the ministry," our well-structured ecclesiastical

organizations, the entrenched interests of our clergy, and the well-schooled dependence of our members.

B. A most challenging exposition of the ministry is found in Ephesians 4:11-16. Paul's concept is dynamic and corporate, a sharp contrast with what we have just described. In v. 11 we note that there are several basic ministries (the list is not exhaustive) and that they are distributed among several different people. In our congregations one man, the pastor, is expected to carry out or at least direct all of the ministries. Instead of a shared, corporate ministry, we have created "a one man band," an ecclesiastical and spiritual superman.



In v. 12 it is evident that the aforementioned leaders are called to equip the members for the work of ministry, not to be or to carry out the ministry by themselves. All the members are called to minister, to build up the body of Christ. Quite obviously the leaders themselves are part of the body and in need of upbuilding, not rulers over the others. This relationship is what makes the ministry a dynamic function of all the members and produces growth both within and without. In contrast we who are clergy today find ourselves constantly trying to inject life into our congregations, to keep the committees and programs going, to maintain the attendance and offerings, etc. from a position which gives us little real leverage and produces little spontaneous growth.



In v. 12 and 13 we can see that the ministry requires the active participation of all the members and that all the members can participate effectively in the ministry. The work of the ministry is to build up the body. This includes preaching, evangelism, and missionary work, but it also includes everything that contributes to the mutual edification of the members. Christian education both at the level of the home and congregation, participation in corporate worship and fellowship, care and exhortation and friendship, witness and service in the community – all are essential and involve all of the members from the very young to the very old and can never be carried out effectively by a professional staff or even by a select group of leaders.

In v. 14 Paul explains what happens when this dynamic, corporate ministry is not functioning properly. The members who are not participating actively in the upbuilding of their congregations are easily carried off by other sects and novel teachings or become embroiled in personal conflicts and controversies, as happens today in so many of our churches. In v. 15 Paul again calls us to grow up in Christ, recommending truth and love as 2 essential ingredients. And in v. 16 he closes the paragraph with a resounding reaffirmation that this ministry belongs to "the whole body," "every joint," "each part" and that this corporate ministry is what produces real growth.

C. In the First Century the Gospel was carried quickly around the Roman Empire and even beyond its frontiers; churches sprang up and multiplied; and the leadership of the ministry was immediately placed in the hands of local people. The Apostle Paul apparently had no difficulty discovering and training leaders in each congregation in the space of a few days or weeks or at the most months, and this was a major factor in the rapid expansion of the early church.

Roland Allen and others have pointed out that one of the great errors of the modern missionary movement is that it failed to recognize the legitimacy and the priority of indigenous leadership, i.e. local leaders who could take over readily the responsibilities of all the ministerial functions within their congregations without passing through the lengthy, costly, deculturizing training process imposed by Western tradition. This basic fallacy is now endemic throughout the world among the older churches and to a lesser degree among the younger churches. In many denominations it is almost unheard-of for a congregation to develop its own ministry with leaders from among its own members; they all hire trained specialists, seminary graduates, outsiders. Third World churches are striving to emulate the Western pattern of professional ministry, but at this very moment the large denominations of North America and Europe are facing grave financial crises and declining vitality because of their universal dependence on professionals.

CONCLUSION: What is the function of theological education in terms of these 3 essential aspects of the ministry? *Traditional training patterns reinforce the dichotomy between clergy and laity; they debilitate the dynamics of ministry at the congregational level; and they make the churches dependent upon highly trained, professional pastors.* Candidates for the professional ministry are the only serious concern of the seminaries; upon graduation these young, inexperienced, and largely unmarried men and women are ordained, set apart, consecrated; as pastors or "ministers" they are given a salary, which in turn means that they are expected to serve full-time. The corollary is that the other members are not trained for ministry; they are not set apart for service in the church; they receive no salary; and they are not really expected to be responsible for the work of the ministry.

Theological education by extension, on the other hand, breaks down the dichotomy between clergy and laity by encouraging alt kinds of leaders to prepare themselves for ministry. It stimulates the dynamics of ministry at the local level by training those men and women in the context of their own communities and congregations. It enables the congregations to develop their own leadership for ministry, so that they do not need to depend on outside, highly trained, professional clergy.

This brief consideration of certain aspects of the ministry indicates that change in theological education is urgently needed. The extension movement demonstrates that change is possible;

it is actually taking place. Noone claims that extension is the only or the ultimate pattern of theological training. On the contrary by breaking with tradition it has opened the way for other alternatives.

2. HISTORICAL BASES: Can the People Participate Fully in Theological Study and ministry?

Most pastors and members would not quarrel with the idea that the ministry should be corporate and collegiate. Many preach and teach this concept in their churches. The problem is not so much the theory (orthodoxy) as it is a matter of putting it into practice (orthopraxis). And here the question arises, Can the people in our churches really prepare themselves theologically and participate fully in the ministry?

The natural tendency is to think that the way we do things today is the way they have always been done – and that this is the only or the best way. We need to look again at the history of the church.

H.R. Niebuhr and D.D. Williams (*The Ministry in Historical Perspective*) demonstrated 20 years ago that institutionalized theological education is a very recent phenomenon. Down through history the vast majority of pastors and priests in all ecclesiastical traditions were trained in the field or on the job. Even as recently as 1926, 40 percent of the ministers in the 17 largest denominations in the U.S. had attended neither college nor seminary.

Following are 3 historical cases, from 3 different settings, which indicate not only that the common people can participate fully in theological study and ministry but that they are more likely to bring renewal and growth to the churches.

A. John Wesley was to the day he died an Anglican priest, albeit a renegade, and he himself was educated at Oxford. The Methodist movement, however, was forced to depend largely upon unschooled lay preachers, because the clergy were not sympathetic to the movement. Wesley was eminently gifted as an organizer. Not willing to break with the Church of England, he organized his converts into "religious societies," a common device at that time, then further divided them into "classes" of about 12 people. The "class leaders" were charged to collect a penny from each member each week, and the groups developed a kind of spiritual oversight and mutual pastoral care. Out of this process leaders were formed for various lay offices.

The Methodist movement was disciplined, as its name implies, and the lay preachers followed a rigorous program of daily study as they carried out their ministry. They were expected to give 8 hours daily to sleeping and eating, 8 to study, prayer, and meditation, and 8 to preaching, visitation, and social work. Wesley prepared numerous materials, including a 50-volume collection of Christian literature, which the lay preachers were to study and also to sell. John Wesley himself was the greatest example for his followers. During 50 years of intensive ministry he traveled – largely on horseback – an average of 5000 miles per year, preached 15 sermons a week, directed the many organizations of the growing movement, continued his prodigious literary output, and maintained his own daily spiritual discipline.

By the time Wesley died the Methodist movement had 71,000 members and 294 preachers in England, 43,000 members and 198 preachers in the U.S. In the New World many Methodists were deprived of the sacraments because there were no Anglican churches in those regions. Unable to obtain Anglican ordination for his preachers, Wesley was finally forced to take the step which caused the final break with the Church of England. In 1784 he and Thomas Coke ordained their first presbyters, and Wesley appointed Coke and Francis Asbury as Superintendents. In that same year the Methodist Episcopal Church was organized in Baltimore.

It would be presumptuous to compare the effectiveness of the Anglican Church and the Methodist movement in the late 18th and 19th Centuries, but it certainly is evident in this example that the people of God (*laos*) are capable of forming their own leaders, of carrying out serious theological studies far from any academic institution or special environment, of producing a vital ministry, and of effecting a world-transforming mission.

B. The second case study takes us to the New World, to the opening up of the first frontier, when the burgeoning population of the newly independent United States began to spill over the Appalachian Mountains in large numbers. Up until this time the Anglican, Congregational, and Presbyterian Churches were the most numerous and influential, but they insisted on a formally educated clergy. The new situation was primitive; communities were small and scattered; the people were poor. The established churches of the East were ill-equipped to respond to the challenge, precisely because of their dependence upon a professional clergy. Into the vacuum stepped the Methodists and the Baptists.

The Methodists were able to survive and grow in the frontier situation because they were accustomed to meeting in small groups for mutual care and edification under lay leaders. The limited number of Methodist pastors played a crucial role as circuit riders, visiting the lay leaders and their "classes" over a broad area.

The Baptists were even more successful because each group was independent and did not require an educated pastor at all. Spontaneous preachers who felt called of God and were selected from among their peers led their congregations and developed their talents through the practice of ministry. Often they supported themselves, entirely or in part, through farming or some other employment.

Once again it would be presumptuous to judge the effectiveness of the different ecclesiastical traditions during this period, but it is clear that the traditional pattern of professional clergy has its limitations and that the common people can and will produce their own leaders if given a chance to do so. The Methodist lay leaders and the Baptist preachers led their churches in ministry during a crucial period in U.S. history, demonstrating their gifts and achieving remarkable growth along with the westward march of the people. Due to them, in large measure, the several Baptist bodies today number 27.7 million and the Methodists 13.2 million, compared with 3.8 million Presbyterians, 2.9 million Anglicans, and perhaps 1.5 million Congregationals in that country.

C. The third case study refers to the Pentecostals in Latin America today. It might be argued that the churches have survived and grown under poorly educated leaders in rural, frontier, and pre-industrial societies but that today they must have a highly trained clergy. Not so. The story which is being written right now during the second half of the 20th Century by the Pentecostals of Latin America is that Christian people's movements led by their natural leaders can prosper in the modern world, especially among the urban masses, and not to the exclusion of the middle and even professional classes.

Most of these Pentecostal pastors have little formal schooling and no Bible institute or seminary training. But they are not uneducated or untrained! Rather their gifts and skills have been shaped and developed "in the streets" and in the dynamic life of the churches. New converts are normally incorporated into the active witness of the churches right away, first by giving their testimony in public, later teaching a class and leading services of worship, then

preaching, taking charge of a new preaching point, and perhaps becoming a church worker. Only after long years of experience, testing, and voluntary service that brings forth fruit in terms of growth in the church and that meets with the approval of peers and superiors does a man become a pastor. This process produces genuine leadership, men who are capable of leading mother churches that number, along with their daughter congregations, 10,000, 25,000, or 40,000 members. The largest Pentecostal denomination in Latin America, the Assemblies of God in Brazil, is said to have over 3 million members with about 40,000 workers ranked in descending order as pastors, evangelists, presbyters, deacons, and helpers. One of their mother church complexes, spreading throughout a major city and into the hinterland, numbers 200,000.

So it is that the Pentecostals are now 3 or 4 times as numerous as all the other Protestants put together in Latin America today, and they continue to grow rapidly. The historic denominations, which initiated work in most of these countries about 100 years ago, remain for the most part small and weak. Ironic as it may seem, the Methodists and Baptists, who responded so well to the frontier challenge in the U.S., have now adopted the traditional pattern of a professional, educated clergy, and they have now stayed behind with the Presbyterians and Anglicans.

CONCLUSION: What lessons should we draw from these brief case studies? *History teaches us that the Western academic-professional system of clergy tends to be static, incapable of responding to the needs of the masses, preoccupied with position and privilege at the expense of dynamic, corporate ministry.* Theological education can in fact be a major obstacle to the growth of the church and the fulfillment of the ministry.

On the other hand the extension movement opens up the possibility of preserving the self-evident values of theological education without destroying the dynamics of leadership formation and church growth. Local leaders can obtain a profound, integral training while carrying on their ministry in the streets and in the life of the congregations. In fact increasing numbers of Pentecostal and other pastors and church workers are now taking advantage of the new opportunities that extension programs are opening up to them, especially in Latin America and also in other places.

3. SOCIOLOGICAL BASES: Who Are the Leaders?

Biblically, theologically, and historically there are grounds for insisting that the churches' ministry should be directed by leaders of the people, not by a professional class of clergy. This leads us to ask 3 fundamental questions: What is real leadership? How are leaders formed? How are they selected, invested with authority, and sustained in positions of leadership? Here we turn to sociology and anthropology for additional light as we consider bases for change in existing patterns of theological education.

A. What is Leadership?

It would be misleading and erroneous to set up a single model of leadership. Every society and sub-culture has its own patterns, roles, qualifications. On the other hand it is easy to point out the fallacy of Western church traditions, precisely because they ignore or by-pass these social realities. By imposing certain academic requirements for ministerial candidates and limiting the accessibility of theological education, these traditions inevitably clash with the existing leadership patterns in most cultures. This phenomenon goes a long way to explain why the historic churches are rapidly losing ground to the Pentecostals in Latin America, the Independent Churches in Africa, and indigenous churches throughout the Third World. It also raises serious questions about theological education in the West.

It should be obvious that leadership is much more than academic credentials. In fact academic credentials may or may not be important for church leaders, which is not to say that relevant skills and knowledge are unimportant . . . ever. In every culture the churches' leaders need, more than schooling, a sense of calling and dedication, talents and gifts (in the traditional and in the charismatic sense), the ability to participate effectively in their group, identification with the group, acceptability to the group, etc. From this point of view any system of theological education is important not so much for what it teaches (quantity and quality) but for how it selects or excludes the real leaders.

Roland Allen (*The Ministry of the Spirit*) developed this essential insight over 50 years ago. He pointed out the significance of Paul's selection of elders and bishops, as described in his Pastoral Epistles. In both 1 Timothy 3:2-7 and Titus 1:6-9 Paul lists 15 qualifications for leadership, and most of them refer to personal and social virtues, i.e. behavior in the home,

church, and society. The conclusion of these studies is that leadership implies experience and maturity, and Paul naturally called the leaders he appointed in each church "elders," which included the pastors and/or bishops.

B. How Are Leaders Formed?

Leaders are not formed by educational institutions; pastors and elders cannot expect to attain the qualities of genuine church leaders by "going to seminary." Schools can contribute to the intellectual and personal growth of their pupils, but leadership development takes place largely in society, in the group, in the life of the church. In recent years schools and seminaries have tried to provide more of an environment for integral development, with simulations and field experiences, but these are by and large sporadic and pale imitations of real life. Furthermore, the socialization process of these institutions can be completely irrelevant or discontinuous or even negative as regards leadership in the churches.

The problem of traditional theological education is not only the fact that the seminaries and Bible institutes are incapable of forming leaders but that they withdraw their students (physically and socially) from the very context and processes where leadership can best be formed. Perhaps every pastor should first gain experience in the secular world and serve in a number of lesser leadership roles in the church, just as an ordinary member. Only after demonstrating his personal qualities, gifts, and leadership as a Sunday school teacher, deacon, elder, etc. should he be considered as a possible candidate for "the ministry."

C. How Are Leaders Selected, Invested with Authority, and Sustained?

We could not begin to deal with the intricacies and idiosyncrasies of the various ways in which our churches select, install, and support pastors. But, from a sociological perspective, the general pattern of the Western Protestant churches is all too clear. We select almost exclusively young, single, inexperienced and unproven men, and we exclude almost entirely the natural leaders who have gained those essential qualifications for genuine leadership mentioned by Paul, Roland Allen, and others. We choose these young men on the basis of a highly subjective sense of call and on the basis of highly theoretical preparation in schools. We set them apart through the years of preparation and then in an absolute way through

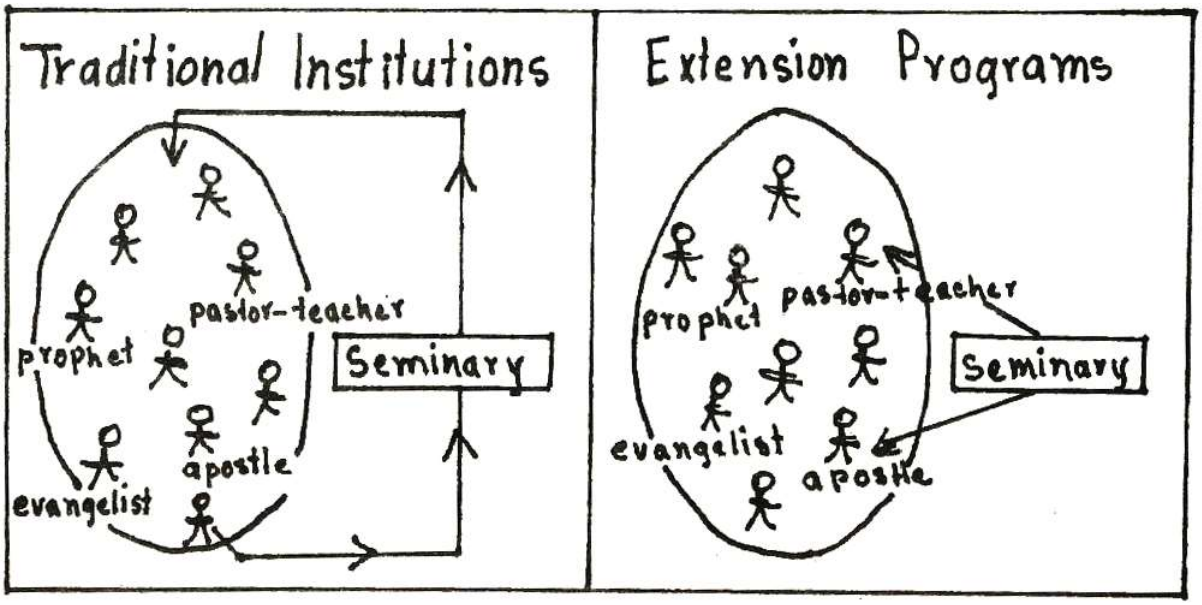
ordination. Then we place them in positions of authority over the churches and require the members to pay their salaries.

The implications of this process can be devastating, especially in indigenous cultures. Among many Mayan communities of Guatemala and Southern Mexico, for example, all young men enter the "cargo" system of civic and religious responsibilities. Over the years they are obliged to serve as assistants to the mayor, then as municipal squad leaders, in the lay religious orders, then as stewards of the saints, and – for those who fulfill responsibly all these positions – as elders. The very idea that a young man should declare himself to be called to the ministry, go off to school, and therewith become a pastor is utterly incomprehensible, dysfunctional, and very objectionable.

In modern industrial societies it is argued that the churches need highly educated pastors, just as we have highly educated professional people in other fields. The question here raised is not the level of training; high level training can be arranged in several different ways. But the ministry is not fundamentally a profession; it is a function of the body of believers. Therefore it is as important in these societies as it is among primitive peoples that the churches' leaders be selected and supported by the members.

CONCLUSION: *The Western churches, whatever their concept of the ministry may be, have developed an academic-professional model of ministry which is self-defeating in terms of effective leadership. Within this system theological education serves to select young, inexperienced men and women, separate them from the normal processes of leadership formation, and place them artificially over the other members.*

Theological education by extension recognizes that leaders are best formed and selected among their peers in the on-going life of the church and society. It offers to these emerging leaders the resources of ministerial training within that context. This basic difference is pictured in the following diagrams. It provides a sociological basis for change in theological education and the ministry.



4. EDUCATIONAL BASES: How Can the Leaders be Trained?

This leads us to another dimension of our critique of theological education. If the real leaders normally emerge later in life, i.e. when they have left school and taken on the responsibilities of a home, family, and employment, how can they be trained theologically? This question is not merely pragmatic; it opens up the whole educational side of theological education – its structure, its methodology, and its educational philosophy. A brief examination of these issues will give us further bases for change.

A. Educational Structures

The legitimization of extension and other non-traditional forms of education has been a long and difficult process, but there is increasing evidence in favor of these alternatives. Education is not a coefficient of schooling; alternative structures can be as effective or more effective than residential training. Local church leaders *can* obtain a valid theological education without going off to seminary.

There seems to be a peculiar prejudice against new educational structures in the realm of ministerial training, probably due to its sacred status and emotional attachments. There are, of course, valid questions to be dealt with, but the continuing opposition to theological education by extension has presented few weighty arguments.

In Guatemala several vocal pastors of the old guard continue to attack our extension system, even though the 3 largest universities in Guatemala have in recent years opened up extension centers around the country, thus belying the old protests that extension is inferior or for low levels of training only. In a remote section of Bolivia the directors of a primary school level Bible institute declare that they couldn't adopt extension because of its deficiencies, while in Great Britain the national government launches its massive Open University program, which is based primarily on home study. Church leaders in many parts of the Third World have been slow to consider the possibilities of theological education by extension in their areas, because they want only "the best" for their people. On the other hand the University of South Africa has operated entirely by correspondence since 1946 and now has 6 faculties (including theology) with about 40,000 students.

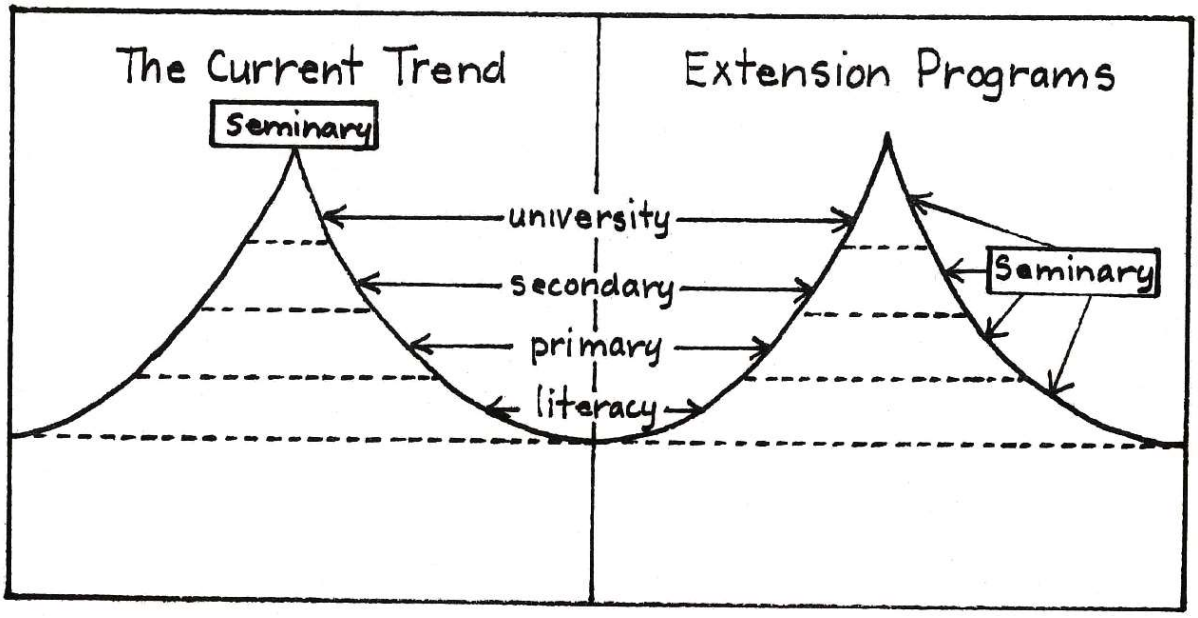
Changes in educational structures are necessary not just to meet the evident needs of society and of the churches but also for ideological reasons. Ivan Illich, on the basis of extensive research, reports that the traditional schooling systems in Latin America are polarizing these societies, forming elites, and fomenting fascism. They form a very steep pyramid in which huge amounts are invested in the few (less than 3%) who rise to the university level. Schools also conceal the tremendous injustices in Latin America, because they continue to draw in more and more people with the illusion that they are improving their prospects for the future (or for their children). Each person accepts resignedly his socio-economic slot in the world according to the level of schooling he has reached. (Ivan Illich, *En América Latina ¿Para Qué Sirve la Escuela?*)

Similarly seminaries and Bible institutes all around the world are striving to "upgrade" their entrance requirements and diplomas. In the U.S. many pastors will shortly have at least a D.Min. degree. In India the major seminaries have moved up from the L.Th. to the B.Th. level and are pushing toward the B.D. In Latin America the ideal is to offer a *Licenciatura* in theology, which in many countries is an academic level reached by less than 1% of the population.

The implications of this tendency for the churches are even more serious than they are for society in general, for seminary graduates are not only given a diploma but ordained, which sacralizes their superior status. The ministerial functions are placed in the hands of a tiny elite

at the top of the steep pyramid, not only educationally but also economically and socially far "above" the people.

The extension concept challenges this structure of theological education and offers comparable ministerial training at every academic level. Since extension students are generally not young men preparing for an occupation, there is far less danger that their training will serve as a ladder for personal advancement. At the same time extension programs are capable of reaching people at the highest educational levels without creating a clergy class dependent on the churches for their relatively high standard of living.



B. Educational Methodology

Just as new educational structures have been widely accepted in recent years, so also we are witnessing unprecedented developments in the field of educational technology. New methods, equipment, and materials are now available that make the old classroom procedures an anachronism. Home study, field-based education, and on-the-job training are now as feasible as schooling ... and far less expensive.

Theological educators have always been "educators" only in a secondary sense, so it is natural that our seminaries and Bible institutes should be slow to adopt new educational technologies. On the other hand theological extension programs have been thrust into the ferment of educational technology because of the demands of their new educational

structures. Although programmed instruction has created more controversy and frustration than effective instructional tools, it has given many extension teachers essential insights into the educational process.

It has, moreover, become evident, from an educational viewpoint, that the new relationships brought about by extension structures provide significant pedagogical advantages for theological education. Theory and practice can be integrated as never before. Professors and students can establish a genuine peer relationship as colleagues in theological reflection and in ministry. The theological institution itself can now be integrated into the life of the churches it serves. Instead of preparation for ministry we now have training *in* ministry.

C. Educational Philosophy

One of the most essential factors in any educational system, more basic than structures and methods, is motivation, which is closely related to meaning. A major problem of traditional schools and seminaries is that the students have a difficult time relating what they study to their own lives, needs, concerns, and purposes. In theological education by extension we have seen that the students have greater interest in their studies because of their involvement in ministry. Their studies are meaningful because they relate to present problems, live questions, immediate needs. Real learning, the educators tell us, depends on the perceived importance of what is studied.

Education does not consist of the quantity of information, books, lectures, and courses that a person can file away in his brain. And it has little to do with the "level" of schooling he or she can attain. Genuine education has to do with the understanding and ability to face one's world, deal with his problems, and meet his own and his group's needs. Theological education is growth in Christian living and ministry, and it is best achieved through action and reflection in church and society. Theological education by extension offers the possibility of educational renewal in the ministry in this fundamental sense.

CONCLUSION: The foregoing paragraphs are only suggestive; they point to large educational issues which provide further bases for change in theological education. *Traditional seminaries and Bible institutes tend to follow the elitist trends of our societies, and they perpetuate the image of education as the accumulation of information.*

Theological education by extension has broken with these traditional structures and concepts in an attempt to define education in terms of life and ministry. We must confess that the extension movement still contains much that is inadequate, useless, or even detrimental. But the door to change has swung open wide.

5. ECONOMIC BASES: What Kind of Theological Education Can We Afford?

We have sought to establish that dynamic ministry requires shared leadership from within the church, that leaders are best formed and selected by the normal processes of congregational life, and that they can be trained theologically in that context. Now we come to a question which is discomforting and critical today: What kind of theological education can we afford? There are urgent economic reasons for change.

A. Theological education has always been costly. As seminaries and Bible institutes move up the educational pyramid, however, the cost factor increases geometrically. Today institutions of higher learning are facing tremendous economic pressures; in the U.S. many have been forced to cut back on programs and faculty; the future of many small private institutions is doubtful. Theological institutions are part of that picture.

Ted Ward, an education specialist who knows the international situation personally, has stated that theological education is one of the most expensive fields of education, comparable to the training of psychiatrists and astronauts. And this is true not only in countries where seminaries are schools of post-graduate study but also in remote mission fields. This fact is not widely known, because the full costs have been hidden in a number of ways. Often the missionary (and national) salaries are not reported in the institutional budgets. Student subsidies may or may not be included. The dropout rate is rarely considered, and the number who abandon the ministry after graduation is seldom counted. Capital investment is taken for granted.

In the U.S. the cost of a basic theological degree (M. Div. or B.D.) now averages $25,000, including the investment by the student and by the institution. If we estimate that only half of the graduates stay in the ministry for any length of time, that figure rises to $50,000. Ten years ago we tried to estimate the true cost of ministerial training at a small institute in Central America which had attained more or less a secondary school level. We calculated that the investment per graduate actually serving in the pastorate was about $30,000. At that

institution and at many others in the Third World the students paid nothing for their training or for their personal support.

B. Even more critical than the cost of preparing pastors is the cost of supporting them in the ministry, especially in the Third World but also in the First World. As theological education moves up the educational pyramid and the ministry becomes increasingly professionalized, the students very naturally develop rising expectations as to their own status and support level. In Guatemala, for example, professional salaries generally stand at 10 to 20 times the workers' salaries – and the disproportion is increasing. Not a single Protestant church in the whole country now pays a pastor's salary at that level, and only half a dozen congregations of all the denominations can hope to do so in the near future.

On the other hand the churches do need, urgently, leaders who are highly trained, and one of the strategic roles of theological education by extension is to provide that kind of leadership. Rather than train young ministerial candidates at or up to the graduate level, we must discover and provide theological training for more mature leaders who have already established their economic base in some other profession. If young people are trained at that level, they will have to be supported more or less at that level in their future ministry. If older professional people at that level are trained theologically by extension, they can support themselves and carry out a voluntary, part-time ministry or enter into a fulltime ministry, if that is economically possible, and/or serve in the ministry on retirement. In this way the churches could reduce greatly the cost of high level training and avoid the burden of supporting highly trained pastors, and they would begin to draw upon their most capable members for leadership in the ministry.

C. Now that there are options (training in residence, extension, etc.), the churches have to decide how they will invest their limited resources for theological education. It is not responsible stewardship to maintain old programs and institutions at any cost. It may no longer be possible to maintain some institutions at all. Each institution or church must restudy its needs, evaluate the results of the past, and then decide what kind(s) of theological education it will support.

The Presbyterian Seminary of Guatemala currently receives $4000 per year from its parent body. That amount could be used to send one single student to seminary in Puerto Rico, or

one married student to the Theological Community of Mexico, or 2 or 3 single students to the Latin American Biblical Seminary in Costa Rica. It could be used to support 10 single students in a 9-month. residential program in Guatemala. It is now being used to maintain an extension program with approximately 200 students around the country, all of whom support themselves and pay minimal fees for their books and courses, most of whom have families, and many of whom already occupy leadership positions as pastors, church workers, elders, etc. (The present budget, which depends upon donations and sugarcane produced on the Seminary's land, is actually about $17,000.)

Up to now few seminaries and institutes have closed down their residential programs. This means that most extension programs receive only marginal support in funds and personnel and other resources. In spite of this fact the extension movement has grown rapidly around the world. But we have yet to see what might be accomplished in terms of leadership training and renewal of the ministry if the churches should decide to invest a major part of their available resources in theological education by extension and other alternatives.

CONCLUSION: What kind of theological education can we afford? It's a difficult question to answer, and each group will have to make its own decisions. We can simply say that there are economic reasons – along with all the other reasons – for making radical changes.

Traditional, residential theological schools are extremely expensive, especially if they attempt to reach the more mature, married leaders of the churches. And they create a heavy financial burden for the churches, for they produce professional pastors at higher and higher support levels.

Theological education by extension is capable of serving large numbers of students, particularly the leaders of the congregations. These students are certain to serve the church, whether they are paid a salary or not, and they generally do not raise their support level expectation by taking extension studies.

6: MISSIOLOGICAL BASES: What Are the Goals of Our Theological Training Programs?

Theological education exists not as an end in itself, not to establish the ministry or the church as such, but to enable the church to carry out its mission (God's mission) in the world. While

it is difficult to harmonize the different views of the mission of the church, there are some areas of common concern which we can focus upon at this time. It is fitting that we conclude this paper with a cursory discussion of the goals of theological education, which will give us missiological bases for change.

A. Providing Pastoral Leadership

Historically the primary goal of theological education has been to prepare pastors. It has been assumed that every congregation should have at least one pastor and that the pastor should play the key role in training the other leaders and in guiding all the members in the Christian life and witness. His ministry should include preaching, teaching, counseling, administration, etc. Because the pastor's role is so crucial and so comprehensive, it is reasoned, he should be highly trained.

Now we can see that this ideal is unworkable. In Latin America, for example, we estimate that 4 out of 5 Protestant congregations are led by men who have had no formal theological studies – even though there are 400 to 500 Bible institutes and seminaries in this region. In parts of Africa pastors of the historic denominations commonly supervise 5, 10, 20, or as many as 30 congregations. In India many congregations have not had a "pastoral" visit and received the Lord's Supper for 1 to 5 years, and the seminaries confess that their graduates have no time to use their theological skills. Even in the U.S. the historic churches find that more than half of their congregations have less than 200 members and may no longer be able to support professional pastors.

Faced with this critical situation, we affirm that every congregation can have its own pastor(s) and that these pastors can receive adequate theological training by extension (or by other alternative means). The churches need only to encourage and to recognize the leadership gifts among their own members; the seminaries and Bible institutes need only to design programs and materials to allow these local leaders to prepare themselves and carry out their various ministries where they are. Existing resources could do the job.

Vested interests (prestige, salaries, ecclesiastical structures, institutions, power) make it unlikely that the clergy will accept any radical changes in the present ways of doing theological education and ministry. The changes suggested in this paper require not only new approaches

to theological education and new patterns of ministry but a new self-image among pastors and "laymen" alike. Such changes will be possible if the churches capture a new vision of and make a new commitment to God's mission in the world.

B. Facing Today's World

Any definition of the mission of the church must deal with the growing world crises, and any statement of goals for theological education must show how the churches' leaders can lead the churches in their response to human needs that are reaching unbelievable proportions. The training of pastors to care for flocks of believers is not enough'. The task of theological education is far greater, far more complex, much more comprehensive.

First, we must recognize that our traditional concepts of pastors and lay leaders are hopelessly inadequate. The churches urgently need to engage their most capable leaders – most of whom are not pastors and therefore have never taken seriously God's call to them – in theological reflection about the burning issues of our time. These leaders, who are deeply involved in the economic, social and political structures and who represent every profession and field of knowledge, must be challenged to work out the meaning of the Gospel in today's world and to lead the church in mission. The clergy, despite valiant, isolated efforts, are utterly incapable of doing this job.

Furthermore, the churches cannot depend on any one group of leaders, whether they be professional pastors or laymen. Our burgeoning, suffering world demands the mobilization and revitalization of all sectors of the church – young people and women as well as men, deacons and elders as well as pastors, the poor and minority groups as well as middle class Christians. Believers can now be found in every society and subculture and they are all essential for the church's missionary encounter with the world. Therefore theological education must be extended to every sector of the church.

C. Building up the Body of Christ

Finally, we return to our starting point, the church, a body which grows as its members minister to each other and to those around them in truth and love. The church needs its pastors and teachers, evangelists, prophets, and apostles. But these are called not to stand

out as individuals or as "ministers" but to enable others to develop these very ministries. It is, after all, the church which is called to carry out God's mission in the world.

How can the church, the whole church, be awakened, renewed, and challenged for mission? This is the ultimate goal of theological education, and theological education holds one of the most important keys to renewal and mission. The seminaries have traditionally narrowed down the selection of those who can be trained and accredited for "the ministry"; they have chosen the young and the inexperienced and excluded the mature and the proven; they have imposed "standards" which further limit leadership to the highly educated; and they have created a profession of the ministry. So the church has remained as a sleeping giant. Now theological education by extension throws out a new challenge to the whole church to involve itself in ministry and mission and to prepare itself through reflection on that ministry and mission. This could be a new day dawning. The world waits desperately for our response.

CONCLUSION: We have considered theological, historical, sociological, educational, and economic bases for change in theological education, but our ultimate concern is the mission of the church. Theological education exists to train those who will lead the whole people of God in the fulfilment of His missionary task in the world. *Traditional theological institutions are far too limited in their outreach, and they have inherent fallacies. New alternatives are urgently needed, and theological education by extension has opened the way to fundamental changes in training and ministry for mission.*

This is not to say that traditional programs are entirely bad; some are excellent – within the limitations of any residential system. But why should we continue to invest so many of our resources in this kind of system when we could achieve so much more? Nor can we say that extension programs are all good. Some have failed; others have fallen short of their stated goals; most have not yet realized their full potential. But theological education by extension has enormous possibilities because it responds in new ways to the basic factors outlined in this paper.

There are several profound bases for change in theological education. The changes we have considered could well bring new life to the churches, new dynamics to the ministry, a new vision of and a new commitment to mission. Neither theological education by extension nor any other model is a magic formula. Its effectiveness will be determined by its ability to handle

critically and creatively the basic factors set forth above. And it will be determined by the willingness of the churches to respond to the challenge, to make fundamental changes, and to invest the necessary resources.

EXTENSION NEWS

Latin America Council of Churches

An important event in the history of the Protestant Church in Latin America was the meeting of over 350 protestant Christians in Oaxtepec, Mexico on September 19-26, 1978. The purpose of this meeting was twofold: 1) to take the first concrete step toward unifying the Protestant Church in Latin America; 2) to define the role that the church should play in this continent today. The first objective was realized in a formation of the Latin American Council of Churches. It will take some time to develop the second objective. More detailed information will be given in future issues of this bulletin.

South Africa

A seminar on "Training for Ministry" was held at KwaNzimela Centre in Zululand, organized by the Department of Training for Ministry of the Anglican Diocese of Zululand. It was open to people of all denominations. Rev. Fritz Lobinger of the Lumko Missiological Institute spoke on "Community Ministries" where the local Christian community takes responsibility for all aspects of ministry, distributing the ministries under the guidance of the Spirit according to the charisma manifested in the members of the local Church. He also explained the use of some of the training materials and manuals produced by the Lumko Institute. These materials were designed for use in Catholic Communities, but can be adapted for use by other denominations.

The Anglican Bishop of Zululand, the Rt. Rev. Lawrence Zulu, spoke on the Self-supporting Ministry, and the restoration of the Diaconate in the episcopal churches. The Anglican Church in Zululand has a number of self-supporting priests and deacons, and this had led to some problems, as some of the church-supported ministers felt threatened by this. There was a very lively discussion on the topic, and it was generally thought that the increase in self-supporting