



**CHALLENGING
TRADITIONAL THEOLOGICAL
EDUCATION**

**20
YEARS
OF WOCATI**

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Neapolis, Thessaloniki, 2008



The beginnings...

Setting up a World Network

At a consultation held in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, from 16–19th June 1989, the World Conference of Associations of Theological Institutions was inaugurated. Present at the consultation, which was sponsored by the Programme for Theological Education (RTE) of the World Council of Churches (WCC), were representatives from over twenty associations of theological schools, institutions and centres from all regions of the world.

The formation of the World Conference of Associations of Theological Institutions (WOCATI) was a result of several years' preparation. Over the past two decades, many theological institutions have committed themselves to closer cooperation at the local, national and regional levels. Arising from these developments, the need was recognized for a global network and organization which would support and enhance the work for theological institutions and their associations. Since a meeting of the directors of associations in Singapore in 1987, extensive discussions took place between many of the theological associations and the PTE. Then discussions prepared the way for the Yogyakarta consultation at which the concept of a world-wide conference of associations was enthusiastically endorsed and WOCATI formally established.

The main goal of WOCATI is to serve the needs and aspirations of its member associations and their institutions, schools and centres. It will be through this prime focus that WOCATI will seek to serve and support theological education throughout the world. The existence of WOCATI as a global conference is seen to be an invaluable resource for all theological institutions and their associations by providing an established network and resource to facilitate the work of the member associations.

Central to the aims and purposes of WOCATI is its commitment to the twin goals of contextualization and globalization. Contextualization roots theology within the lives and communities of the people in their societies. As it takes serious account of the particular cultural, economic and political realities experienced by the people within their specific histories and societies, contextualization brings forth a wide diversity of theological expressions. The consultation also acknowledged the impact of globalization as a powerful and liberating force within theological education and the fact that several theological institutions are committed to this perspective. Globalization readily accepts the reality of living in one world of interdependence. Theological education is to emphasize the way we are to take responsibility for the globe and to work to ensure that the theological vision of a world-wide community of peace, justice and freedom becomes a reality for all people of our globe.

Membership of WOCATI is open to associations which are constituted at least in part by theological institutions which award degrees and diplomas at the university first degree level and above. However, it is significant to note that member associations include a wide diversity of theological institutions, schools and centres offering programmes and courses in theological education and ministerial practice in a variety of ways. This diversity within theological education is warmly endorsed by WOCATI.

Other purposes of WOCATI include establishing processes which assist member institutions in faculty development, library improvement, women's concerns, resource sharing and providing guidance on accreditation matters. It is anticipated that a consultation and general meeting, with two representatives from member associations attending, will be held at least every four years. These meetings will provide a focus and forum to assist the work of WOCATI.

At the Yogyakarta consultation, the following were elected as WOCATI officers and members at large of its Executive Committee: President: Dr Zablon Nthamburi. Vice-president: Dr Leon Pacala. Secretary/Treasurer: Dr Yeow Choo Lak. Members at large: Rev. Les. Oglesby, Dr Noel Titus, Dr Jaci Maraschin, Rev. Ming Ya T. Tu'uholoaki.

WOCATI PREAMBLE

Theological education is a worldwide enterprise fundamental to the mission of the church. In its most immediate and concrete forms theological education is shaped by the religious, educational, social, political and historical traditions within which it exists. Theological education is carried out in a world which is increasingly being made aware of its interdependence and religious pluralism. Its context is both local and global and therefore, it can function more effectively within a worldwide framework.

These characteristics of theological education have led theological institutions to commit themselves to closer cooperation ill local, national, and regional levels. It is appropriate that a global network and organization be established to serve, support, and enhance theological education in its constituent parts. To this end, the World Conference of Associations of Theological Institutions is established. The members constituting this Conference join themselves together for the purpose of advancing their shared vision, purpose, and common cause.

WOCATI PURPOSES

1. To provide an established and continuing forum for members to confer concerning matters of common interest related to theological education;

2. To consider and promote relations of member associations to one another, to other educational organizations and units throughout the world, to appropriate ecclesiastical agencies as they relate to theological education, and to other bodies as may be relevant;

3. To identify and advocate excellence in theological education and ministerial practice and to encourage full compliance with the standards and purposes as established by the member institutions;

4. To provide leadership and understanding of the purposes, role and needs of theological education in the following ways:

By cultivating a broad and informed understanding of theological education;

By serving as an advocate locally and globally for theological education and its implications for church, society and education in general;

By interacting with other appropriate agencies and groups;

5. To provide services to member associations in the following ways:

By facilitating co-operation and co-ordination among associations;

By gathering, maintaining and sharing information and resources that will facilitate the work of member associations;

By encouraging, sponsoring and conducting research on theological education and related matters;

By enabling and supporting member associations in implementing standards, policies and procedures by which they may best serve their constituencies;

By assisting and guiding the establishment of procedures and criteria for equivalency of academic diplomas and degrees awarded by the institutions in the different regions;

By being instrumental in identifying resources for the development of the global nature and implications of theological education;

6. To promote the improvement and advancement of theological education in such ways as may be appropriate.

**The 1st WOCATI Congress
(Pittsburgh 1992)**

REPORT OF THE FIRST WORLD CONGRESS

Ian S. Williams
Australia

The first World Congress of the World Conference of Associations of Theological Institutions, (WOCATI) was held at Pittsburgh, U.S.A., from June 14-21, 1992. Twenty-six delegates from sixteen member associations, together with two consultants and thirteen guests participated. The Congress was able to further the goals of WOCATI as affirmed in the constitution adopted at the inaugural meeting at Kaliurang, Jogjakarta, Indonesia in June, 1989. During the first two days, the WOCATI Congress shared in joint sessions with The Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada (ATS) at its biennial meeting.

At the Congress, the following were amongst the most significant themes discussed:

a. *The inter-relationship between globalization and contextualization.* The importance of globalization was recognized in providing a broad, indeed global perspective for the theological task and also challenging any particular theology which claims to be universal. However, with a significant number of delegates representing associations from the southern regions of the world, questions were raised as to whether some expressions of globalization could be another form of the continuing dominance of the concerns of northern theology. A global perspective needs to acknowledge the range and diversity of cultural contexts in which theology and theological education are pursued. It was recognized that a crucial challenge to theological educators in many regions of the world was to give greater attention to developing forms of contextual theology. Some of these contextual theologies are being developed in regions of considerable religious pluralism. This constitutes a significant challenge to many traditional ways of doing theology.

b. *Who defines excellence of theological scholarship?* In the discussions at the Congress, great emphasis was placed upon the task of theological educators to educate the whole people of God. To engage in this task means to develop new forms of theological scholarship and research, with different criteria for evaluating excellence. Theologies of the people are not to be uncritical. However, at present, there tends to be a dominance of, if not an enslavement to, norms of excellence as defined by the academy and professional and disciplinary guilds, especially those of the northern world. The Congress asked the executive committee of WOCATI to be responsible for a continuing study of ways in which theological education and excellence of theological scholarship are being defined and developed in the various regions of the world.

c. *The contributions of women to theological education.* Congress acknowledged that theological education must take far more seriously the contributions

and perspectives of women. Their partnership within the theological enterprise will challenge many established ways of doing theology, as they bring distinctive concerns and methodologies to bear upon the theological task. WOCATI's commitment to having equal representation of men and women from member associations at the Congress greatly assisted in establishing a positive dynamic partnership within the life of the Congress itself. The importance of the contributions of women to theological education forms one of the continuing areas of study in WOCATI's programme over the next four years.

d. Other issues were related to *the ways theological educators were pursuing their vocation in a wide range of contexts*. It was here, as elsewhere, that one of WOCATI's unique contributions to theological education was experienced, in that WOCATI provides the opportunity for dialogue between theological educators from all regions of the world. Delegates received reports from their colleagues about such issues as:

- (i) the ecumenical nature of theological education;
- (ii) the challenge for faculty members to be involved within the struggles of the people;
- (iii) the need for faculty development;
- (iv) difficulties encountered in evaluating credentials of various associations;
- (v) encouraging theology and theological education to be expressed in indigenous languages;
- (vi) the need to develop more adequate library resources.

The Congress elected a new executive committee with Dr. Yeow Choo Lak as President. It charged the executive committee with the responsibility of furthering the aims and purposes of WOCATI in a number of ways.

It also resolved that the next World Congress would be held in 1996.

CONTEXTUALIZATION FROM A WORLD PERSPECTIVE

By Robert J. Schreiter
Professor, Catholic Theological Union, Chicago, Illinois, USA

A speech was delivered by Robert J. Schreiter on the occasion of the 38th Biennial Meeting of The Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada (ATS) and the 1st Congress of the World Conference of Associations of Theological Institutions (WOCATI). What follows presents the main points in the first two thirds of the address, combined with the complete text of the last sections of the address.

Summary

Robert Schreiter was asked to address the question of contextualization from a world perspective. His speech began with four assumptions behind his approach to contextualization which come from his identity as a Roman Catholic: (1) its theological appreciation for «nature” (and therefore culture) which especially values oral modes of knowledge, (2) its concern for the centrality of the incarnation of Jesus Christ which carries hope about all of creation, (3) its sacramental view of the world which appreciates nature as conveying Divine revelation, and (4) its concern for the «evangelization of cultures” which goes beyond evangelizing individuals. Schreiter examined contextualization:

Contextualization from a world perspective becomes essential because of the inevitability of globalization. Contextualization is finding one’s own voice against the backdrop of global media. It is a way of holding up what is noble and immensely human and humane in local culture—against all forces that would undermine its dignity.

Contextualization and globalization are interdependent. Thinking about context begins when the larger, global reality impinges uncomfortably. At the same time, our concepts of globalization have implications for what we do in our own locales. The two can serve as mutual correctives as we measure our faithfulness and our growth in our educational settings.

3. Globalization is currently profoundly asymmetrical. We are moving from an East- West axis to a North-South interaction. In this new world the North does not look to the South as a partner, but as a resource to be exploited. In this new world the population of the South is expanding and the average age of the North is growing older. New patterns of mission and dependency are emerging, but it is difficult to know the meaning of mutuality in such a profoundly unbalanced situation.

4. Contextualization is coming about more slowly than globalization. Why?

Because the legacy of colonialism is still very strong. The power of the global media culture is pervasive. The North resists contextualization because it is felt to be a rejection of Northern values. The North resists contextualization because it simply does not like to do things differently.

In this situation, according to Schreiter, there are three concrete issues facing contextualization—the uprooting of peoples, the question of reception (or how the Gospel message is received), and the shape of belonging in multiple worlds of reference. He reflects upon the implications of population movements for contextualization. He examines issues surrounding the way the Gospel is offered and accepted in different contexts. And he notes that it is common for people to find themselves with double and even triple religious and cultural loyalties. In this complex situation it is important to understand globalization. The final sections of his address examine globalization and the implications of globalization and contextualization for theological education. The exact text follows:

Globalization: The Long View

Along with our understanding of contextualization, we need a fuller understanding of globalization. I wish to sketch out a proposal here of how we might understand globalization from a perspective useful for theological education and ministry. Space does not permit working out the interaction with contextualization, except to make some suggestions in the closing section.

I wish to present this perspective on globalization by taking a longer view chronologically than we have been wont to do in theological education circles. Most frequently, we trace the interest in globalization back to the late 1970's, just as globalization itself is traced back to the early 1960's in business and education, or to the League of Nations in politics. However, I think that blinds us to those «world» perspectives we are hearing from the southern hemisphere. Globalization is a phenomenon much larger than theological education—something we all know, but tend to forget. It is larger than the phenomenon of religion, although religion plays an important role in it. [1]

To aid in this, I want to make a rough adaption of Immanuel Wallerstein's world-system theory as a basis for understanding globalization. [2] I am proposing that globalization (as seen from the point of view of theological education) has gone through three stages. Each of these stages is shaped by larger developments that serve as the *carrier* of these developments; i.e., they form a frame of reference for which societies of that time articulate their reality. This articulation, in an integrated fashion of all elements of society, creates

that phase's sense of *universality*. Religion in turn responds within the carrier to this universality. This is its *theological mode*. And this brings about certain *results* that reflect what, at that phase, constitutes effective globalization.

Schemata always distort reality. But they can help us see a bigger picture and help us raise questions about what we do, and see relationships that may have heretofore eluded us. The categories here of carrier, theological mode, universality and results are meant heuristically—not to foreclose, but to make us think.

It should be noted too that each of the three phases continues into those of its successors. But as we shall see, what happens to the theological modes of the previous phases is that they meet a different set of challenges than what they had encountered when they were the dominant mode. The phases should not be read in an evolutionary pattern from low to higher, the world and the carriers of those conditions. Let us turn to this long view of globalization.

1. First Phase: 1492-1945: Expansion and the building of empires.

The first phase has its period of dominance from the European voyages of exploration down to the conclusion of the Second World War. It is a time of European expansion and the creation of new European territorial space on the other continents of the world. The *carrier* of this phase of globalization is an image of expansion and establishment of political power over wide areas of the world—empire. The mode of *universality* giving justification or credence to this expansion is the concept of *civilization* that is invoked. In the early stage, the peoples encountered are seen as either animal or demonic; in a later stage, as not fully evolved. [3]

On the religious side, we see a concomitant development, reflecting the envelope of the carrier in which it acts, and the universality in which it works out its own understanding of globalization. Images of expansion of the Church, of a *plantatio ecclesiae* come to the fore. There is a sudden interest in worldwide evangelization (first among Roman Catholics in Spain and Portugal; later among churches of the Reformation as England and the Netherlands become worldwide powers).

The *theological mode* responding to this is *world mission*, understood as saving souls and extending the Church. The *results*, by the height of European empire building in the nineteenth century, is a worldwide missionary movement. Globalization, at this point, means extending the message of Christ and his church throughout the whole world.

2. Second Phase: 1945-1989: Accompaniment, Dialogue, Solidarity.

The Second World War finished what the First World War began: the dissolution of the overseas empires of Europe. From the late 1940's into the 1960's, region after region was given independence (at least «flag» independence) and it looked as though the shackles of colonialism would be cast off. There was an optimism about a new world at that time, fueled by economic expansion in the North and a discourse of «development» of the newly formed nations. All of this presaged a new kind of world. The *carrier* of this second phase was *decolonialization, independence and economic optimism*. The mode of universality was *optimism* about overcoming the evils of the past.

On the religious side, Reformation churches found themselves overcoming their old antagonisms (partially as a result of the student missionary movement and the experience of Resistance in Europe during the Second World War), and started coming together. The Roman Catholic Church abandoned at the official level its fortress mentality against the modern world and embraced that same modernity in the Second Vatican Council. Both of these Western embodiments of Christianity found themselves welcoming a new partnership with the churches of the South. The shift into the new phase called into question the dominant universalities of the previous phase. What «mission» meant came under close scrutiny. Meanwhile, many Catholics and Protestants continued to practice mission more or less as they had in the previous phase, while others sought modifications, and still others called for the outright abandonment of mission.

The response toward ecumenism, the ambivalence toward mission, and a new attention to the churches of the South was developed in the carrier envelope of decolonialization, independence and optimism. The *theological modes* that emerged were those of solidarity, dialogue, and accompaniment. Solidarity bespoke the new partnership that led to a sense of mutuality and commitment to the churches on the churches' own terms; it gave birth to liberation theologies. Dialogue was a reaction to the evangelizing mode of the first phase, and emphasized respect for the other and left the possibility of conversion deliberately vague. Accompaniment was meant to overcome the hegemonic patterns of leadership from the colonial period, and replace them with greater mutuality. The *results* were a new definition of globalization as ecumenical cooperation, interreligious dialogue, and the struggle for justice.

These were all couched in the optimistic universality of the 1960's that the world's problems could be overcome. The tension between mission and

these latter three went largely unresolved, and for many there was a clear divide between mission, on the one hand, and ecumenism, dialogue and justice on the other. Many, however, struggled to create a new synthesis. Globalization came to embrace all four by the 1980's.

3. Third Phase: 1989- : Between the Global and the Local.

Paul Tillich and others said that the twentieth century began in August, 1914 with the outbreak of the Great War. It could equally be said that it ended with the fall of the Berlin Wall. But the conditions leading up to that political event were also shaping a larger understanding of what sometimes is called the postmodern world. It was 1973, the date of the OPEC oil embargo, which is often given as the date when economic power and the concomitant modes of production began to shift. New technologies, especially in communications, marked a move away from largely industrial economies to economies involved more in the flow of information, technologies, goods and services. Just when the South was struggling to attain nation-states, these states were becoming more and more superfluous as information and capital drew their own map of the world—one beyond the eighteenth century ideal of the nation-state.

The *carrier* of this new postmodern reality is a *new global capitalism*. As was noted earlier, the defeat of socialism left no alternative. But the liberal capitalism that had been seen as the implacable foe of Marxist socialism has largely disappeared now into a new form of capitalism that emphasizes the mobility of capital, information and resources rather than the building of large industrial bases. While often having a clear national identity of origin (Japanese, American, German), it in effect moves wherever it needs to in order to achieve its short-range goals. Because profit margins have narrowed since the 1960's, the temptation is to get the short-term profit rather than wait for a long-term return. [4] This global capitalism is characterized by postnationalism, a communication system built on network rather than hierarchy, a multicentered view of the world, and a tendency to operate in the short term. While it brings untold new wealth to some, it also breeds asymmetries, conflict, and a sense of no alternatives for those not included in the flow of its information, technology, capital and goods.

Its mode of *universality* is the new *global culture*, characterized by American cola drinks, athletic and casual clothing, and American movie and television entertainment. It is a culture sent virtually everywhere, but received in considerably different fashions. For example, «Dynasty» is watched differently in Lagos than in Los Angeles; studies have shown that Canadians see

the resolutions of disputes in «All in the Family» differently from the Dutch (Archie tends to be the winner in Canada, while Edith, Gloria and Meathead triumph in the Netherlands). The universality is both real and unreal at the same time. It is real inasmuch as it is found everywhere; it is unreal in that what it signifies means different things in the reception of the local culture.

What becomes the theological *mode* of the third phase of globalization? Discussions of the meaning of mission continue. Worries about the stagnation of ecumenism; the possibility of genuine dialogue with the religiously other and a theology of religions; and speculation about the future of liberation theology in a no-alternative world bespeak the fact that even as we have moved into a new phase, the previously dominant modes continue with us. After all, most Christians still feel the need to spread the Gospel, overcome the scandalous divisions in the body of Christ, understand other religious traditions better, and struggle for justice. But the optimism that marked those earlier discussions has been replaced by a sobered realism (the attitude of the postmodern phase). Can a new mode be identified?

I would suggest that the new *mode* will involve bridge-building, finding symbols of hope, and seeking paths of reconciliation. In other words, the barriers in the third phase are not between Empire and colony, or between older and younger church, but rather they are barriers that run helter-skelter through our communities, created by attempts to hold the global and the local in critical correlation. Even to phrase it as between North and South is too simple, since the South lives in the North and the North in the South. We need to find the cracks yawning in our midst where the global and the local fail to connect. We need to seek symbols of hope in a world that seems less and less able to hold out opportunities for another vision. Our hope is not the optimistic hope of the 1960's; it is a tempered, more sobered hope, but a hope nonetheless. Likewise, in the tensions and conflicts that emerge, we need to seek paths of reconciliation lest an ecologically threatened earth fracture altogether. There are many false paths of reconciliation, to be sure. But in an ever violent world where the majority suffer, reconciliation—the discovery of the gift of true humanity—is something we cannot disdain to seek. [5]

Globalization in this third phase, then, becomes a quest for the bridges between the global and the local. The global has changed; its economic face appears to be even less benign than in the recent past. This has prompted new expressions of the local—the eruptions in Central Asia and in Eastern Europe, the resurgence of native pride in the Americas, but also the rootlessness of much of affluent North America and Western Europe. How shall the

global and the local be configured to one another, within communities and across continents? How shall prophetic challenge be maintained? If the hypothesis about the yoking together of the global and the local suggested above is correct, this could well be the shape that globalization will take in the ensuing period, even as we struggle to integrate the understandings of the first and second phase.

Implications for Theological Education

Let me conclude this already too long presentation with just a couple of suggestions about what all of this means for theological education today. I make the suggestions in three points and a concluding remark about vision.

If the next phase of globalization finds us between the global and the local, we need to prepare ourselves and our students to:

Understand the contextual. Especially for uprooted peoples, for those who receive in a different way from how it is given, and who seek ways (and it is often plural) to belong. The world has shifted such that we can no longer presume (or perhaps should even presume) an Archimedean point.

Build strong local communities. Only communities confident of themselves and imbued with the Gospel will resist the temptation to become enclaves or fortresses rather than the communities Christ intends.

Interpret the global, both in its hegemonies—how it destroys human life; and in its gifts of decentralization, democratization and local empowerment.

To carry these out in the concrete may require some axial changes. The *sin-and-forgiveness* model that has dominated Western Christianity for some many centuries may need to give way to others. One being suggested from the South is a *death-and-life* model, since that hues closer to the day-to-day experiences of the poor of the world.

Certain biblical images have often undergirded, at least implicitly, our understandings of globalization. In the first phase, it was undoubtedly the Great Commission of Matthew 28:19-20. In the second phase, Luke may have provided the key: Luke 4:16-20, in the call to solidarity and justice; Luke 24:13-15, in the call to accompaniment. The Scripture for this third phase may well be Ephesians 2:12-14; «remember you were at that time without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in this world. But now in Christ

Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us.»

NOTES

- [1] See the collection by Wade Clark Roof, *World Order and Religion* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1991).
- [2] Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Modern World-System: Capitalist Agriculture and the Origins of the World-Capitalist Economy in the Sixteenth Century* (New York: Academic Press, 1974) 2 vols.
- [3] For a good history of this development of understandings of the «other» encountered, see Bernard McGrane, *Beyond Anthropology: Society and the Other* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989).
- [4] For a general description of this new form of global capitalism, see Robert B. Reich, *The Work of Nations: Preparing Ourselves for 21st Century Capitalism* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1991); for a critique of the relation between the liberal-industrial and global capitalism, see David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989).
- [5] I have explored these themes of reconciliation more fully in *Reconciliation: Mission and Ministry in a Changing Social Order* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1992).

WOMEN IN THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

*by Maryanne Confoy,
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Australian New Zealand Association of Theological Schools
(ANZATS)*

My first response is to acknowledge the priority that WOCATI has given to women in theological education by requiring that women be given equal representation from each region. This requirement has resulted in my presence in this conference. Thank you!

In addressing the question as proposed: *What are the most significant factors, conditions, forces, or developments that either positively or negatively affect the role and status of women in theological education?* my immediate reaction is that women are not concerned with their *role* or *status*. What is of primary consideration for women is the significance of our contribution to the task of theological education.

One obvious fruit that we would hope for from our contribution to this panel is that there might be a greater awareness of the distinctive insights that women's scholarship offers to the world of Christian theology. An example of women's influence is in regard to methodology. In order to prepare for this panel, we gathered together with other women here, all of whom were prepared to share their insights. Although the daily schedule was crowded, they were still willing to give their free time to this purpose. We also chose a different physical setting, because we believe that every aspect of the experience of learning is significant. So we chose to arrange the group in a circle and to try to operate in a conversational manner rather than for each to offer her own isolated insights.

Conversion seems more linked to conversation than to dogmatic statement. So, collegiality and collaboration are characteristics of the way women engage in theology as a community of searchers. Independent and privatised learning are not characteristic of women's way of knowing—whatever the discipline may be. Concrete examples of this can be seen in a number of women's theological books, but particularly in the book edited by Mercy Amba Oduyoye and Musimbi Kanyoro, *The Will to Arise: Women, Tradition and the Church in Africa*. This book is the outcome of a meeting with African women theologians, their sharing about «the life and dreams, the sorrows and joys of African women in a continent where religion shapes the whole of life.»

While men describe the spiritual life in terms of the «quest for the Grail,» with all the individuality of such a personal quest as a consequence, women are meeting in groups, such as that of the African women, addressing issues related to bonding in community. The relational aspects of the faith experience are of greater significance to women than the achievements of the individual. The group is the focus of consideration rather than one's own personalised efforts and accomplishments. Women are listening with attentiveness to each oth-

er, and the bonding goes beyond boundaries and ideological differences to deeper areas of woman's consciousness.

Among the most critical contributions of women's theology to the Christian world is its reclaiming of the body. Women's theology is an embodied spirituality. Much of the Christian heritage describes people at war with their bodies. Women then become the enemy in men's struggle to address their sexuality in the spiritual life. At best we are ambivalent towards women, in fact if not in theory. The Christian tradition gives classic examples of this ambivalence, in both theory and practice. Women are usually either idealised by men, or seen as a source of temptation.

Women are concerned to befriend their bodies, to be more in tune with them. Their concern is to integrate an embodied spirituality, rather than to accept the dualistic heritage that has been theirs. So women's theology is rich in imagery and language that affirms the wholeness of humanity. Metaphors that celebrate birth, the feminine experience, and the life of passion and compassion abound in women's writing. Desire is seen as an important aspect in theological writing, as thirst for God takes shape within the affective dimension rather than the exclusively rational domain.

With a greater appreciation of the feminine, new images and metaphors for God are being generated. This is not simply an awareness of God as mother, but there is an increasing appreciation of a wide range of biblical descriptions of the attributes of God which transcend some of the more limiting depictions handed on by nineteenth-century spirituality.

New insights on sin and grace are resulting from women's reflection on their own experiences. After listening for years to sermons on pride as a primary source of sinfulness, women are beginning to realise that a far greater problem for them is self-effacement—self-forgetfulness—because they are so oriented towards the needs of others. As women and men dialogue about their human experience a deeper awareness of the diverse aspects of their Christian spirituality will be a consequence. The resulting insights will enrich the faith journeys of women and men of all ages and backgrounds.

As women and men become more sensitised to their attitudes to those who are «other» they become more fully human. Women have been «other» in a male-normative culture which has been oppressive to women as other, but also to those men who did not fit the norm as prescribed by their culture. The gift of women to the endeavour to become more fully human, more fully «alive in Christ» is in raising people's awareness to inner prejudices and bias for whatever cause:

sex, race, age, social status, or lifestyle. A Christian theology which arises out of this heightened sensitivity will be more authentically incarnational. The reduction of theology to a system of thought which maintains an oppressive status quo has hindered the Christian churches for far too long. Exclusiveness and elitism within Christianity are always an aberration.

Finally, women's theologising is focused on the future. While Christian feminist theology has its roots in its heritage, it is not confined to the past. It reaches to the source of light and life. It affirms the future in faith, hope and in a loving embrace of humanity and the cosmos. Women and men are presently working together in creative ways as they respond to the challenges of the future in a world that is often described as paralysed by fears of nuclear catastrophe. The collaborative efforts of women and men who include an authentic feminine as a basis of their theological praxis give witness to a vital affirmation of covenantal promise. Institutional churches will ignore these future-oriented theological activities at their own peril. They may find themselves reduced to the circumstances of a museum of treasures from the past with little to say to the future, or to the identity of a «dinosaur farm» with benevolent creatures whose reality is not related to the present. Women have been incredibly patient in the past; they are now realising that they have a serious responsibility to make their own unique contribution to a future which takes humankind and the created world as seriously as their God intended them to take it.

This conference has acknowledged women's contribution to theological education. As women we have responded with passion and conviction about the importance of this contribution; we offer our support and invite WOCATI to continue these efforts in the transformation of our world

CHOO LAK'S PRESIDENCY

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Yeow Choo Lak

Theological education is what you remember after you have forgotten what you have been taught in seminary. How can this be so? In communication in ministry formation, of course.

In broad strokes, communication in ministry formation involves the attempt to express our theology in such ways that both foster and advance the communication of our theological concepts and practices that result in the ability and capacity to bring about the formation of a people equipped to do the work of ministry (serving God and people).

It has been said that you are what you eat. If so, then in theology one can say that you are how you communicate theologically. This brings to mind a popular saying in the 1960s: What you are speaks so loud I can't hear what you say.

How you communicate theologically is seen in the way you do theology, (*i.e.*, when you do theology with people you are communicating theologically). Your struggles and emotional affinity with and your involvement in their long march against injustice, oppression, and corruption body forth in a theology that makes sense. You are one with them in more ways than one. They not only understand your theology, but they also contribute to your theology by way of making your theology down to earth. In the process, communication in ministry formation takes place.

Among other things, WOCATI is endeavouring to explore ways and means to advance communication in ministry formation. For example, WOCATI has set up sub-committees to research into ways theological educators all over the world can come to a better understanding on:

- a. Academic credentials
- b. Women in theological education
- c. Influence of cultures in theological education
- d. Scholarship and research

I covet your prayers as the four sub-committees attempt to do their work. The impending April 1994 Executive Committee meeting in Paris will try to pool together all our resources and talents as we seek to help each other to understand better communication in ministry formation.

I know that many of you would want to join me in expressing our appreciation of the contributions, ministry, and leadership of Dr. Barbara Brown Zikmund as she touches base with leading theological educators all over the world in her capacity as the Secretary-Treasurer of WOCATI. All this in addition to her work as a seminary president! Thank you, Barbara.

**LIBRARIES:
BRIDGING THE LOCAL AND THE GLOBAL**

*By John A. Bollier
Director of Development
American Theological Library Association (ATLA)**

Introduction

The first World Congress of the World Conference of Associations of Theological Institutions (WOCATI), meeting in Pittsburgh, U.S.A. in June 1992, called for bridging the widening gap between globalization and contextualization. As reported in the first issue of its newsletter,¹ WOCATI emphasized the need for reconciling valid expressions of localism with the relentless advancement of globalization. In an age of inter-dependence and religious pluralism, it sensed that the best expressions of a local culture and the continuing awareness of universality must somehow find ways toward friendly co-existence and even productive partnership.

Theological libraries, with their long tradition of promoting cooperative enterprises, are surely one of those bridges WOCATI seeks to span the ever widening gap between the contextual and the global. North American theological libraries, working together through the American Theological Library Association (ATLA) since its founding in 1947, provide convincing evidence of the validity of this assertion. In numerous programs throughout almost half a century, ATLA has encouraged its 180 library members and its 500 individual members to cooperate in continental-wide efforts for meeting urgent local needs.

With this long experience in bridging local and universal interests and a more recent awareness of globalization in both the theological community and the communications industry, ATLA has begun to expand its vision beyond North America by forging global partnerships with those who share its concerns. These partnerships in both North America and globally focus on the three areas that have traditionally defined ATLA's mission:

the use of technology for providing access to theological literature.

the preservation of library materials for resource sharing.

the providing of ecumenical opportunities for professional development. Technology for Access to Theological Literature

In order to meet the increasing demands of their users, libraries have been adopting and adapting for many years the technology of the communications revolution. Libraries with the appropriate equipment and expertise can now transmit bibliographic records, and even full texts, over high-speed networks that cross the barriers of national boundaries, ethnic origin or religious creed. Or if a local infrastructure does not offer online network access to the database desired, the whole database can be formatted electronically on a CD-ROM (Compact Disc-Read Only Memory), sent via post and read with a computer connected to a CD-ROM player. Thus, the global and the contextual come together as the vast uni-

verse of bibliographic data now becomes accessible to even the most remote locations.

Moreover, in this exchange, the contextual, i.e., the local library, is encouraged to contribute its unique bibliographic records to the global, i.e., the comprehensive database. Thus, the local source becomes a strategic partner in the whole communications network, which depends upon the contextual contribution for enriching the universal database.

However, as the use of automation continues to expand, the bibliographic community is developing an information retrieval protocol to enable one system to search for records and receive data from another system unimpeded by differences in local record formats and hardware configurations.² ATLA is particularly concerned about the compatibility of computer systems being developed by theological indexing services and information centers throughout the world. For if the various publishers producing religion indexing tools in Europe, Asia, Africa and the Americas develop idiosyncratic and incompatible systems, it will be impossible for them to exchange their information easily and economically on a global basis. Thus, a new Tower of Babel will develop, with technology widening the chasm between contextualism and globalization, rather than bridging it.

To encourage globally compatible systems, ATLA has developed indexing software that is based on the USMARC (U.S. MACHine-Readable Cataloging) standard. This widely accepted «tagged format» for creating cataloging records in any language enables the user to identify up to 44 «fields» in a record, e.g., Main Entry, Title, Edition, Imprint, Series Title, Subject, etc., to search this data in a variety of ways and to transmit it to computer systems using USMARC or a USMARC-compatible format. USMARC or USMARC-compatible systems with national variations, such as UKMARC (United Kingdom), CANMARC (Canada) and UNIMARC (Universal), have now been adopted by the national libraries of Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Japan, New Zealand, Russia, Spain and the United Kingdom. Others in the process of adopting such standards are Brazil, Chile, Italy, Norway and Venezuela. There is also a high likelihood that the systems now adopted by the Czech Republic, Croatia, Slovenia, Georgia, Switzerland, Finland and South Africa will conform to this universal standard.³

As well as using a MARC-based system for its current records, ATLA is converting all its older records back to 1949 into this format. By the end of 1994 ATLA anticipates that all 800,000 records in its database will be in this universally accessible format.

These records, known as the *ATLA Religion Database*, are contained in the

following annual publications:

Religion Index One (RIO). Begun modestly in 1949 and expanded annually, *RIO* now provides indexes by subject heading, by author-editor and by Scripture citation for more than 12,000 articles in approximately 500 international journals published in English and other Western European languages.

Religion Index Two: Multi-Author Works (RIT): Provides indexes by subject heading, by author-editor and by Scripture citation for 783 Festschriften in religion, 1960-1969, and annually since 1970 to the present, for more than 450 multi-author works, including Festschriften, conference proceedings, and congresses.

Index to Book Reviews in Religion (IBRR): Contains indexes by author-editor, by book title, by series, by reviewer and by classified subjects to 12,500 book reviews culled from 500 international journals, 1949 to the present.

Research in Ministry: An Index to D.Min. Projects and Theses (RIM). Offers indexes by subject heading and by author, with abstracts, to these materials produced in North American theological schools from 1981 to the present.

In addition to these four continuing annual indexes, which provide in-depth coverage for all disciplines in theology/religion and related fields, ATLA also published in 1993, with support from The Pew Charitable Trusts, a special index to printed materials in selected U.S. libraries that document Christian life and mission in the non-Western world. The *International Christian Literature Documentation Project Index (ICLDP)*, Vol. 1, Subject Index; Vol. 2, Author-Editor, Corporate Sponsor Index, contains 18,635 bibliographic records for monographs and pamphlets, along with indexing for 6,774 recent essays in 1,843 multi-author works.

All these indexes are available in print format and also online through the U.S. vendor, Dialog. *RIO*, *RIT*, *IBRR* and *RIM* are also available electronically in CD-ROM (Compact Disc-Read Only Memory). The *ICLDP Index* will be available on a CD-ROM in late 1994. *RIO* is available on magnetic tape now, and the other indexes soon will be, for loading into a local library's Online Public Access Catalog (OPAC).

In May 1994, ATLA will publish for the first time its new *Ethics Index* which will be available only on CD-ROM. It is intended not only for theological schools, but also for broader use in schools of medicine, law, business, the social sciences, and humanities generally.

ATLA now produces two CD-ROMs: *ATLA Religion Database*, 1949 to the present, which is intended to support religious and theological scholarship in grad-

uate education and faculty research; and *Religion Indexes: RIO/RIT, IBRR 1975-*, which is tailored for undergraduate academic and public libraries' needs to support current research in religion and related fields. Prices of all these indexes in either print or electronic format, are available from ATLA headquarters.

To foster the compatibility and exchange of bibliographic information, ATLA is willing to share its customized MARC-compatible software with non-profit religion indexes and individual bibliographers throughout the world. This software will enable users to enter data, evaluate it, correct it, transfer it to other systems, provide for various output formats (print, digital and electronic) and distribute it electronically to MARC users. ATLA believes that this format, suitably expanded in the light of further experience, could come to serve as the «lingua franca» for indexing services.

Some religion index publishers have already begun working with ATLA toward adopting this common system. For example, the *South African Theological Bibliography*

plans to implement the use of the ATLA software for its production in 1994. ATLA is also discussing the deployment of this data input and production software with other indexes in the United States, Europe, and Latin America. Indexes using the ATLA software would continue to own and control their data, but ATLA could offer technical assistance and help with distribution and other business matters.

ATLA is also working toward the development of an online bibliographic network among theological libraries and information centers. Such a network will facilitate the global distribution of bibliographic records and enable ATLA to undertake a document delivery service. Currently ATLA is planning a pilot project with the Library of the Biblical Seminary of Latin America in Costa Rica and other Latin American libraries as the first phase of such an online network. The Latin American Bibliographic Network anticipates using the existing international telecommunication network, Internet, as its carrier. In 1994, ATLA expects to establish at its Evanston headquarters an Internet node, which will provide 24-hour access for several service features, such as e-mail and listserv. ATLA will also mount several databases and bibliographies on this system. One of the databases that ATLA plans to develop will contain cataloging records in Spanish, English and other languages. Access to these records would appreciably increase cataloging production and reduce its cost for participating Latin American and Caribbean theological libraries.

Moreover, the conversion of records to machine-readable form would enable a participating library to produce its catalog in electronic format, as either an

Online Public Access Catalog (OPAC) or as a CD-ROM. Such a catalog, especially on CD-ROM, could easily be duplicated and installed in off-campus sites where the library's parent institution offers Theological Education by Extension. Both the main library and the off-campus sites would also have access to ATLA's proposed document delivery service.

These expanding applications of technology enable libraries to provide global access to theological literature and thus, build bridges of understanding between the contextual and the global.

Preservation for Resource Sharing

ATLA's long commitment to providing bibliographic access to current theological literature has been matched by a similar commitment to preserving and making accessible nineteenth and early twentieth century theological literature, which is rapidly disappearing because of its acidic, brittle paper. Thus, as early as 1957 ATLA began a cooperative program for the preservation microfilming of periodicals, especially those which commercial vendors were not likely to film. To date this program has filmed 1,800 periodicals, which libraries may purchase on demand.

In the meantime, ATLA and its member libraries conducted a series of studies which documented the urgent need for preserving nineteenth and early twentieth century monographs before they also were irretrievably lost due to the deterioration of their paper. In a 1976 study of its monographic collection, Princeton Theological Seminary's Speer Library found that the paper in its books published 1860-1929 was so brittle that most of these volumes could not be rebound.⁴ In a 1979-1981 study of 82 theological libraries, ATLA estimated that there are 218,000 unique monographic titles in religion published 1860-1929, representing 25 8,776 volumes. Because of the widespread use of acidic paper in book publishing during this period, ATLA considered virtually all of these works to be on the endangered list.⁵ And in a 1984 study of North American theological libraries sponsored jointly by the Association of Theological Schools and ATLA, it was reported that «70 percent of the printed and manuscript resources which will be available in our theological libraries at the turn of the next century, are, by definition, candidates for advanced deterioration.»⁶ Other studies demonstrated the same deteriorating condition of materials in academic and research libraries throughout the U.S.⁷

The solution to a preservation problem of such magnitude was obviously beyond the resources of any individual theological library, even the largest and strongest, working alone. Thus, ATLA undertook a cooperative monograph preservation program in 1987. This program was soon recognized as an integral com-

ponent of the U. S. national effort to preserve endangered library materials. To date this ATLA program, at a rate of 4,000 volumes annually, has preserved and made accessible 30,000 carefully selected volumes, which form a core collection in theology and related disciplines. Recognizing the urgency of this preservation problem, ATLA plans to increase its annual filming production in 1994 from 4,000 to 8,000 volumes.

After firmly establishing its monographs preservation program, ATLA has now accelerated the preservation of endangered periodicals with a new program begun in January 1993. The first three-year phase of this program will film 300 significant international periodicals published between 1850 and 1950. Staff, assisted by a panel of recognized scholars, have carefully selected these titles to assure the wise use of limited resources.

Both the monographs and the periodicals that ATLA films for preservation are provided to ATLA without charge by its member libraries from both university related divinity schools and free standing, denominationally related, theological seminaries. Libraries receive a positive microfilm or microfiche copy in exchange for the book or periodical they have donated for filming. However, if a particular work is still in fair condition and has bibliographical significance due to an author's autograph, marginal notes, illustrations, etc., it will be returned to the donor library after filming, if so requested.

Some of the major donors of materials to the ATLA preservation programs are the libraries of Harvard Divinity School, Yale Divinity School, Union Theological Seminary, Princeton Theological Seminary, Graduate Theological Union, Candler School of Theology at Emory University, McCormick Theological Seminary, Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary and Seabury-Western Theological Seminary.

ATLA, following the lead of the U.S. preservation community, continues to use microfilm for its preservation programs as this medium alone has commonly accepted standards and provides the assurance that its master negatives, if stored under archival conditions, will last for centuries. However, ATLA keeps abreast of current research that is developing the means for digitizing texts from microfilm. When such a process is commercially available at a reasonable cost, ATLA plans to offer its microfilmed texts in electronic format so that they may be read with a computer.

All the monographs and periodicals ATLA has filmed since 1987 have been cataloged according to the USMARC standard, with the records entered into the two U.S. bibliographic networks, OCLC (Online Computer Library Catalog) and RLIN (Research Libraries Information Network) and into the Canadian network,

Utlas. These records will also appear on ATLA's new bibliographic network when it comes online. Thus, users with network access can readily determine whether ATLA has filmed a particular title and order copies as needed. Those without access to these online networks may inquire of ATLA concerning availability of specific titles. Monograph titles include materials published in English and other Western European languages from 1850 through 1917. Periodicals include international titles beginning at the same date, but running to the mid-twentieth century.

Because of the large number of titles ATLA has preserved in microformat, it is no longer economically feasible to publish a printed catalog. However, ATLA has identified groups of materials, such as reference works in Bible or Church History or works documenting particular denominations, which it can supply as sets. It can also produce customized lists of available materials based upon subject requests. Details concerning availability of particular titles and prices will be provided upon request.

Funding for ATLA's preservation efforts since 1987 has been provided by subscription income from over 60 ATLA member libraries and by grants from the U.S. National Endowment for the Humanities, the Pew Charitable Trusts, the Henry Luce Foundation and the Lilly Endowment.

By sharing their unique resources with the whole world of scholarship through ATLA's preservation programs, theological libraries continue to build enduring bridges between the local and the global.

Ecumenical Partnership for Professional Development

Since its beginning, ATLA has considered the professional development of theological librarians as a central component of its mission. In pursuing this goal, ATLA members have discovered that regardless of their denominational affiliation or ecclesiastical tradition, they can improve their service to theological education and research by working together rather than separately. Thus, while ATLA began in 1947 as a Protestant organization, it soon became completely ecumenical so that its membership now represents the full spectrum of mainline, evangelical and pentecostal Protestant, Roman Catholic and Orthodox Christians. It has also expanded in recent years from serving only a theological school constituency to serving also those engaged in religious studies at universities and colleges. Through such broadening ecumenical experience in pursuing professional goals, libraries working through ATLA have long been engaged in bridge-building.

The three day ATLA Annual Conference, and the one day Continuing Ed-

ucation Workshops preceding it, are particularly important in bringing together librarians representing the whole religious spectrum. These events attract approximately 250 ATLA members and visitors at a host institution in the United States or Canada. Guest lecturers, scholarly papers, panels, seminars and discussion groups address current theological and professional issues. Library concerns on the agenda regularly include such areas as technical services, public services, collection development, management, automation, archives, networks, preservation, bibliographic instruction, library buildings and rare books. The Conference also provides for informal conversation and fellowship, through which lasting friendships develop among librarians of different theological and national backgrounds.

ATLA's 48th Annual Conference will be held at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, U.S.A., June 15-18, 1994. The registration fee will be US\$90 and cost for board and room approximately US\$200. The one day Continuing Education Workshops preceding the Annual Conference will cost an additional US\$60. With gifts from members, ATLA expects again this year to pay the Annual Conference registration fee and the Continuing Education fee for all members who are attending for the first time. International visitors are welcome to attend both events. Further information on the 1994 Annual Conference and Continuing Education Workshops will be available by February 1994 from ATLA headquarters.

For its institutional members, ATLA provides a unique service in its Library Materials Exchange Program. This program has developed cooperative guidelines and channels for the exchange of duplicate library materials among member libraries.

In summary, theological libraries, working together through ATLA, build bridges between the local and the global by using technology to provide universal access to theological literature, by preserving their unique collections for distribution world-wide, and by providing opportunity for ecumenical partnership in professional service. These libraries through ATLA are now ready to enter into wider partnerships with all those who share their vision and wish to cooperate in achieving new goals none can attain alone. Any libraries, associations, indexes or individuals interested in joint ventures with ATLA, are invited to contact the ATLA Executive Director, Albert E. Hurd. See the box below for address and further information.

NOTES

- *The American Theological Library Association (ATLA), an independent, non-profit organization of 180 theological libraries and 500 librarians in the U.S. and Canada, works closely with The Association of Theological Schools in the U.S. and Canada (ATS). ATLA Address: 820 Church Street, Suite 300, Evanston, Illinois, 60201, U.S.A. Telephone: 708-869-7788; Fax: 708-869-8513. Executive Director: Albert E. Hurd. Annual dues for individual members in U.S., Canada, and other industrial countries: US\$30 - US\$100, based on salary level; for all student members and for librarians in developing countries: US\$15. Subscription to Annual Conference Summary of Proceedings and quarterly ATLA Newsletter: for members, free; for non-members, US\$30.
1. *WOCATL News* 1 (February 1993):1, 3, 5-8.
 2. ATLA participates in this effort as a voting member of the National Information Standards Organization (NISO).
 3. As reported in an electronically distributed paper, August 8, 1993, by the Foreign MARC Task Group of the Cooperative Cataloging Council of the U.S. Library of Congress, John Byrum, chair.
 4. Louis Charles Willard, «An Analysis of Paper Stability and Circulation Patterns of the Monograph Collections of Speer Library, Princeton Theological Seminary,» in *Essays on Theological Librarianship, Presented to Calvin Henry Schmitt*, eds. Peter DeKlerk and Earl Hilgert (Philadelphia: ATLA, 1980), 163-173.
 5. Ronald F. Deering, Albert E. Hurd and Andrew E. Scrimgeour, «Collection Analysis Project Final Report: Ad Hoc Committee for the Preservation of Theological Materials,» *ATLA Summary of Proceedings* (1981), 162-206.
 6. Stephen L. Peterson, «Theological Libraries for the Twenty-first Century: Project 2000 Final Report,» *Theological Education XX* (Supplement 1984):43-44.
 7. Cf. *Brittle Books: Reports of the Committee on Preservation and Access* (Washington: Council on Library Resources, 1986).

THE 1994 PARIS WORKSHOP

3 working papers

A. THEOLOGICAL SCHOLARSHIP AND RESEARCH

(Working Document of the 2nd WOCATI Congress)

1. Introduction

This paper is one of three submitted by the Executive Committee of WOCATI to member associations in preparation for the next WOCATI CONGRESS to be held in Nairobi, Kenya, in 1996. In 1992, the Executive Committee endorsed the terms of reference of this particular paper as being a study of:

ways in which theological scholarship and research are being developed according to different methods and criteria of excellence.

A working group of five was appointed, and during 1993 two drafts of the paper were prepared. Then in April 1994, the members of the working group met, together with members of the other three working groups and the Executive Committee, and completed this draft. This will form the basis of discussion on the theme of theological scholarship and research at the 1996 CONGRESS.

2. Background

From its beginning, WOCATI has expressed a commitment to excellence of theological scholarship. In its constitution, adopted in June 1989 at its inaugural meeting in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, one of the main purposes of WOCATI is affirmed as follows:

To identify and advocate excellence in theological scholarship and ministerial practice and to encourage full compliance with the standards and purposes as established by member associations. (Section 8)

At the first WOCATI CONGRESS held in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA in June 1992, this issue of excellence of theological scholarship and research was one of the central themes to emerge in discussions. It was linked with discussions on the global nature of theological education, and the unease felt by many delegates about the manner in which globalization had been emphasised within certain Northern contexts. It was felt that much of the emphasis upon globalization within seminaries in the North, commendable as it is, was placed within a framework of theological education that was grounded upon certain criteria of excellence. These criteria were very much shaped by the canons of excellence influential within the Western/Northern academic tradition, with a heavy emphasis upon theological scholarship and education being pursued within discrete disciplines.

This in turn has given rise to a growth in specialization to such a degree that many have pointed to the deleterious effects of fragmentation within theolog-

ical scholarship. However, many of these critiques have tended to assume criteria of excellence in theological scholarship dependent upon the Western intellectual tradition. Thus when theological educators from all regions of the globe came together, as they did in Pittsburgh for the WOCATI CONGRESS, globalization in theological education took on some new perspectives.

2.1 Globalization

A reconsideration of the term «globalization» is seen as necessary. It is recognized that it is a legitimate and important concern for North American theological educators, and the significance of their work is acknowledged. Globalization can challenge all particular theologies and theological methods from claiming to be one authentic, universal theology. However, the working group was aware of serious reservations being expressed about the term, and the way it could be used as another form of imposition upon developing theologies in other contexts. It would be unfortunate if globalization and contextualization were placed in opposition to each other, as both are necessary perspectives in contemporary theological scholarship and research.

The working group sought for another term that could better express the importance contained within the search for a global awareness of the theological task. One suggestion that is offered is: a coherent, ecumenical, global perspective. The force of the adjectives, «ecumenical» and «global» are self-evident. Coherence is important in that it expresses the authenticity and distinctiveness of different contextual theologies, as well as the need to bring these contextual theologies into interrelationship with others. There is also a form of inner coherence required for contextual theological scholarship, in that those engaged in this exercise need to search for coherence between their particular cultural identity and their identity as Christians, as members of the one Body of Christ, the «one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.» Thus the working group concentrated on how this coherent, ecumenical, global perspective to theological scholarship and research could be achieved. Central to the group's considerations was the concept of dialogue and also of the need to answer the question of where does the locus of Christian faith reside. This paper outlines the responses to these questions.

3. Excellence of Theological Scholarship

The interrelationship between contextualization and the search for a coherent, ecumenical, global perspective gives rise to a re-examination of what constitutes excellence of theological scholarship. Criteria of excellence of theological scholarship must include serious consideration of the sources, methods, and purposes of such scholarship.

The working group recognized considerable value in Robert Schreiter's outline of four forms of theological expression that he has identified throughout the world:

- Theology as Variations on a Sacred Text
- Theology as Wisdom
- Theology as Sure Knowledge
- Theology as Praxis.'

Schreiter's twofold purpose in identifying these different expressions of theological inquiry and scholarship corresponds to the two basic points of focus examined in this paper. One is the recognition of the importance of contextualization. Schreiter states that one of his purposes was to show how theology is:

to open church tradition in a different way, by seeing it as a series of local theologies, closely wedded to and responding to different cultural conditions.² The second is related to the purpose of searching for unity within theological scholarship. Schreiter believes that a recognition of the various forms of theology allow local cultural and religious expressions of theology to converse more easily with the church tradition, «thereby offering a better chance of maintaining a genuine catholicity in a local church's expression of its faith».³ Thus the criteria of excellence of theological scholarship must take serious account of the interplay between these two points of focus of the basic purpose of theological scholarship.

3.1 Scholarship

Two other issues related to excellence of theological scholarship are important to be recognized at this point. One is the understanding one has of scholarship. There can be the tendency to identify authentic scholarship only with a limited number of theological methods. It is commonly used in relation to writing and research completed within a university context, and/or published in scholarly and professional journals and books. To limit the understanding of scholarship to these forms can be an undue restriction and a serious disservice to other ways in which theological scholarship can be undertaken and expressed. For example, in addition to the forms of scholarship directed to the search for new information and understanding, and integrating these findings into new perspectives, there is also the importance of the scholarship of *praxis*. In this form of scholarship recognition is given to how learnings can both arise from the life of communities and how these learnings can be applied to address human problems.

3.2 Critical Inquiry

By broadening and deepening one's understanding of both the theological task and of the meaning of scholarship in the ways suggested above, further atten-

tion is required to be given to the importance of critical inquiry. These forms of critical inquiry, as with all criteria for excellence of theological scholarship, must be congruent with the nature and purpose of any particular theology and the method it follows.

One fruitful way of exploring further the issues involved in bringing critical inquiry to bear upon one's theological scholarship and research is an examination of the role played by one's partners. Partners have a twofold meaning. They represent the other disciplines necessary to assist theology to explicate the meaning and truth of Christian revelation. Within the Northern tradition of theological scholarship, the disciplines of philosophy, history, and literary and textual inquiry have been prominent and influential partners. More recently, the disciplines of psychology, sociology, and hermeneutics have become of greater importance. This has meant that much of the bases and direction of critical inquiry within theological scholarship have been shaped by the insights arising from these disciplines.

However, other forms or expressions of theology, especially many from within the southern world, have utilized the insights of different partners and/or appropriated the insights of the traditional partners in different ways. Thus we have seen the emergence of the disciplines of political science and economics as partners to theological scholarship, as well as a different appropriation of such disciplines as history and sociology being followed. The impact of this is to make one aware of the different forms of critical inquiry that will arise from the influence of one's partners in theological scholarship.

Secondly, partners also mean the people to whom theology and theological education is addressed. If theology is to be addressed to the whole people of God, then there needs to be an expansion of one's awareness of the influence of some partners previously overlooked in much of theological scholarship. Increasingly, Christian theology is evolving in contexts that are heavily influenced by the presence of people of other faiths. Also, recent developments in liberation and political theology have been influenced by the recognition of the partnership of the «forgotten» people, or the «non-people»— those crushed by the forces of the dominant culture. When theological scholarship and education accept the presence of these people as partners in the theological enterprise, new forms of critical inquiry are needed.

4. Essential Components in Contemporary Theological Scholarship and Research

In the light of its reflections upon theological scholarship and research from a coherent, ecumenical, global perspective, the working group identified four essential components in such contemporary scholarship.

4.1 Contextualization

There is an increasing recognition that contextualization is a *sine qua non* of contemporary theological scholarship. Reference has been made to Schreier's observation that theology, as a series of local theologies, is «closely wedded to and responding to different cultural conditions.» Thus theologians are faced with a twofold task of establishing criteria of excellence which are congruent with both the historic Christian tradition/s and, at the same time, appropriate for their particular cultural contexts.

It is to be noted that for many the starting point of theological scholarship and research is no longer the common Christian core of doctrine but the experience of the people of God in a given context.⁴ Such scholarship includes a profound recognition of the importance of the experience of the poor and marginalized in their society, whether that be due to social, economic, political, or religious reasons.

Furthermore, theological scholarship developing from such a contextual basis can only be expressed in particular culturally conditioned forms. Thus the cross-cultural theological task becomes important; «cultural» in signifying the specificity and non-repeatability of the particular features and dynamics of each cultural setting; «cross» indicating the desire and necessity of reaching beyond the particular and demonstrating its ecumenical perspective.

4.1. (a) Contextualization and indigenous languages

In discussions at the WOCATI CONGRESS in 1992 and continued in the working group, the crucial importance of the need for theological scholarship and research to be carried out in the indigenous languages of the people was emphasised. Contextualization goes hand in hand with the use of indigenous languages. The reasons for this are many and compelling. In many societies throughout the world the oral transmission of theology is more important than written texts. Allowing people to use indigenous languages makes it easier to recognize the importance of the theologies of the people that are emerging from their experience.

Translation of indigenous languages into English or German, and vice-versa, is never a neutral process and can distort the particularities of many important cultural insights and expressions. The majority of Christian communities throughout the world do not use English or German for their worship and community life activities, nor in their witness and service in their societies. Of particular pertinence to theological scholarship is that many of the canons of excellence and critique developed within theological scholarship have been formulated in Northern languages. This can lead to alien criteria of excellence and of critical methodologies being applied to theological scholarship and education expressed in in-

indigenous languages, especially in their oral form.

In our discussions, we recognized the complexity of the issue. Some African countries have many languages. For example, in Zambia there are 72, of which eight are official. Also languages are not confined to the colonial boundaries imposed upon Africa. However, it is heartening to note that some member associations of WOCATI are addressing this issue, and have taken initiatives to encourage the writing and transmission of theology in indigenous languages. In Appendix A, reference is made to two projects that have been initiated by The Association for Theological Education in South East Asia (ATE-SEA).

4.2 Dialogue

The working group became convinced of the importance of dialogue as an essential component in contemporary theological scholarship, not simply as peripheral to, or as a consequence of such scholarship, but as central to its methodology, content, and goal. The content of theological scholarship is grounded upon the divine revelation, centered upon God's self-disclosure in the incarnation. This can be understood as God's dialogue with the people within certain historical settings. The theological significance of dialogue has been emphasised in recent times by several writers, especially by Wesley Ariarajah. Not only does Ariarajah maintain that, in the light of God as Creator, dialogue affirms that this world is God's world, but also that dialogue is at the heart of the cross. He expands his conviction that the incarnation is God's dialogue with the world in this way:

Here the biblical message is unambiguously dialogical. For it insists on the «previousness» of grace, and of God's acceptance of us before our acceptance of God ... It is this belief that the other person is as much a child of God as I am that should form the basis of our relationship with our neighbours. That attitude is at the heart of being in dialogue.⁵

Thus it is not only from the perspective of God as Creator that brings us to the necessity of dialogue, thereby establishing the basis of inter-religious dialogue. The central events of Christian revelation, focused in the incarnation, also point to the necessity of dialogue. Here is the focus of God's communication with the people and the revelation of God's nature and character as love. Dialogue can be practised as a process of seeking the truth of reality, of penetrating further into the truth of God's revelation, and also leading to a redemptive experience for the people engaged in dialogue.

4.2(a) Dialogue and contextualization

The theological importance of dialogue is strengthened within contextualologies. For here, the theologians are engaged in a fundamental form of dialogue

between their identity as Christians and their identity as people of a particular culture and society. Mention has been made of the important role partners play in the theological task. Here, we are suggesting that dialogue, the respectful but not uncritical listening and talking with other people, constitutes one essential component of theological scholarship. The importance of dialogue is intensified when we acknowledge as Christian theologians that we, too, are partners on a journey towards appropriating the fullness of God's grace and truth. Thus we must be open to the way our partial insights are to be challenged and enriched through our willingness to enter into genuine dialogue, not only with fellow Christians, but also with people of other faiths and others with whom we live and work.

4.2.(b) Dialogue and theological education

Theological education has shared a common concern with many other forms of education in disclosing reality to people and equipping them to respond in such a way to live fully and creatively in the present and into their future. However, theological education has a particular goal of enabling people to mature in Christian faith and practice, and to be partners with God in God's mission of redemptive love to the world.

Contextual theologies have given attention to the dialogical method of education. Many have been influenced by the insights of Paulo Freire.⁶ In his critique of the traditional forms of pedagogy, (the «banking» concept of education), Freire maintains that this not only tends to prevent the free development of students, but has another, often unrecognized, effect. The «banking» system can be a powerful agent in preserving the *status quo*, which many experience as oppressive and dehumanizing. This tendency has been noted by many educators in the Southern world. It is significant to note that Freire suggests a form of education, the «problem-posing» concept, which is dialogical in nature, whereby both teacher and student become partners on the journey of searching for the truth. The importance to theological scholarship and education of this dialogical approach to education is that it not only promises an atmosphere of creativity, but is also a way of leading oppressed people to liberation.

4.2. (c) Dialogue and contextual theologies

Dialogue is also essential to the way the various contextual theologies are to interact with each other. The unity we share in Christ does not mean the acceptance of any one particular theological expression as being universally definitive, nor does it mean a disregard of one another's witness and theology. Therefore, the dialogical process should concentrate not only on the one gospel, but also the ways its truth is being expressed in different contexts and with a range of cultural resources. WOCATI could provide one important forum, not simply

allowing us to search for what we hold in common, but also encouraging a dynamic interaction between theologians to the mutual enrichment of the global theological enterprise.

4.3 Unity

After affirming the contextual nature of theology, and taking account of the indispensable nature of dialogue to the theological task, the working group faced the inescapable question: Wherein does the unity of Christian theology reside? It has been mentioned that the term globalization can imply another form of domination that would endanger the autonomy of the various contextual theologies.

However, for theology to seek for a coherent, ecumenical, global perspective requires the recognition that Christian theology, no matter how many and varied be its expressions, must have a common point of reference, a unifying element within all forms of theological scholarship and research. The working group focused upon the issue of unity in both general terms and in the specific ecclesiological use of the term as the ongoing search to restore the given unity of the church. This included consideration of the unifying and saving nature of the Christ event, continually re-enacted through his Body, the Church, in the life-giving and communion-restoring Holy Spirit. It was noted that the first sentence in the preamble to the constitution of WOCATI states, «Theological education is a worldwide enterprise fundamental to the mission of the church.»

Thus theology, both as the conscience of the living community and one of the fundamental tasks of the community, is inextricably related to the church. By understanding the church, not in institutional terms but as *koinonia*, as the people of God called to witness to God's restoring presence, then the nature of the theological enterprise needs to be restructured. In particular, theological scholarship and research should be directed in such a way as to educate not only church leaders but the entire people of God. The prime purpose of theological education is not to educate pastors, priests, or missionaries in order that they may preserve and propagate certain Christian truths and ethical norms, but to build authentic Christian communities, proleptic manifestations of the kingdom of God. In this way, theological scholarship is conditioned by the nature of the church with its unity given as gift and demand by God.

This given unity of the church, which does not necessarily mean a strict unified structure, is given expression in an adherence to a broad understanding of Christian tradition. Such an understanding affirms not only the centrality of Christology, but also the constitutive nature of pneumatology, i.e., the normative nature of a Trinitarian understanding of Christian revelation.⁷ This Trinitarian understanding affirms the ultimate goal of the divine economy in terms of Christ becoming all in all, not only in a soteriological, but also in a cosmological way.

The communion God seeks and initiates is not only with the church in the conventional sense, but with the whole cosmos. Thus the unity of divine revelation, as represented in the broad understanding of Christian tradition, is for the entire created world, not only for believers. This understanding of unity is important to keep in mind as it challenges a potential distortion wherein unity is identified with the maintenance of denominational loyalty, which in turn can be an exercise of oppression, excluding suffering people from the community of the people of God.

This understanding of unity in theological scholarship informs and challenges all expressions of contextual theology. It does not locate the unity inherent within Christian theology with any ecclesiastical or doctrinal system, and recognizes the varied forms of human and social existence. In this way, it is congruent with the methodologies and goals of contextual theology. However, it also challenges these theologies in pointing out the indispensability of an adherence to a broad understanding and acceptance of Christian tradition as that which gives expression to the given unity of the church.

4.4 The search for a common understanding of excellence in theological scholarship

After identifying the above three necessary components of contemporary theological scholarship, the working group discussed the impact of these upon the methods of scholarly research. In particular, the question was addressed: Are there common levels or approaches that transcend the diverse contexts in which such scholarship occurs? It was recognized that one standard approach has been that of the critical method, with its varied modes of analysis, critique, evaluation, and historical reference. It was acknowledged that critical inquiry is a necessary dimension of searching for excellence in theological scholarship.

It constitutes the rigorous evaluation of the sources of theology and of the ways they have been transmitted within the variety of historical contexts. It also involves being critically aware of the forces—intellectual, social, cultural, political and religious—that shape the nature of one's perspectives and presuppositions by which one interprets the received tradition. It is important for this critical inquiry to incorporate the subtle nuances of context within its approach and methodology. Critical inquiry must be accountable to the context and thereby assist in enriching one's experience and understanding of the context. This in turn requires such critical inquiry to be conducted in a dialogical manner, incorporating a partnership with one's community and carried out in concert with many disciplines.

This approach recognizes many forms of critical inquiry. The effects of contextualization and dialogue mean the expansion of critical inquiry beyond the rational, historical forms dominant in most Northern theologies. For there are

ways of knowing that are outside the commonly accepted forms of critical understanding. These include the importance of intuitive, artistic, and emotive sources of theological understanding. While these forms must discover means of critical or communal accountability, excellence in theological scholarship must seriously consider such meanings as admissible, indeed desirable.

Thus the importance of the *scholarship of praxis* comes to the fore. As mentioned before, this scholarship of praxis not only incorporates the theoretical issues of theology into its method, but also those «texts» of church practice and the impact of the material conditions of the particular context. A scholarship of praxis embraces both an integrative approach to theological work by incorporating the nonrational elements of understanding, and the goal of personal and social transformation which is at the heart of the Christian message. The liturgical dimension of the Orthodox Church is an important element for consideration. This form of integration of theological method and its responsiveness to the context can contribute to a new unity of theological scholarship and research. It can forge new directions in understanding how the redemptive work of God is inextricably linked to the witness of the church, to the ultimate goal of the communion of the whole cosmos in the Triune God.

5. The Emerging Relationship between Theological Scholarship and Ministerial Formation

The changes suggested above in theological scholarship and research will have considerable impact upon ministerial formation. Many member associations are giving attention to this issue and a significant amount of literature is available in many regions of the world. In particular, note was taken of the project of Ecumenical Theological Education of the World Council of Churches on «The Viability of Ministerial Formation,» involving a number of regional consultations on the theme.

A number of questions were raised in the discussions of the working group. These included: Is ministerial formation a by-product of theological scholarship and research? Or, does the goal of ministerial formation play a significant role in defining excellence of theological scholarship and education? The emphases made in this paper on the purpose of theological education being for the whole people of God and upon the scholarship of praxis allow ministerial formation to contribute to excellence of theological scholarship. However, these emphases also challenge any restriction of theological education to any one group within the church.

The importance of spiritual formation in both ministerial formation and in theological education was noted. Recognition is to be given to the crucial importance of the liturgy in some Christian traditions. In these traditions, the litur-

gy provides a significant means of overcoming the break-down in confidence between scholarship and the church which has been caused, to a large degree, by the fragmentation of theology into autonomous disciplines. The liturgy can provide a means of ensuring a holistic soteriological and ecclesiological understanding of theological education and scholarship.

The nature of contextual theology, with its focus upon the concrete situations of the particular society means that ministerial formation cannot be pursued without those involved in such formation being in a significant and interactive relationship with their society. This could entail a greater involvement by ministerial students in the socio-political life of their society.

6. *Emerging Issues to be Addressed by Theological Scholarship and Research*

In the light of the approaches to theological scholarship and research outlined above, a number of issues were identified as those that demand attention. These issues, which are global in their impact, also impinge upon most particular societies and are of central importance to contemporary theological scholarship and research.

Human rights, especially the rights of women

Economies of countries *vis-a-vis* the Divine economy, with special consideration to levels of international debt

The growth of materialism and the consequent marginalization of religious values

Increasing ethnic and religious conflict

AIDS epidemic

The spread of arms and the incidence of war

Issues associated with the fullness and future of human life and human communities

Prospects for the use of technology for the enhancement of theological scholarship and research, especially in regard to libraries.

WOCATI can provide an environment to foster ways in which theologians can pursue the import of these issues, both by developing coherent, ecumenical, global perspectives on the significance of these issues to theology, and by being informed and challenged by theologians from other contexts.

NOTES

1. Robert J. Schreiter, *Constructing Local Theologies* (London: SCM Press, 1985).
2. *Ibid.*, 93.
3. *Ibid.*, 94.
4. J. Meyendorff, «Theological Education in the Patristic and Byzantine Eras and its Les-

- sons for Today,» *Anaphora* 111, (Geneva: 1989), 401-414.
5. Wesley Ariarajah, *The Bible and People of Other Faiths* (Geneva: World Council of Churches, No. 26, Risk Book Series, 1985), 32.
 6. Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, translated by Myra Bergman Ramos, (New York: Herder & Herder, 1971).
 7. John Zizioulas, *Being as Communion* (London: Daarton Longmann and Todd Ltd., 1985).

APPENDIX

Uses of Indigenous Languages in Theological Scholarship and Research

Two projects initiated by The Association for Theological Education in South East Asia (ATESEA) illustrate many of the positive and necessary steps that can be taken to encourage theological scholarship and research to be expressed in indigenous languages.

1. Chinese Theological Education Series (CTES)

This project commenced in 1962 with the purpose of translating a number of theological «classics» from English to Chinese. Support was given by the former Theological Education Fund of the World Council of Churches. Two regional committees were formed in Hong Kong and Taiwan. Qualified translators originally translated approximately 50 books, and these books have contributed greatly to Chinese theological education in the last three decades. A more recent policy has been introduced of publishing indigenous theological writings. Another significant decision recently made is that taken by the South East Asia Graduate School of Theology in adopting the policy of encouraging its Th.D. candidates to write their dissertations in their own languages. The present director and general editor of CTES is Dr. Yeow Choo Lak, and the two regional editors are Dr. Daniel Chow in Hong Kong and Dr. Huang Po Ho in Taiwan.

2. Bahasa Indonesia Theological Education Series (BITES)

This was launched in the 1980s and makes theological material available in Bahasa Indonesia. It is estimated that there are eight million Christians who would not have access to contextual theological literature unless it was available in Bahasa Indonesia. This project is run in conjunction with the Indonesian Association of Theological Schools. It fulfills its purpose by designating persons, especially those involved in theological education, to translate theological books, and then coordinates the publishing and distribution of these books. The coordinator of BITES, Dr. Meno Soebagio, works with a team of three other persons. Each member is responsible for translating one-third of each book, and Dr. Soebagio edits the final draft for publication.

B. WOMEN IN THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

(Working Document for the 2nd WOCATI Congress)

Introduction

In 1992, the WOCATI CONGRESS expressed concern about gross injustices resulting from "constraints, prohibitions, failures, and denials of persons (particularly women) who seek the services of theological education or who feel called to be theological educators." The CONGRESS expressed the need for "a more holistic representation and fullness in the theological community." Because of this concern, the CONGRESS charged the Executive Committee with the responsibility of specifically addressing the issue of women as an underrepresented group, despite the fact that they constitute half of the theological community.

Therefore WOCATI's Executive Committee chose a group of four women, representing four corners of the world, to present a wide range of perspectives on the role of women in theological education. The task common to all was to study the present status of women in theological formation, to evaluate the presence and absence of women in various positions within theological institutions, and to recommend means of enhancing women's participation in theological education.

Thus, on this rare occasion, the reality of African, European, Latin American, and South Pacific women involved with theological education was compared and contrasted. Initially, each member presented a draft paper that subsequently served as a basis for discussion. This was an opportunity to acknowledge the wealth of experiences that women, as theologians, have not yet been able to fully articulate and reflect upon. In spite of the social, economic, political, and cultural differences that characterize their contexts, there are also many commonalities and experiences shared by women which enabled us to have ground for mutual understanding and challenges.

Our insights are a way to reflect on these commonalities and to offer a contribution to the ongoing discussion on women in theological education. What we present does not aim to be universal, since there are many perspectives not yet represented. But, we speak from our own contexts and our own reality to the wider world of theological education. This is an attempt to build bridges to shorten the distance that still separates us.

I. THE PRESENT CONTEXT

For many years women theologians writing as concerned individuals and meeting together in professional forums have identified a number of problems

that confront women worldwide in theological education. These problems are ubiquitous and enduring and thus they need to be clearly stated. However, it is also important to record the ways in which women have worked creatively, despite their constraints, and to suggest means by which their position might be improved in the future.

1. *While the faith has consistently been passed on from woman's hand to woman's hand, formally organized theological education has been largely restricted to men and dominated by the requirements of clergy training.*

- a. It is important to recall that in some churches and regions theological education is still entirely a male preserve; women are not included at any level, in any role.
- b. In other places women have achieved varying degrees of access to theological education, but must continue to struggle as a minority group whose interests are often unseen. Where tokenism exists in the appointment of women whose voices are not heard, or who are selected because they do not offer an alternate voice, this is detrimental for both men and women.

Women cannot continue to be disadvantaged:

- in the practical arrangements that govern the day-to-day life of theological institutions;
 - in the models of ministerial formation that have been inherited from past traditions rather than reformulated in light of the current needs of the church;
 - in the syllabus based upon a male biblical and theological canon;
 - in the role models presented by faculty members and the "unwritten syllabus" that is discerned in the community life of the institution;
 - in a "token" presence that is simply one-dimensional rather than transformative in intention or situation.
- c. Women students face an insecure future in terms of unemployment, placement, and recognition in light of their studies. This has profound effect on their attitude toward their studies and their vocational aspirations.
 - d. Very commonly a two-tier system of theological education applies. It is considered necessary to equip male students with linguistic and theological skills whereas women may be channeled towards educative and pastoral roles. Their restricted access to theological discourse precludes women from exercising authority within the churches.
 - e. As the full range of ministerial vocation is not available to women, neither is the full range of theological education. Those roles which are made available to women are consequently undervalued in their place in the curriculum of theological education.

2. *The world of theological education still remains an alien country which many women are wanting to enter. Women have not yet built their own homes or planted their own gardens.*

- a. Theological discourse, including such key Christian concepts as sin, grace, and redemption, are still largely the product of the interpretive world of men. Women students have to forget their mother tongue, which voices their experience, in order to speak the language of their faith.
- b. Concerns that determine women's lives have not been the subject of ethical reflection, and both male and female students are thus unprepared to make a mature pastoral response to:
 - the appalling "everyday" violence women suffer at the hands of men;
 - the many moral and relational conflicts experienced in connection with women's reproductive lives;
 - the complex and specific cultural traditions, such as female "circumcision" and initiation rites that form and deform women's lives.
- c. the ways of cooperative working and the "unsystematic" theology that is often produced from marginal perspectives are frequently misunderstood in a world that values individual academic achievement according to the strict regulations of disciplinary guilds.
- d. Women experience differential access to communication. Heterodox views are less likely to be published than those of the theological mainstream. Further more, research has shown that the use of information technology, such as electronic mail, is frequently gender-based. This is likely to become a very significant issue in the future.
- e. Women who have found their way into positions of potential influence within theological institutions have a great deal to lose if they are labeled as those who continually raise women's issues. Women may become, willingly or unwillingly, complicit in the continuation of the status quo.
- f. However, in some centers of theological education women are teaching and researching, and the faculties are working in ways that encourage women to engage in reinterpreting the tradition, to rethink theological concepts, to propose new methodologies, and to create new hermeneutics. In such situations theological centers are enabling women to move beyond the current expectations of their roles and educational situations.

3. *There are many obstacles that still bar the way to women's full participation.*

- a. Chronic underfunding operates at many levels, for example:
 - church budgets are first allocated to ministerial training and women form only a small minority of those ordained;

- women find it hard to justify funding for research in new areas of feminist scholarship;
- women find it difficult to secure academic employment with the opportunity this offers both for personal development and structural change. Many women are "kitchen-table," "baby at the breast" theologians;
- women often experience the insecurity of teaching marginal subjects that do not form part of the (securely-funded) prescribed "core" curriculum;
- women find it difficult to meet together to pursue common professional concerns.

b. Because of the difficulties they encounter, many women feel compelled to accept the promise of academic freedom and financial security offered to them in countries which fund and support women's studies. Because academically trained women are in such short supply in many parts of the world, in many cases the results of such international "exchanges" have proved devastating to the home country.

c. The cost of receiving the new potential of women's theology is considerable. Feminist theology is an iconoclastic movement; it is destructive of many former "certainties," and of positions of inertia, as well as being pregnant with new possibilities. The pain of receiving new insights from women is illustrated in church contexts throughout the world. Nevertheless, new life might well be the fruitful issue of this blood-drenched birthing process.

4. *For women to become full partners in theological education will require acts of "liberation."*

- a. Economic recession and the impact of conservative social movements have resulted in an actual worsening of the position of women in many regions. An easy optimism based upon belief in a gradual movement towards women's equality can no longer be sustained. A return to more traditional understandings of women's roles in the churches will inevitably have an impact upon theological institutions, these will face difficult decisions concerning the support they give to women, and the opportunities they make available to them.
- b. Women themselves will need to continue to develop new ventures and training before there is financial or structural support for their initiatives. Women will need to ask themselves hard questions about where they put their energy and resources, and considerable sacrifices will be made.
- as academically trained women continue to support local initiatives in the training of lay women;
 - as Western women learn to share power in dialogue and to keep silent when

appropriate so that other women may speak;

- as women continue to offer their talents within their own cultures and churches when greater freedom and financial security may be enjoyed elsewhere.

In their endeavors women will need to differentiate between those actions that are directed toward change and those that merely serve to ameliorate an intolerable situation.

- c. While it is clear that it is not a feature of human nature to easily relinquish privilege and control it is also the case that many people have faithfully supported the women's cause for a number of years. This consistent work within the system is a vital component of change.
- d. Alongside aspects of feminist liberation are issues of theological imperialism that require a greater openness to dialogue, especially in regard to South-South contributions. Accusations of syncretism need to be reviewed to see if they have a sound basis or if they have their roots in an oppressive attitude to cultures and theological interpretations.

II. WOMEN IN THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION: THE ACHIEVEMENTS

Despite the many obstacles that women have to overcome in order to participate in theological education, women are claiming their right and obligation to participate in theology. They have manifested a high level of commitment and determination to do theology in spite of the rigidity of theological institutions. This determination and commitment have yielded significant results over the last 25 years.

During this period, a new body of theological knowledge distinctive from traditional theology has emerged, and has even been given a distinctive name, feminist theology. This theology has spread all over the world and many women from the various geographical, social, and cultural contexts have come to identify with it.

For these women, feminist theology is not only a new way of doing theology, it has also become a springboard from which women can do theological reflection, based on their own contexts, and also emphasize women's issues in theology. Women's determination to participate in theology has also resulted in significant efforts to research, write, and publish women's theological perspectives on virtually all aspects of theology, for example, biblical feminist theology and hermeneutics, and feminist perspectives on systematic theology, to name only two key aspects.

Women are also committed to fill the gap in terms of lack of information concerning the role of women in theology. A considerable amount of research and documentation has been carried out in order to highlight the extent of women's

contribution to theology and theological education, as well as the issues of concern expressed earlier in this paper.

Women around the world are carving out space within the discourse of theology by coming together under the umbrella of national and regional associations of women concerned with doing theology from a woman's perspective. One of the most exciting movements in the history of theological education is the emergence around the globe of such associations of women theologians. For example, in Africa, in 1989, the Circle of Concerned Women Theologians was formed. In Europe the Association for Women Doing Theological Research was formed in 1985, while similar associations have also been established in Asia, Latin America, and South Pacific regions.

The refreshing thing about women's theological activities is that this is not merely an additional way of doing theology; rather women are challenging theological narrowness in the curricula in theological institutions. In their theology, women are breaking out of the tunnel vision manifest in establishment theological education, and they are more inclusive in the content of their theological agenda. For example, women are proposing new ways of reflecting on ethics, eco-theological issues, alternate ways of doing systematic theology, and the creation of an inclusive and positive theology of sexuality.

It is also clear that women are not only breaking new ground in terms of theological content, they are also widening the horizons of the space within which theology is to be done. For example:

Women perceive the breadth of the curriculum as going beyond the classroom and the library. Aspects of formal and informal networking and community-building which are conducive to a greater academic and ministerial awareness are being embraced by women in theological education. This has resulted in the creation of formal networks such as Women's Studies Centers, the establishment of a Chair of Feminist Theology in some institutions, as well as occasional consultations on pertinent themes outside the confines of the academy.

Though informed largely by their immediate contexts, experience, and concerns, women are also pointing out the need to reach beyond their immediate contexts to reflect together, not only with local grassroots sisters, but also with women internationally, for example: international consultations, and debate, research, and publications on theological and other themes of concern from various global perspectives are being undertaken with significant success.

It is with a sense of pride and celebration that women claim their space within the theological enterprise. This, however, does not mean that there is no longer cause to be concerned. There is still much to be done, and in some areas, beginnings still have to be made. Women perceive the need for a continuing watchfulness and critical alertness as a vital necessity to ensure the continuity

of a genuine tradition of women's agency, and of women's participation as subjects in theological education, rather than as objects of theological analysis.

To this end, this paper also highlights certain areas of ongoing concern, and concludes by articulating aspects of the vision of women in and for theological education.

III. ISSUES FOR ONGOING CONSIDERATION

WOCATI Associations should continue to engage their constituencies in the discernment of appropriate ways to empower women in the local and regional theological education context.

Present leadership patterns within the various institutions should be examined to see whether they are gender-biased, exclusive, or inclusive of the whole range of human experience — in regard to gender, age, or race.

Present initiatives of teaching institutions within WOCATI directed towards the empowering of women should be surveyed to assess their effectiveness.

Although women have started to research and document ways in which religion impacts their lives, much more needs to be done, in light of the WCC's and other ecclesiastical bodies' affirmative action in trying to enable and empower women's research, writing, and their participation in theological discourse.

Lay theological education for women is to be promoted in theological institutions.

Curricula for theological and ministerial education should be reviewed to see that they are liberating for women and men as members of the human community, and that women's contributions to theological education are recognized as an integral part of the curriculum.

Theological education should take into account matters of more immediate concern to women, such as domestic and sexual violence against women, reproductive issues, taboos, witchcraft accusations. In order to address such issues the sharing of insights, resources, and personnel between the academic and the congregational worlds must be facilitated.

Theological institutions need even more openly to affirm the initiative that women have shown, both materially and morally, by:

- a. supporting research and discussion on women and theology;
- b. enabling women's publications and feminist research. The tension women experience in regard to acceptability, orthodoxy, employability, access to power and to publishing needs to be addressed openly.

Practical issues such as residences, originally built for males and requiring

adaptation for females, need to be addressed.

Theological institutions should offer possibilities for women to study or teach full-time or part-time, and for child care.

The workloads of women and men faculty members need to be examined, taking into account both formal and informal workloads.

The present elitism of much of the theological education available needs to be addressed. Questions about why women find it difficult to take advantage of theological education in terms of expectations, programming, time tables, scholarships, and funding need to be addressed.

The voices of women need to be heard in practical aspects of theological education. Women should be involved in the selection of faculty and students, in budget and building planning, and in curriculum development.

It is a priority that where women are trained in theological education, women should be on the faculty. The value of role models in society is significant.

In light of so many movements of women faculty from less privileged educational contexts to more affluent placements, it may be valuable for institutions to examine attitudes towards women, roles, and circumstances of women faculty to discern some motivations for departure.

IV. CONCLUDING COMMENTS

As we reflect on the present praxis of women and theological education, we perceive signs of hope alongside signs of explicit gender bias or inertia. As women who are engaged in the process of theological education, we affirm the signs of hope, and invite the collaboration of all in the eradication of prejudice and the healing of alienation and inertia.

We recognize that initiatives have been taken by men and women deeply committed to excellence in theological education, and to the affirmation of gospel values in the expression of these standards.

We believe that these initiatives will bear fruit for the total theological education enterprise, and thus for the redemptive work of our churches.

C. ACADEMIC DEGREES AND CREDENTIALS IN THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

(Working document for the 2nd WOCATI Congress)

I

The purposes of this paper are threefold: (1) To contribute to the understanding of the various systems, structures, and roles of academic credentials used by theological institutions throughout the world; (2) To foster discussion regarding the nature and significance that academic credentials should have in theological education; and (3) To propose ways whereby academic credentials can be assessed and interpreted by academic institutions and communities in countries and cultures other than their sources of origin.

Consideration of these purposes will constitute a part of the agenda of the convening of WOCATI CONGRESS 96. This paper is intended to provide a basis for consideration by the CONGRESS of the issues involved in current systems and practices of theological credentials.

II

Despite the long history of academic credentials, current attitudes, practices, and problems pose new questions regarding their use and significance in theological education.

Some find the idea of academic credentials incongruent, if not inimical, to the purposes of theological education. In many respects this critique of academic credentials is a form of the age-old claim that «Jerusalem has nothing to do with Athens,» and that the standards by which the academic community is structured have no place in determining the competencies that are required for church leadership. In a more general sense, questions regarding the significance of academic degrees undoubtedly reflect the growing separation between the church and the academy in our time.

Many advocates of the «theology by the people movements» are critical of traditional, institutionally based, degree-structured forms of theological education and the values these place on academic credentials as certification for church leadership. They charge that the tradition of valuing academic degrees leads to serious failures to acknowledge leadership competencies that are developed in other ways than academic study.

Others view the practices and uses of academic credentials as fostering the professionalization of the ministry, which is considered to be in sharp contrast to the concept of calling, servant leadership, and spirit-filled graces.

From the standpoint of practice, the relation between academic credentials and ordination is increasingly problematic for many churches. Churches without firmly established educational requirements for ordination tend to minimize the significance of academic degrees. Many churches which traditionally have required a graduate seminary degree or its equivalent for ordination have been moved to reassess such degree requirements out of concerns for feminist and minority interests and commitments to foster more inclusive leadership that reflects the pluralism of church constituencies.¹

5. Developments within theological education add to the mounting issues and problems related to academic credentials. The diversity of degrees that are currently used throughout the world and the absence of universally accepted criteria by which degrees are governed give rise to serious problems regarding the significance of degrees, their equivalencies, and their utility for the world community of theological schools and scholars. These problems are further complicated by the growing proliferation of degrees by theological schools, a trend that is most pronounced in the United States. In addition, in the effort to serve a more inclusive constituency, theological schools in many parts of the world are devising both programs and educational methodologies that are alternatives to degree structured theological education. For example, special certificate programs are being instituted for persons who either do not have the academic prerequisites for established degree programs or are in no position to follow formal programs of study. Still others are adopting educational strategies that acknowledge and build upon forms of learning and experience that may not be based on formal academic study. Finally, attitudes and practices within the academic community, especially the tendency to define academic degrees according to the number of course units accumulated rather than educational competence acquired, add further motivation and reason to question the significance of academic degrees.

But there are other, more positive mandates for reassessing theological credentials. It is implicit in the ongoing task of contextualizing theological education. This task consists of at least a two-step process. First of all, the significance and uses of theological credentials should reflect and serve the educational and ecclesiastical needs and influences of their indigenous cultural contexts. In order to accomplish this end, the academic traditions that have been inherited from the past need to be critically reviewed and revised as needed. Secondly, as this task is carried forward effectively, it entails a correlate one. The indigenous systems of theological credentials need to be related to the global community of theological schools. Both elements of this mandate, contextualization and globalization, constitute timely challenges to theological educators seeking to advance their callings both locally and in concert with their peers throughout the world.

III

Academic degrees are related to both the ends and the means of theological education.² For the degree recipient, degrees signify the completion of formal courses of study or the certification of educational achievements. As such, degrees may serve as proof of acquired abilities, qualification for professional position or appointment, or a requisite for further study. For theological institutions, degrees are formal mechanisms for structuring the pace, type, duration, and sequence of courses of study.

The social role of theological schools is twofold: to educate and to certify the recipients of education.³ In the latter case, theological schools function on the presumption that they are the appropriate and qualified agents of confirming to the church and the world at large that degree recipients have fully attained the educational purposes to which the credentials bear witness.

The terms, academic degrees and academic credentials, designate the formal means that institutions use to recognize and certify academic accomplishments. For such purposes, theological schools use a variety of forms. *Certificates* are used to recognize completion of courses of study that are often more limited in scope and subject matter than are degree programs. *Diplomas*, on the other hand, are documents that formally confirm the degree and the privileges that pertain to the degree, regardless of whether or not a formal system of degrees is in effect. In its more limited sense, *degrees* signify a rank or distinction conferred by an institution as mark of proficiency or completion of a designated course of study.⁴

This paper focuses on the academic degrees that are distinctive to theological institutions and which are granted on the basis of the authority and jurisdiction that theological institutions have in their own right.

Seven or eight years of study were required for the doctor or master's degree. The baccalaureate or bachelor's degree was conferred after four or five years of study and qualified a student to perform limited teaching responsibilities in a master's school. From the beginning, it designated the completion of the first course or period of study leading to the more senior degree. As such, the baccalaureate was not considered an end in itself but the initial stage of formal university studies.

In France, the baccalaureate came to signify the completion of secondary schooling, and the license became the first university degree. In England, the Bachelor of Arts became the major university degree and the Master of Arts something of a formality based upon informal study or research. In Germany, the bachelor's degree disappeared and the doctorate became the first university degree.

In the United States, the English model of degrees prevailed. The Bachelor of Arts was awarded after four years of study, and in the beginning, the Mas-

ter of Arts was granted «in cursu» to students who remained for three years and paid regular fees. As early as 1853, however, the Master of Arts was established as an earned degree and was termed «pro meritis» to distinguish it from the Master's Degree offered «in cursu.» The Doctor of Philosophy degree was introduced in 1860 and rapidly became mandatory for faculty appointment to leading universities. However, it was not until the beginning of the 20th century that the granting of the Ph.D. as an honorary degree was ended by American universities and colleges.

IV

In the West, theological degrees were well established as early as the 13th century at the universities of Paris and Bologna.⁵ They were conferred on students who completed designated years of study, passed exams, and were formally admitted into the guild of teachers. Degrees were titles that carried certain rights regarding the teaching office, the most important of which was the right to teach. Thus, degrees originally bore the significance of certifying to academic competence and conferring the right to practice the profession of teaching. Throughout the Middle Ages, the terms master, doctor, and professor were synonymous and remained so until modern times.

At Paris and later at Oxford, the master's degree was the prevailing rank. At Bologna, it was the doctorate. Both carried the right to teach anywhere without further certification. However, later in the development of universities, the prerogatives of the degrees changed. The right to teach was no longer automatically conferred with the degree. Hence, the titles came to designate not the conferral of an office but the certification of academic accomplishment or completion of formal courses of study. By and large, it is this meaning of degrees that has continued into modern times and is dominant for theological schools.

V

The granting of degrees by theological seminaries, as distinguished from university faculties of theology, is a relatively recent innovation in the history of higher education in the West. It represents the development of theological education designed primarily to prepare persons for the church's ministry. The introduction of this form of theological education resulted in the distinction between academic and professional theological degrees, and this distinction continues today throughout the world. The point that should be stressed is that until approximately the beginning of this century, theological degrees were quite insignificant, and in many instances, considered irrelevant, to educating clergy.

Until the middle of the 18th century, state churches existed throughout Eu-

rope. Theology was taught by state-supported universities as part of the general curriculum, and with the exception of Roman Catholic seminaries, no institutions existed uniquely for training ministers. The Council of Trent in 1563 made provision for the establishment of Roman Catholic theological seminaries, the first of which was not founded until the 17th century. None functioned as degree-granting institutions. Throughout the Protestant world during the latter part of the 18th century, the churches became convinced for a variety of reasons that they could not depend on colleges and universities for the training of their ministers. As the academy sought freedom to pursue the dictates of scientific knowledge and as the separation of church and state increasingly affected all forms of education throughout the world, the churches lacked confidence that state-supported colleges and universities could serve fully the educational needs of ministerial leadership. They responded by establishing their own theological institutions to provide the kind of education deemed essential to an adequately educated ministry.

As independent churches developed alongside established churches, preacher-seminaries were founded first by non conforming churches and then by state churches.⁷ In Germany and Scandinavia they were called preacher-seminaries. In England and Scotland, they were known as public colleges, and in the Church of England as diocesan seminaries. In Germany, preacher-colleges existed as early as 1677.⁸ All followed in some fashion the Tridentine seminaries, offering first a philosophical course followed by theological study of one or two years, for which no academic degrees were awarded.

In colonial America, colleges were founded after the British model essentially to «assure a literate ministry.» The study of theology was mingled with general education, and the traditional Bachelor of Arts degree was granted, followed by the master's degree where such was provided.⁹

Throughout the 17th and 18th centuries, no professional theological degrees were granted in the United States. This did not change with the founding of graduate theological seminaries, which began in 1808 with the founding of Andover Theological Seminary. Graduates of seminaries, upon completion of their studies, often returned to their college or university for the Master of Arts degree. Despite the fact that seminaries were organized as graduate institutions, no provisions were made at first to award degrees. Instead, seminaries awarded certificates confirming the completion of theological studies. These certificates were significant in that they were often required by ministerial associations and ordaining councils. It was not until the latter third of the 19th century that provisions were made for seminaries to grant degrees in their own right. Harvard, for example, instituted the Bachelor of Divinity degree in 1869, which was recognized as a degree of the divinity school rather than the university. Since the

B.D. degree carried special requirements, those who completed only the regular course of study continued to receive certificates. It is interesting to note that during the first 10 years, only 39 B.D. degrees were awarded by Harvard. The majority of students continued to receive certificates only. This was largely true for all theological seminaries in the United States and reflected the prevalent absence of any significant role of academic degrees for the training of clergy.¹⁰

In Canada, theological schools followed a similar pattern. The traditional practice was to award only a diploma for the three-year post baccalaureate course in divinity. This was all that was required for ordination by mainline churches.» The Bachelor of Divinity degree became an optional post-graduate degree and required the equivalent of a fourth year of study and major thesis. This pattern began to change in mid-century. For example, in 1950 Victoria University (Toronto, United Church of Canada) altered requirements for the B.D. degree, making it possible to qualify «in course» after three years of study, a thesis, and at least one biblical language. Provisions were also made for those with a diploma to receive the B.D. degree upon completion of a thesis. In English-speaking Canada, this system prevailed.

In many sectors of the world, theological degrees are university degrees and conform to the academic traditions of the country. This is especially the case where theological schools are the theological faculties of universities. In other sectors where seminaries are autonomous and issue their own degrees, their credentials are either recognized as the appropriate credentials for education devoted to theological purposes, or they are independent of university degrees and often without recognition by central educational authorities. For example, in Brazil and most Latin American countries, the B.D. degree is not recognized by governmental authorities. The degrees offered by theological schools are under the rule of their church bodies, and their significance is generally limited to the values placed upon them by denominational constituencies. However, recently the Brazilian government instituted the means of recognizing the Master's and Doctor's degrees offered by theological schools which are annually evaluated by the Ministry of Education.¹²

It is important to note that in the Roman Catholic Church, degree-granting theological education takes place in three institutional settings.¹³

The first is an ecclesiastical university or faculty. In these instances, degrees are awarded on the authority of the Holy See and are governed by the Apostolic Constitution «*Sapientia Christiana*» (1979). The program of study, intended for both ordinands and lay persons, is divided into three cycles. The first, a three-year program preceded by two years of philosophy, leads to the Baccalaureate in Sacred Theology (S.T.B.), the second cycle of two years with specialization in theology, to the Licentiate in Sacred Theology (S.T.L.), and the third terminat-

ing in a doctoral dissertation to the Doctorate in Sacred Theology (S.T.D.).

A second institutional setting is the seminary devoted primarily to preparing men for the ordained priesthood. Seminaries are governed throughout the world by the «Basic Norms for Priestly Formation» (1983), by regional adaptations of individual Bishop's Conferences of the world, and by the Code of Canon Law. While most seminaries confer degrees, by nature they are not necessarily degree-granting institutions. Students in seminaries affiliated with an ecclesiastical faculty of theology can be awarded the S.T.B. by the affiliate faculty. In other cases, seminaries confer what is recognized as civil degrees in their own right, usually by virtue of their membership in such associations as The Association of Theological Schools in the U.S. and Canada.

Departments of Theology of Catholic universities constitute the third setting for theological education, and these confer civil, university degrees. These departments, together with the entire college or university, are governed by the Apostolic Constitution «Ex Corde Ecclesiae» (1990) and by the local ordinances of the regional Bishops' Conferences. In some countries, there are also Higher Institutes of Religious Studies, connected to faculties of theology, providing programs that lead to diplomas and other similar credentials.

VI

The awarding of academic degrees by theological institutions not associated with universities, once started in the late 19th century, was unregulated or monitored. Consequently, a plethora of different degrees was developed without commonly agreed upon standards or nomenclature. Efforts were made in various regions around the world to institute some uniformity of degrees related to theological education.

For example, in South East Asia, prior to the Second World War, theological education was conducted essentially by Bible schools that operated at various levels of higher education. As these institutions advanced, various forms of academic degrees developed. In 1957 the Association for Theological Education in South East Asia (ATESA) was established with a major purpose of accrediting theological degrees. Today, ATESA accredits the licentiate (diploma), Bachelor of Theology, Bachelor or Master of Divinity, the Master of Theology, and the Doctor of Theology.

In Brazil, the Association of Brazilian Theological Schools (ASTE) accredits the *Bacharel em Teologia* (B.Th.) and the *Mestre em Teologia* (M.Th.) at the request of member schools and according to the Association's standards. In addition, Protestant evangelical schools have established their own system of accreditation. Similar systems of accreditation by associations of theological institutions have been established throughout Africa, Asia, and other parts of the

world.

In 1932, The Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada established firm definitions and standards for theological degrees to which all accredited institutions were required to adhere. They included the following:

The *Bachelor of Divinity* degree was established as the first post-graduate degree for a theological course of study, normally of three years duration, and designated as a «professional degree» focusing on the ministry and its practice.

The *diploma* was to be awarded for three years of study that did not conform to the requirements for the B.D. degree.

The *certificate* represented one or more years of study that did not fulfill the requirements of either the diploma or B.D. degree.

The *Master of Theology* (M.Th.) was established as the second theological degree and required at least one year of study beyond the B.D.

The *Doctor of Theology* degree (Th.D.) was to be the highest degree awarded by institutions without university affiliations and was equivalent to the Ph.D.

The *Master of Arts* and *Doctor of Philosophy* degrees (M.A. and Ph.D.) were recognized as the highest academic degrees to be awarded by university-related theological schools.¹⁵

These definitions have remained normative for theological degrees in North America. However, several changes were made subsequently to the nomenclature and inventory of theological degrees.

During the 1960s, the M.Div. was accepted as an alternative to the B.D. In 1972, the M.Div. replaced the B.D. as the preferred first, professional, theological degree.

In 1970, the Doctor of Ministry degree was approved as the «highest professional degree» for which ordination is required.¹⁶

In 1986, the Doctor of Missiology (D.Miss.) degree was approved as «a professional degree designed to prepare persons for leadership roles in specialized cross-cultural ministries...as well as teaching.»

A number of degrees primarily related to specialized ministries were added such as the Master of Religious Education (M.R.E.), the Master and Doctor of Sacred Music (M.S.M. and S.M.D.), the Doctor of Education (Ed.D.), and a number of M.A. degrees in specialized areas such as pastoral counseling, youth ministries, etc., intended for persons not committed to ordained ministry. The recommended designation of the specialized M.A. degrees is «M.A. in (specialization).»

Alternative designations of degrees have been approved. Among the most prevalent alternatives are the Master of Sacred Theology (S.T.M.) as substitute for the M.Th., and the S.T.D. for the Ph.D. or Th.D.

One additional change has occurred especially in the United States regarding

the academic doctorate. As indicated above, in 1932 The Association of Theological Schools designated the Ph.D. as an appropriate degree for university-related theological institutions and the Th.D. for freestanding schools. In 1974 this distinction was removed, and subsequently theological schools that offered the academic doctorate in theology were free to adopt either the Ph.D. or Th.D. nomenclature. Subsequently, the Ph.D. designation has been preferred almost without exception by North American theological schools. The reason for this change, simply put, was to make the highest academic doctorate offered by theological schools competitive with those awarded by colleges and universities.

This change reflected in its own way a major shift that has generally occurred throughout the world in the significance of academic degrees for theological education. During the past century, the credentials issued by theological schools, whether they were certificates or degrees, were significant to the extent that they served important purposes and functions of the church. Throughout the present century, however, theological seminaries have increasingly fashioned their academic degrees according to the degree standards, nomenclature, and rationales held by colleges and universities. At the same time, they have sought to base theological degrees upon their own degree-granting authority and hence to make them independent of the rest of higher education. In short, theological schools have tended to import the logic of academic degrees from the rest of higher education while developing a system of degrees in their own right. In doing so, it can be said that the degrees related to theological education have taken on added academic, as distinguished from ecclesiastical, significance. The result of this development has been twofold. On one hand, theological institutions have attempted to import the logic of academic degrees from the rest of higher education in the attempt to increase their academic significance. On the other hand, by seeking to establish and maintain an independent system of academic degrees, theological schools have sought to preserve the role and significance of academic credentials for the church. The tension between these two motivations is the source of much of the current problematic nature of academic degrees.

VII

What case can be made for theological degrees today? There is reason to believe that many of the current practices and use of academic degrees by theological schools have developed without clear rationale. Any assessment of the current state of theological degrees must take into account the twofold significance they have, that is for the church on one hand and the academic community on the other. Academic degrees are the clearest symbols of the fact that as agents of both the church and the academy, theological schools seek to exist with integrity in both worlds.

The theory of academic degrees can be stated quite simply: *They are the structured means of certifying the fulfillment of educational ends by a duly constituted third party.*¹⁷ Based on this formulation, the case for academic degrees in theological education should take into account the following elements:

1. The *structure* of academic degrees. The use of academic degrees by theological schools is informed by long historical precedent and practice. The weight of these historical traditions bears upon both the church and academy, and to propose alternate systems of certifying academic accomplishment would incur the burden of proof. There seems to be no sound reason for either denigrating the use or significance of academic degrees in theological education or for displacing them with some other system.

There are, however, at least two conditions that should be met in the future development and utilization of theological degrees. First, the system of degrees should be coherent, tying together the different levels of educational accomplishment and proficiency that are significant to the church's ministry. Theological degrees should be sufficiently complex to calibrate the different levels and forms of education required for church leadership. They should also provide for sufficient flexibility to allow students to move from level to level without undue barriers or obstacles. In other words, no theological degree should be terminal in nature and prevent qualified students from having access to advanced degrees. Secondly, as a system, theological degrees should become global in nature and applicability. There is much to be gained by both worlds within which theological degrees function, the church and the academy, from a global system of theological degrees. As is argued later, there is no reason, in principle, to preclude the possibility of establishing a global system of theological degrees based upon broadly defined educational objectives which could be implemented without detriment to local systems, traditions, and practices.

2. *Certification.* This is the principle of academic credentials. They are intended to certify the academic accomplishments of the degree holder. Within the academic community, such certification is significant in that it carries certain rights and privileges that by tradition accrue to each degree. For example, the right to engage in higher studies is limited to those who possess degrees that are considered requisites for advanced study. In some professional areas, the right to practice is based upon educational requirements, the fulfillment of which the degrees certify. By means of degrees and the certification they represent, theological institutions provide significant services to constituents within the academic community and society at large.

Within the life and work of the church, certification by degrees is significant not for the rights, privileges, or social and professional prestige that may that may be claimed for them. Rather, they are means of certifying the fulfill-

ment of educational goals that are considered by the church as essential to the practice of ministry. Such evaluation is vital to the church, and especially to the ordaining councils that are guided by educational and intellectual criteria and expectations. There are profound theological justifications for these educational and intellectual expectations. Obviously, theological degrees will have significance for the church only to the extent that these intellectual and educational expectations or requirements are valued.

Duly constituted third-party assessment. Academic or educational achievement is not the only type of competency that is important to the church and its leadership. However, *it is the form of competency that theological institutions are best capable to assess and most qualified to certify.* Academic degrees are the formal means by which this jurisdiction is exercised, and as argued above, certifying this form of achievement by means of degrees is one of the basic services rendered by theological schools to the church and to society as a whole.

The authority by which theological schools issue degrees is vested in a number of sources. In most countries, theological schools are corporate entities and exercise their legal functions including degree-granting rights by means of state charters. Within centralized, state systems of higher education, the significance of theological degrees is dependent upon state certification. In countries with decentralized systems, theological schools function in their own right, and the significance of theological degrees is often based upon some form of institutional accreditation or recognition. Regardless of the overall educational system within which theological schools operate, academic credentials are significant only to the extent that the certification they offer is well founded and fully acknowledged by the major constituencies served by the degrees. In short, the certification contained in academic credentials is valued in direct proportion to the confidence that theological schools enjoy as certifying agents within both the church and the world of higher education.

This confidence is dependent upon a number of factors. Among the most significant are the strengths of the faculty and the adequacy of educational, physical, and financial resources. As institutions of higher education, these factors are important for theological schools and the degrees they issue. Increasingly, the value of degrees is enhanced by forms of accreditation or assessment by a community of institutional peers. But in very special ways, the value of theological degrees and the certification they represent are dependent also in no small measure upon the excellence and character that graduates demonstrate in their ministries. Although every educational institution is known by its graduates, this is especially the case for theological schools. The intimate relation between church and seminary, and the concrete manner in which this relation is expressed and served by graduates, are peculiar to theological schools and determine in pro-

found ways the significance of their degrees. All other graduate and professional schools are related to the institutions served by their graduates in quite different and far more general ways than is the case in theological education.

VIII

So far we have addressed only the formal nature of theological degrees. In summary, they are the established means by which theological schools certify the fulfillment of educational ends. As has been argued, this certification is significant and relevant to fundamental purposes served by theological schools. We now turn to the material significance of theological degrees by asking the question: What do theological degrees attest to? In other words, what are the educational ends the fulfillment of which are certified by theological degrees? What follows is a proposal that is intended to foster discussion among theological educators regarding the future course and development of theological degrees.

A system of theological degrees, if it is to serve the worldwide community of theological schools, should conform to the following criteria:

It should reflect the theological nature of theological education.¹⁸ This is not to suggest that questions concerning theological degrees are in themselves theological questions. They clearly are not. Logically, they possess secondary or even tertiary signification. However, assessments of the significance of theological degrees must reflect in some ways that which makes theological education distinctive. Questions concerning that distinctiveness (or to restate the matter, what makes theological education *theological*) are theological in nature, and responses to these questions should provide rationales by which the significance of academic degrees is informed and assessed.

It must accommodate the pluralism of theological schools and their educational systems. To speak of pluralism is very much in vogue among theological educators. It has become so commonplace as to mask critical issues inherent in many uses of the word. For example, at times it is used to express a very non controversial observation that various forms of theological schools do in fact exist throughout the world.¹⁹ At other times, the concept «pluralism» shifts from a descriptive to a normative term and is used in ways that imply, without supporting argument, that all cases of differences are in fact equally valid. In this context, pluralism is used in order to focus on the concreteness of theological educational systems and the differences that characterize them. A global system of theological degrees must take into account the differences that not only exist but that may be inherent in the nature of theological schools and their educational enterprises.

It must provide an overarching structure that is consonant with the unity of theological education. How might this be formulated?

Criteria two suggests that a system of theological degrees should be compatible

in meaning and general character with indigenous degrees used by higher education at the local level. Criteria one, however, refers to the basis by which the distinctive character of theological degrees is to be determined. This third criteria assumes that all theological schools share a common reality. They all are or seek to be theological. The viability of a global system of theological degrees will ultimately depend upon the extent to which this unity is operative, either explicitly or implicitly, throughout the world.

David Kelsey has characterized the issues of unity and pluralism as the most critical to the current debate concerning the theological nature of theological education.²⁰ There is little question but that the manner in which these issues are resolved will shape the future of theological education in fundamental ways. As to the viability of a shared system of theological degrees, the issues concerning unity will also be determinative. From such resolutions will come the theoretical foundations upon which a system or potential systems of theological degrees can be based.

In keeping with this claim, this paper puts forth two proposals. The first is a proposal concerning the general principle by which the unity of theological education should be conceived. The second pertains to a system of theological degrees based upon the proposed principle of unity.

IX

As indicated above, projecting an inclusive system of theological degrees requires a conceptualization of the unity that is common to all theological schools. This is in itself a theological undertaking and is not the purpose of this paper. However, some notion of the nature of this unity, however rudimentary and tentative, is required in order to undertake a serious discussion of a global system of theological degrees or to establish a framework within which existing theological degrees can be assessed and interpreted on a universal scale.

Accordingly, we propose that the principle of unity that should guide considerations of a system of theological degrees should be stated as follows: *Focus on the purposes or ends of theological education*. In other words, the unity of theological education should be conceived ideologically.²¹

By definition, the proposal excludes other alternatives. It precludes efforts to conceive of the unity of theological education in terms of structures, systems, programs, content, or educational methods. Such an approach would enable theological schools to participate in wide-ranging discussion regardless of the theological, philosophical, or cultural differences that may exist within the community of schools. Whether the ends or purposes of theological education are conceived in relation to the dynamics of faith (e.g., faith seeking understanding or other forms of witness) or the community of faith (e.g., preparing church lead-

ership, Christian identity and praxis, etc.), such differences need not curtail serious consideration of an overarching system of theological degrees.

The second proposal sketches the rudiments of a degree structure for theological education. But before doing so, it would be well to summarize key points addressed above. Academic credentials are the formal means of acknowledging educational or academic achievements. As official instruments, they certify the fulfillment of educational ends and are valued in proportion to the confidence that is enjoyed by the certifying institution. A global system of theological degrees must reflect the theological nature of theological education, and the concreteness and pluralism of its implementation. Finally, it is argued that a global system of degrees is viable only to the extent that theological schools share some identifying unity underlying institutional differences, and that this unity should be conceived and interpreted teleologically.

In keeping with the foregoing, a proposed system of theological degrees should include the following characteristics:

- a. It should be inclusive of the fullest range of educational missions, each of which constitutes the fulfillment of a discrete educational goal appropriate to theological education.
- b. It should include a sufficient number of degree titles as required to fully recognize the different goals and purposes of theological education without redundancy or duplication.
- c. It should be systematic in character; that is, degrees should be structured in such ways as to flow from one to another providing maximum flexibility and freedom of transition.
- d. Each degree should mark the successful completion of a level of academic achievement without precluding following steps or stages. Each degree should be based upon its own requirements and goals and made available to all who successfully fulfill them.²²

A global system of theological degrees should include eight modes of academic achievement. Although each local educational system may engage only in one or some of the following degrees, it is proposed that this system be accepted as the means for a reciprocal understanding of theological degrees offered in areas throughout the world. The proposed designations and general specifications for each are as follows:

1. Preparatory Certification

Theological education may begin with programs devoted to the preparation of persons for study at the university or college level. Ordinarily, this form of theological education is recognized not by a degree but by such other forms of academic credentials as certificates or diplomas.

2. *The First Degree*

As an undergraduate degree, the baccalaureate should signify the completion of a general, liberal arts education as defined by the educational and cultural heritage of the certifying theological institution. As a theological degree, it should be directed to the critical understanding of the religious heritage of one's culture, including introduction to its religious writings, theology, and traditions, both in historical and contemporary contexts. Although it should not be determined by professional educational objectives, it should represent the completion of studies that constitute a sound basis for additional theological studies. Examples: Bachelor of Arts (representing three or four years of university, college, or Bible school study; the U.S., Canadian, and English systems), Diploma (two years of university study, French system), Statsexamen (two to four years of university study, German system), etc.

3. *The Intermediate Degree*

This degree signifies the completion of at least one year of full-time study beyond the undergraduate level resulting in the acquisition of the requisites for independent study and research directed to the doctorate or a critical theological understanding and interpretation of one's religious and cultural heritage. Examples: Master of Arts, License (French system), Magister Artium (German system), etc.²³

4. *The First Professional Degree*²⁴

The primary purpose of this degree is to prepare persons to begin the practice of ministry as defined by the religious communities that are served by the theological institution. The degree recognizes the completion of both academic and practical studies that are directed to at least four sets of educational objectives: (a) a thorough and critical understanding of the scriptures, theology, historical tradition, and ministry of the religious heritage and faith of the religious community; (b) an understanding of the social and cultural structures and realities within which religious bodies and institutions exist and carry out their missions; (c) the nurturing of basic arts of ministry; and (d) the growth and maturing of personal and spiritual formation. This degree should represent at least three years of full-time study beyond the baccalaureate. Examples: Master of Divinity or Bachelor of Divinity, License (French system), Diploma (German system), S.T.B. (Roman Catholic), etc.

In the history of theological education, the normative degree for ministry has required at least three years of graduate study. However, there is a growing trend of awarding as a first professional degree recognition of two-year studies directed to specialized ministries. Such degrees as the Master of Religious Education and

the Master of Sacred Music have the longest history. More recent innovations, especially in North America, have been degrees designated as Master of Arts in (Name of specialized ministry added, e.g. «Pastoral Counseling»). In other regions, this form of education may be recognized by certificates or diplomas.

5. The Intermediate Professional Degree

It is generally acknowledged that the first professional theological degree is intended to certify an initial level of educational achievement and development required to begin the practice of ministry. Many schools offer programs that focus on the fuller mastery of one of the theological disciplines or on a particular form or aspect of ministry. These programs are intended for holders of the Master of Divinity degree and usually require at least one year of study beyond the first professional degree. Examples: Master of Theology or Master of Sacred Theology (North America), S.T.L. (Roman Catholic), etc.

6. The Final Professional Degree

As the general educational levels of society have increased, theological schools especially in North America have developed educational programs for ministers beyond those provided by the first and intermediate professional degrees. These programs have been designed at the doctoral level and are intended to provide a «level of knowledge, theoretical clarity, and competence of practice commensurate with the highest earned degree for the profession and practice of ministry.»²⁵ As the final professional doctorate, this degree is intended to certify the acquisition of advanced knowledge and understanding of ministry in relation to the basic biblical, historical, systematic, and practical theological disciplines. In addition, the degree represents the additional development of competencies required for effective ministry informed by a comprehensive and critical theory of ministry, and a contribution to the understanding and practice of ministry as evidenced by a doctoral level project. Examples: Doctor of Ministry (North America). There are no equivalents in other national systems.²⁶

7. The Academic Doctorate

In some cases as in Germany, the doctorate is the first earned degree. In most other systems, it is the culmination of the degree structure and presupposes as requisites the various forms of academic accomplishment represented by all related degrees. In both cases, the system of degrees and academic credentials are so structured as to come to termination in the academic doctorate. As theological degrees, the Ph.D. and the Th.D. are intended to certify academic preparation required for teaching and research, and in this regard represent educational purposes that have been in effect since the middle ages.

In many parts of the world, the Ph.D. and Th.D. have become indistinguishable as theological degrees. However, there are substantial reasons for maintaining differences between the two. Theological education requires faculty prepared in the context of religious studies with its focus on what is identified as the academic or nonconfessional study of religion in all of its manifestations. In addition, it needs faculty who reflect the distinctive approaches and orientation embodied in theological degrees. Therefore, the distinction between the Th.D. and the Ph.D. should be maintained. The Th.D. should presuppose the first professional theological degree and be structured accordingly. Either doctorate should certify achievement required for teaching and research.

Examples: Doctor of Philosophy, Doctor of Theology, Doctor of Sacred Theology, Doctorate de Troisieme Cycle (French system), etc.

8. *Post-Doctoral Degree*

In North America, the Ph.D. and Th.D. are considered the highest earned academic degree. In Europe and elsewhere, a higher doctorate has been established. Almost without exception, these post doctorates are awarded on the basis of published scholarship, are intended to recognize mature scholarship, and usually are awarded after the onset of one's teaching or scholarly career. In France and Germany, the higher degree involves additional study and qualifies one for appointment to a professorship.

As theological education faces the future, there may be good reason to adopt a system of post-doctoral recognition based upon specialized study and published research. In the sciences, formal programs of post-doctoral study and research are well established, and in some fields of natural science, it is not an insignificant qualification for university faculty appointment. Although this is not generally the case in theology, post-doctoral recognition could provide very significant impetus and support for advancing theological scholarship. It could serve to acknowledge in very special ways those scholars who in extraordinary ways advance the knowledge and teachings of the church regarding its faith and mission. If so, the postdoctoral degree would need to reflect achievement that is clearly distinguishable, on one hand, from the Ph.D. and Th.D. and, on the other hand, the plethora of honorary degrees («*honoris causa*») that are currently awarded by many theological institutions for reasons other than academic, educational, or scholarly achievements. Examples: Doctorat D'etat or Agrege (French system), Habilitation (German system), Livre Docencia (Brazil). It should be noted that in England, Wales, and Scotland, the Doctor of Divinity is awarded as the highest theological degree. This nomenclature is not recommended in view of the fact that especially in the United States and other regions, the D.D. is an honorary and not an earned degree.

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In conclusion, the following comments are offered. First of all, discussion regarding the structure of theological degrees should have as its purpose not the creation of a single, uniform, all embracing system to which all must conform but rather the emergence of a conceptual framework of equivalents in terms of which individual systems of theological degrees can be interpreted and assessed. Such a framework would be of considerable practical value to the world community of theological schools.

The second intention of a thorough review of degree structures would be to undertake a far-ranging consideration of the general standards that should define each of the levels of academic achievement by which theological education should be structured or ordered regardless of degree systems that may prevail in various regions of the world. This is by far the more substantive, if not formidable, task. Again it must be made clear that the intention of such a task would not be to establish or mandate a single, uniform, worldwide set of standards to which all regional or local institutions should conform. Instead, the purpose would be an invitation to undertake a mutual search for commonalities that both reflect and constitute the unity of purposes shared by all theological institutions. Such a discussion could be of immeasurable value to theological education as a global enterprise for it would focus attention on the most decisive questions confronting theological educators; namely, what is theological about theological education? What makes theological education different from closely related academic enterprises? How can the nature and distinctive purposes of theological education be translated into educational goals and standards that will serve as norms for the enterprise? From such explorations might come the benefits of conceptual clarification concerning the nature of theological education and mutual understanding, if not agreement, regarding a number of very important instrumental practices as theological degrees.

If such undertakings require justification, let it be argued that the future of theological education will be charted by movement from local or regional boundaries to global contexts. In this transition, it will be imperative that theological educators become more critically self conscious about their distinctive mission and purposes. Although degree structures possess only instrumental significance and value, as seen above, they reflect matters of primary importance to the entire enterprise. As such, they can be instruments for the kind of reflections and engagements that are essential to the ongoing agendas of theological educators.

WOCATI CONGRESS 96 offers a unique opportunity for theological educators to consider seriously and productively the potential values, issues, and defining characteristics of a global framework of theological degrees and cre-

dentials. Accordingly, there are at least two challenges that confront the CONGRESS in this regard:

To reach consensus regarding the ingredients of a general and defining system of theological degrees and credentials (see Section IX above).

To authorize WOCATI to plan and initiate studies and discussions directed to the identification of global standards by which each level or mission of theological education should be defined and evaluated, and to devise means of engaging member associations and organizations in these efforts. These two recommendations are put forward in the conviction that such actions by the CONGRESS would provide an agenda for WOCATI with long-range implications for advancing theological education as a coherent, global enterprise.

NOTES

1. For example, in 1961 the American Baptist Churches, USA specified that the educational standards for ordination are the possession of the Bachelor of Arts and the Master of Divinity degrees awarded by accredited institutions. Exceptions to these degree requirements were approved in 1973 to include experience, carefully defined, as an equivalent to formal educational preparation. The purpose for this change was to foster diversity and inclusiveness in the church's ministry.
2. See Clark Kerr, «Foreword,» in Stephen H. Spurr, *Academic Degree Structures: Innovative Approaches*, (McGraw Hill: New York, 1970), p. v.
3. Spurr, p. 1.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 4.
5. Historical references are based primarily on Rashdall, Hastings, *The Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages*, F.M. Powicke and A.B. Emden (eds), (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1936), and Spurr, pp. 9ff.
6. Spurr, p. 10.
7. Abdel R. Wentz, *History of the Gettysburg Theological Seminary*, (Philadelphia: The United Lutheran Publication House, 1926), pp. 104ff.
8. See George W. Richards, *History of the Theological Seminary of the Reformed Church in the United States*, (Lancaster, PA, 1952), p. 16.
9. The charter of the first university in Massachusetts, Harvard, established in 1636, includes the following purpose: to insure the perpetuation of an educated ministry «when our present ministers shall lie in the dust.»
10. Union Theological Seminary, New York, established the B.D. degree in 1896. The General Theological Seminary (Episcopal) of New York, authorized the granting of the Bachelor of Sacred Theology in 1876. Gettysburg Theological Seminary (Lutheran) introduced the B.D. degree in 1894. Auburn Theological Seminary (Presbyterian) was authorized to grant the degree in 1904. An exception to this history is Bexley Hall (Episcopal), which conferred the B.D. degree for two years in the 1830s, but discontinued it thereafter until 1876. In the beginning, the B.D. degree was granted only upon the fulfillment of requirements such as a comprehensive examination and final the-

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- sis in addition to the regular course of study. Those only completing the regular course of study continued to receive a certificate of study.
11. Information provided by Dr. C. Douglas Jay, former principal of Emmanuel College of Victoria University, Toronto. My dependence on Dr. Jay's letter of October 28, 1993 reflects the almost total absence of documented study of theological degrees throughout the world.
 12. Information provided by Dr. Jaci Maraschin.
 13. Information provided by Msgr. Walter Endyvean.
 14. Information provided by Dr. Yeow Choo Lak.
 15. Minutes of the Eighth Biennial Meeting, Conference of Theological Seminaries and Colleges in the United States and Canada, June 7-9, 1932, pp. 14-15.
 16. For an account of the history and assessment of the D.Min. degree, see Jackson W. Carroll and Barbara G. Wheeler, «Doctor of Ministry Program: History, Summary of Findings and Recommendations,» *Theological Education*, Spring, 1987, pp. 7-52.
 17. This formulation of the theory of academic degrees is based on the suggestions of Spurr, pp. 1 ff.
 18. For the past decade, theological educators throughout the world but especially in North America have conducted what has been described as «the most extensive debate in print about theological schooling that has ever been published.» David H. Kelsey, *Between Athens and Berlin: The Theological Education Debate* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans, 1993), p. 1. Kelsey offers the most comprehensive and incisive analysis of the major publications produced by this debate since Farley's important and influential work, *Theologia: The Fragmentation and Unity of Theological Education* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983). The most recent contribution is by Kelsey, *To Understand God Truly: What's Theological About a Theological School* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1992).
 19. Kelsey, p. 116.
 20. For a brief summary of his argument, see *Between Athens and Berlin*, pp. 221-225.
 21. We are dependent upon David Kelsey for this formulation of the proposal. See Kelsey, p. 224.
 22. See Spurr, pp. 26-28.

