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# WOCATI NEWS

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE WORLD CONFERENCE OF ASSOCIATIONS OF THEOLOGICAL INSTITUTIONS



## WOCATI CONGRESS 96 NAIROBI, KENYA

*See back page for photo identification.*

**Please Note: This is the final issue of *WOCATI NEWS*. To order additional copies, please fax your request to the USA at 412-788-6510. For a description of the new communications plan for WOCATI, see page 13.**

## ISSUES AND EVENTS OF WOCATI CONGRESS 96

Fifty delegates and guests from seventeen associations and other organizations concerned about theological education around the world convened at the Methodist Guest House in Nairobi, Kenya, for WOCATI CONGRESS 96 from 27 June to 3 July 1996.

At the opening session local church leaders welcomed the international and ecumenical guests, and Jose Chipenda, president of the All Africa Conference of Churches, spoke to the delegates and local representatives about Africa and the problems of the local situation. He noted three things that are shaping the work of the churches in Africa: (1) Life has become very cheap, with buying and selling of everything (including children); (2) Child labor is on the increase; and (3) Leadership is fleeing responsibility. Chipenda reported that Africa suffers from the problem of a middle class that comprises only the top 20% of the population. The task of the church is to develop a theology that addresses this inequity.

Worship leadership during the CONGRESS was shared by delegates, and music was coordinated by Patrick Matsikenyiri of Zimbabwe. The CONGRESS theme of "Partnership in Theological Education: Conversation and Communion" was introduced in a keynote address given by Elsa Tamez, principal of the Seminario Biblico Latinamericano in San Jose, Costa Rica.

The CONGRESS organized its sessions around three papers that were prepared during the years leading up to the CONGRESS, each of which was published in past issues of *WOCATI NEWS*. The English abstracts of these papers and the CONGRESS responses are found on pages 14-19 of this newsletter. For each paper there was an introductory symposium led by a member of the team that drafted the paper. In the symposium the issues were summarized and questions for discussion and development were highlighted. This was followed by small-group discussion sessions around the themes and issues raised by each paper. During the small-group discussions a roving reporter visited the various discussion groups and gathered ideas that were being addressed in the groups. When the discussion groups came back together in a plenary session, the roving reporter offered reflections and shared some summary insights about each topic. A written summary of those comments and insights was distributed in the plenary session. This pattern was repeated with each of the pre-CONGRESS papers published in *WOCATI NEWS* on the topics of:

- Theological Scholarship and Research,
- Women in Theological Education, and
- Academic Degrees and Credentials in Theological Education.

On Saturday the delegates visited the Nairobi National Park and enjoyed an evening of African food and entertainment. Sunday morning delegates worshiped in various churches, and Sunday afternoon they heard a presentation on



*Welcoming the delegates at the opening session were (from left) Jesse Mugambi of the University of Nairobi; Jose Chipenda, president of the All Africa Conference of Churches; and Douglas Waruta, chair of the local host committee in Nairobi.*

"Christianity in Africa" by Ambrose Moyo of the Conference of African Theological Institutions (CATI). Moyo highlighted the growing strength of African Initiated Churches (previously known as African Independent Churches). He noted that economic hardship and political unrest have created many refugees in Africa. Furthermore, many educational efforts are still patterned after colonial models, and African governments control the credentialing functions. University departments play a key role, because they are the centers that educate faculty for seminaries and other forms of theological education. At the same time theological education by extension is having an important impact, especially in South Africa. With theological education by extension, Christian workers are learning how to work out of their homes and villages, and they are maintaining a self-supporting ministry. Residential institutions are very expensive, and African educators and church leaders are looking for alternative methods. Moyo suggested the need to link the universities, the seminaries, and extension programs more effectively.



*Yeow Choo Lak of Singapore, former president of WOCATI (left), was joined by Peter Ensor of Kenya and Wanda Deifelt of Brazil.*

On Sunday evening the CONGRESS heard a presentation by Peter Bisem, of the Nairobi Council of Churches, about the ways in which the Association of Theological Institutions in East Africa (ATIEA) is supporting theological education in the region. He noted that ATIEA holds regional forums for theological educators and seeks to raise the quality of faculty and students in existing institutions. Many seminaries in Africa are becoming universities, but some schools with a primary commitment to educating ministerial leadership are not trying to meet government standards. “Unfortunately the curriculum in African theological education is still ‘transplanted’ curriculum and not as linked to the local context as it needs to be. It is alien to the life and soul of Africa,” Bisem said.

The CONGRESS adopted a “Message” that summarized its concerns (see page 4). New officers and Executive Committee members were elected.

The CONGRESS voted to revise Article 34 of the Constitution and By-Laws to read: “Half of the Executive Committee shall be women and at least one officer shall be a woman. The eight members of the Executive Committee shall come from seven different areas of the world, with two members chosen from Asia or Africa on alternate quadrenniums, and one member from Asia or Africa at all times.”

The CONGRESS admitted one new full member and two new affiliate members to WOCATI. The Conference of Orthodox Theological Schools (COTS) was admitted as a full member. Established in 1936, the Conference of Orthodox Theological Schools in an inter-Orthodox body of all accredited Orthodox theological schools worldwide.

Affiliate membership was granted to the Erasmus-Socrates Network of European Theological Institutions which is a consortium or inter-university cooperative project of theological institutions of the European union, with the aim to promote ecumenically oriented academic excellence and to review theological curricula. Established in 1992, the Network is interdenominational and has 13 member schools.

The Society for Ecumenical Studies and Inter-Orthodox Relations (SESIOR) was also granted affiliate membership. SESIOR is the only Orthodox scholarly network that also includes non-Orthodox ecumenists with the aim to promote the ecumenical vision. Established in 1993, SESIOR has approximately 50 professors carrying out theological work.

## OFFICERS AND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ELECTED AT CONGRESS 96

### *Officers*

#### **President—Barbara Brown Zikmund**

The Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada (ATS), North America

#### **Vice President—Zenaida Lumba**

Programme for Theology and Cultures in Asia (PTCA), Asia

#### **Secretary-Treasurer—Ian Williams**

Australia/New Zealand Association of Theological Schools (ANZATS), Australia/New Zealand

### *Executive Committee*

#### **Mary Getui**

Association of Theological Institutions in Eastern Africa (ATIEA), Africa

#### **Wesley Kigasung**

Melanesian Association of Theological Schools (MATS), Pacific

#### **Leonor Rojas—Asociacion de Seminarios e Instituciones Teologicas (ASIT), Latin America**

#### **Petros Vassiliadis—Conference of Orthodox Theological Schools (COTS), Europe**

#### **Douglas Waruta—Conference of African Theological Institutions (CATI), Africa**

## MESSAGE FROM THE WOCATI CONGRESS 96

### The Context

We came to Nairobi, 50 delegates and guests from 17 associations and other related organizations.

We began by listening to our hosts speak of Africa. The continent where the human family was born and which cherishes a wisdom of wholeness. The elders joined to the unborn and people to the land and the animals. We heard about the struggle to maintain this vision in theological education:

- when the poor are sold for a pair of sandals.
- when violence and great faith are found together.
- when educators face painful tensions and must choose between their personal needs and the urgent call to attend a new birth.
- when clear vision is needed to look into the future.
- when the cord that binds the present to the past must be broken.
- when celebrations can be made, even in the midst of suffering, because the people are faithful and God will multiply them and make them very strong.
- when as yet unformed and vulnerable beginnings must be cherished and sustained because they may bring deliverance.

We heard from Latin America of the grace of God that tastes like salt. Like the blood of a birth, like the tears of travail, like the ‘sea smell’ of a new born baby. A theological education that radiates grace. That is:

- born in the night and not in the fixed time and space of knowledge.
- has a soft form that fits the breast and that can be carried upon the back.
- that resembles its father and its mother having a human face, not the face of a machine.
- that comes from the people and will free the people.

We heard from these particular contexts and recognised that they revealed to each of us the contours of our own. In every place a painful labour is in process. Gentle hands are needed to steer the birth, and clear vision is needed to protect the helpless grace which God is multiplying amongst us.

### The Challenges

#### *Theological Scholarship and Research*

We discussed the document prepared on this subject which drew our attention to the need for excellence in scholarship, the honouring of local knowledge, the need for socially engaged reflection upon the issues of contemporary concern, and a coherent global perspective.

In our response we faced painful issues. We recognised that in most contexts a gap exists between the life of theological institutions and the living faith of the people. WOCATI believes that in our future work we:

- must acknowledge the place of power and privilege in which theological education has operated and in which excellence has been defined.
- must recognise the life that God has granted to local and contextual theologies which show great beauty and profound wisdom.
- must intentionally direct our energies to include lay people and women in the life of theological institutions.
- must bear in mind the necessary link between theological education, spiritual formation, and the life of the churches.

The Congress acknowledges that difficult questions concerning the distribution of resources and the “ownership” of tradition are unresolved. These are of vital importance when promoting good scholarship and research. WOCATI must urgently consider:

- the possibilities for a far more effective sharing of resources through the use of new technology.
- the corresponding danger that new technology may widen the gap between those who are joined in networks of communication and those who are excluded.
- the dangers inherent in a post-modern “globalised” culture that indigenous theological traditions may be abused and plundered by Western academic theology.
- the tension between the need to develop self-sufficiency, South-South exchanges, and contextual scholarship and the just requirement to share resources (e.g., scholarship, publications and subject specialists) between the North and South.

When theological scholarship and research are viewed in the light of the richness of our spiritual heritage we affirm the:

- vital significance of artistic and creative expressions of theology.
- the importance of conversation between local perspectives in order to achieve a communication which becomes manifest in concrete action on issues of social justice.
- the presence of God’s Word in the language of human suffering.

#### *Women in Theological Education*

We studied the paper on theological education which was produced by women in conversation from four corners of the world. It drew our attention to the lack of participation by women in theological education and the obstacles they en-

counter when they begin to claim their place within the theological tradition. In our discussions we recognised that:

- women have given their energy, commitment, and financial support to the work of the church, including theological education, but have not been honored for their contribution or received their fair share in the distribution of educational resources.
- women's traditions have been forgotten, women's names have been unrecorded.
- women's concerns have not been the subject of theological reflection and have been omitted from the curriculum.

In order to counter women's exclusion from theological education an *intentional* process of change must be initiated. This will require attention to:

- the access of women to theological education *whether or not* they seek ordination as a result.
- the intentional distribution of resources to women for further study and research and the intentional recruitment of women faculty members.
- the intentional revision of the curriculum with the interests, concerns, and insights of women in mind.

WOCATI affirms that women have nourished and sustained the life of the Christian church throughout the centuries. It celebrates its faith that in future their names will not be lost and declares its commitment to discern appropriate ways to ensure their full partnership in theological education.

### *Academic Degrees and Credentials*

We considered the prepared paper which set out the origins of academic credentials in the West and differentiated among eight levels of intellectual and professional competence.

The CONGRESS felt that it was not possible to address the use of academic credentials without naming issues of access and power. It was reluctant to adopt as normative the eight categories which had originated within the Western academic system. However it recognised that, whether WOCATI adopts these classifications or not, they will continue to be widely used to govern access to theological education. For this reason WOCATI must continue to engage in conversations concerning academic credentials in theological education:

- that information be shared widely as to the value attached to academic awards within their specific contexts.
- that the various debates concerning accreditation which are currently taking place along confessional lines be brought into dialogue with one another.

- that creative ways of facilitating access to theological education and assessing non-traditional theological work be actively pursued.

### **The Response**

In response to the challenges it has considered, WOCATI affirms that its mission is rooted the worship of God and its commitment to God's people. We embrace the challenge to:

- return to our own contexts with a fresh commitment to articulate local knowledge and to share fully in the life and inheritance of our peoples.
- recognise the importance of the image of God in every human face; intentionally supporting the theological work of women and the scholarship of Africa, Latin America, and Asia.
- to discern and share what is of value in the development of traditions of accreditation.
- to look to the future, whose face we do not yet know, and discover ways in which new technology might be shared in the service of our institutions.
- to examine ways in which financial resources might be best employed to achieve the visions we have now made our own.



*Leading in worship were representatives from The Association of Theological Schools (North America), from left: James L. Waits, James H. Costen, Diane Kennedy, and Barbara Brown Zikmund.*

## BIBLICAL MESSAGE OF THE WOCATI CONGRESS

**Seeking to be guided by Scripture, the WOCATI delegates placed their discussions in a biblical framework.**

### The Context

*“Pharaoh said to the Hebrew midwives, ‘When you are present at the labour bed and a boy is born, kill it there and then.’ But the midwives feared God not the king. They let all the children live.”*

I’m telling you no woman ever forgets the face of her midwife. It might seem that it is my hands that do the work, turning the child in the womb, placing palm of hand over crown of head in the birth tunnel so the baby does not come too fast with tearing, fingers opening the tiny mouth to pull so gently when the head is stuck fast.

It might look as if it is the hands that do the work but it is not just the hands. No one forgets the face of her midwife because it is her eyes that see into the woman’s soul in her pain. It is the eyes that call the new soul into the world. It is the meeting of the eyes, the knowledge shared between mother and midwife, that eases the birth.

No midwife can close her eyes before the child sees light. Our own children, our own beds, our own safety neglected. And when the child comes we tie the knot we bite the cord and we also wipe away the mucus from the child’s eyes so that it might become a human being so that it can take its first look into the world of our faces. Midwife and mother; seeing, sharing God’s new life.

### The Challenges

#### ***Theological Scholarship and Research***

*“A woman conceived and bore a son. She saw he was a fine child and so she hid him in a basket amongst the reeds and set his sister to watch over him. The daughter of Pharaoh heard the child crying and took pity on him. ‘This must be a Hebrew child,’ she said and took him in her arms. As he grew up she raised him as her son and called him Moses saying, ‘I drew this child out of the water.’ ”*

I am Pharaoh’s daughter, and I live in a palace whose walls are made of massive stones and whose floors are polished. Everyday I walk out from the darkness and the coolness of the palace to the riverside. I pass through the streets and the markets. I hear the shouts and I see what is bought and who is sold.

I see the hungry eyes of children. I take note of the shacks that the Hebrews have built right here on the flood plain where the angry waters could sweep them away in a moment. I have seen those things and pondered them in my heart. And so I drew the child out of the water when I heard it cry. I sheltered it. But I must say it is not my child. I didn’t pant and bleed to give it birth.

Listen to the barefoot steps of my son Moses running through the palace. I swung open the heavy doors and let him in. His steps sound lightly now and everyone smiles to hear his sweet voice. The time will come when his steps will shake down the massive stones from their resting places. It is a fearful thing to bring down the walls of your own palace.

#### ***Women in Theological Education***

*“Then his sister said to Pharaoh’s daughter ‘Shall I go and find a nurse from amongst the Hebrew women to nurse the child for you?’ Pharaoh’s daughter said ‘yes’ so the child, Miriam, went and called her own mother. Pharaoh’s daughter went to her and said, ‘Take this child and nurse it for me and I will pay your wages.’ ”*

I am the mother of this baby but if his lips say ‘Mama’ when he looks into my eyes then he will die. What I give him is my milk that his body will grow strong and my wisdom so that he will know the secret names by which God calls his people.

I am the mother whose name cannot be spoken and whose place cannot be honoured. God’s hand has been upon my son and his name will sound aloud. But it is Miriam who comforts me. It is Miriam who works beside me and who calls me Mama. Will her name be remembered? Will her story be told?

#### ***Academic Degrees and Credentials***

*“One day the boy-man Moses saw an Egyptian mistreating Hebrew slaves. He waited until he thought no one could see and then he killed him. The next day he saw two Hebrews fighting and attempted to intervene. ‘Who made you judge over us?’ They said to him, ‘Are you going to kill us too like you killed the Egyptian?’ ”*

Am I child of the palace or child of the people? How do I take what I learned on one world where power and force rule and use it in another way? How can I exercise authority when I am not trusted?

And yet how can my people ever enter their inheritance when they are divided? God has called me to lead them. Yet here I am sitting alone beside a well in Midian.

### **The Response**

*“Moses tended the flocks in Midian. He saw a great sight. A bush burning with fire and yet not consumed. The voice of God said, ‘Take off your shoes. This is holy ground. I am the God of your ancestors. I have seen the suffering of the people. I am sending you to Pharaoh.’ ”*

God does not show a face I recognise. No one face is God’s but in the flames I see so many faces. Those of my ancestors calling me to my own place. My Father is there. My Mother embraces me. They tell me my sister and brother are calling me home.

And I see the many faces of my people. Suffering, brutalised, and violent; faithful and hopeful. Burning in their bondage.

And other faces I also know. They are those in whose language I have learned to speak. Those who have formed me and who would yet destroy me. Those who taught me to walk, and now I must stand against.

God does not show a face I recognise, but in the flames I see so many faces. Their eyes look into my eyes and I become a human being. I look back at them and recognise God.

I take off my shoes and bow down upon the holy ground.



*Worship was celebrated in the courtyard of the Methodist Guest House in Nairobi.*

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ADDRESSES THE FUTURE OF WOCATI

The new Executive Committee of WOCATI met in Pittsburgh, PA (USA) January 5-8, 1997. The Committee considered five questions facing WOCATI:

1. What are the distinctive goals of WOCATI and how can they be met in the next four to five years? We agreed that WOCATI should pursue six major goals in the future: (a) stimulate scholarly work on the nature and future of theological education, (b) support women in theological education, (c) engage religious educators from other religious traditions about theological or religious education, (d) develop clearer understandings of degrees and credentials used in different parts of the world, and (e) encourage the formation of regional associations in parts of the world where they do not exist and work to support existing associations.

2. How will the financial resources to sustain WOCATI be obtained to enable the conference to continue its work? We need a combination of global support and local funding. Local funding is needed for travel grants to assist delegates when they attend a WOCATI CONGRESS. The Executive Committee will be contacting members and other agencies to explore options.

3. How can we get more members—from groups that are presently uninformed about the existence of WOCATI, from global organizations already concerned about theological education, from affiliate agencies that relate to theological education? We are developing a new pattern of communication to spread information about WOCATI more effectively.

4. What pattern of meetings should be used to promote the work of WOCATI in the next five years? We propose a consultation on “Change in Theological Education” for May 1999. We suggest that the next CONGRESS be postponed until 2001 to avoid conflicts with other meetings and to enable WOCATI to find the necessary funding.

5. What means should WOCATI use to communicate with members and share useful information about theological education? We will no longer publish *WOCATI NEWS*. It will be replaced by a diversity of communication tools that are currently being explored: a periodic fax news sheet, a series of printed occasional papers, and a World Wide Web page.

Details about these decisions and plans will be shared with member associations and interested schools in the months ahead—following a new WOCATI communications plan.



*Members of the WOCATI Executive Committee, who were elected at the CONGRESS 96 meeting in Nairobi, Kenya, in June are: [front row, from left] Douglas Waruta (Kenya), Zenaida Lumba (Philippines), Petros Vassiliadis (Greece), Leonor Rojas (Paraguay), [back row] Ian Williams (Australia), Wesley Kigasung (New Guinea), Barbara Brown Zikmund (USA), and Mary Getui (Kenya).*



## PARTNERSHIP IN THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION: CONVERSATION AND COMMUNION

CONGRESS 96 Keynote Address by Elsa Tamez

When we think about partnership, we think of reciprocity, friendship, and mutual cooperation. When we speak of conversation, we have in mind dialogue, informality, and friendship; and when we experience communion, we feel celebrative. We experience openness with one another. We believe in friendship, love, commitment, solidarity.

Partnership, conversation, and communion occur within the dimension of grace in flexible spaces and times. Profit and advantage are not a part of it. It is only lived and felt. In that fellowship there is humanization and flavor.

When we think about theological education, what comes to mind is all that has to do with the fixed time and space of knowledge: the institution, academic excellence, norms, objectives, curriculum, accreditation, methods, content, financing—almost always elaborated hierarchically. We give little thought to human existence even when the object of our study is God.

Theological education, as we perceive it today, happens more in the context of institutionality than of grace. We think more about advantage and profit than about conversation and communion. The more academic life adheres to institutionality, the more distant it becomes from persons as living and creating subjects. Taken to the extreme, no space is left for the informality of conversation, or the fellowship of communion without a profitable return. There is no humanization. There is no flavor, only knowledge.

Even though the words “flavor” (in Spanish, “sabor”) and “knowledge” (“saber”) come from the same Latin root, *sapere*, it seems that the dimension of knowledge is very distant from the dimension of flavor.

What I have been asked to talk about, “partnership in theological education: conversation and communion,” shows that this division is recognized as a problem, and that in WOCATI we are trying to take up the issue with the intention of rethinking theological education from new angles. There are probably theological institutions which, for some time, have tried to close the gap between celebrative and academic reciprocity. My own experience has been part of a constant struggle between the institutional needs and the human needs of the community and of persons. Grace forms part of the human needs. Sometimes balancing the requirements of the institution with those of human beings is not easy. Much depends on the horizon by which the institution is guided.

So, to speak of partnership in theological education without taking into account the reality of the globalization of the neoliberal market on the one hand, and the diverse cultural, social, and ecclesial contexts on the other, can lead us to make universal statements without a grasp of the particulars; or, rather, valid only for the West. In fact, the division between partnership and theological education is a legacy of western



***Ian Williams of Australia, newly elected Secretary-Treasurer of WOCATI, and keynote speaker Elsa Tamez, principal of the Seminario Biblico Latinamericano in San Jose, Costa Rica.***

academics which is considered universal. We all know that the majority of our theological seminaries and universities are western-style, and that it is not easy to conceive of new models of theological education outside of this arena.

How do we focus and unite partnership—conversation and communion—with academics in the global context and the specific contexts? In other words, how can grace become a fundamental and essential part of context-specific theological education (something important to be taken into consideration) and not appear as an *addendum*?

### 1. Grace as the root of theological education

One possible response is that grace be considered as the root of theological education, and that the educational institution, regulated by subjects, be the effective vehicle by which grace illuminates everything—persons, communities, nature, and the cosmos. In such a context, the human being takes on importance as a trans-individual subject, interrelated with the world and with others. Communities and the current context take on importance, each distinct from the other. Mutual recognition, interchange, and dialogue do not permit the imposition of some over others.<sup>1</sup> Thus, to speak of partnership in theological education implies that the emphasis of all educational policies is placed on the subjects, interrelated among themselves and with their environment. Jesus said that the Sabbath was made for the human being and not vice versa. This means that the institution and its norms must be at the service of the subjects.

## 2. The academy as a means to live and radiate grace

One problem of many theological institutions of higher education is that academics become an end in itself. Most of the time, when this occurs, there is no space for conversation and communion. I will give you an example using biblical sciences. I have chosen four verses from the gospel of Matthew, almost at random, and only with the intention of showing the importance of the interrelation between knowledge and flavor in theological education.<sup>2</sup> I am reading from Matthew 5:13:

You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything, but is thrown out and trampled under foot.

When we study this logion in class, we discover that there are two different traditions. This is deduced from the difference between the synoptics. In Luke 14:34-35, salt that has “lost its taste is not fit for the soil or for the manure pile.” Though in Matthew the word “manure pile” does not appear, there is agreement with Luke. The word “soil” appears, the salt loses its taste, it becomes useless, it is thrown out. In the gospel of Mark, there is a greater difference. Though it begins like Luke, “salt is good,” it excludes several things and ends in a completely different way. “Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another.” (Mark 9:50)

Because of these differences, one arrives at the conclusion that Matthew and Luke follow document Q. According to scholars, the similarity between Luke and Mark comes from an influence of an intermediate Marcan redactor in the last Lucan translation. Now, if Matthew begins with the phrase “You are the salt of the earth...” it is because it has been added by an intermediate Mathean redactor to include the logia about the light in 14a and 16. Matthew omits the primitive formulation of the logion in Q the word “manure pile,” and adds, as well, the final punishment: the salt is thrown out and is trampled by human beings. What the scholars cannot explain with precision is whether those two modifications of Matthew are from an intermediate Mathean redactor or from the last Mathean translation.

Now, I will read Matthew 5:14-16, which is along the same lines: “You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hidden. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lamp stand; and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.”

In these three verses we find three different logia. The first one that talks about the light begins in verse 14a and continues in verse 16. Justin uses an analogous text, also 1P.2.12. Since this logion is not in Luke, it is difficult to affirm whether it comes from document Q or from another collection of logia of an intermediate Mathean redactor. Verse 14b constitutes the logion about the city, which alludes to Jerusalem in messianic times in Isaiah 2:2-4. It is probably taken from the Septuagint version, most likely from the tradition of Thomas 32.

Verse 15 deals with the logion about the lamp. It comes from document Q. According to studies, it was included by the last Mathean redactor, previously taken from an intermediate Mathean redactor, but located in a different place. Here I end the literary analysis of the four texts.

Some of you will ask what all this technical analysis of biblical texts is doing in a conference about partnership in theological education. What I want to point out is the following. If, in academics, we are centered on and limit ourselves to the deconstruction of the text and the explanation of its form and history of redaction, the work can be arid and incomplete, although some might experience intellectual pleasure. In a closed academic curriculum, it is difficult to find space for the exchange of knowledge, conversation, and communion. The



*Music and worship led by Patrick Matsikenyiri, professor of music at Africa University in Mutare, Zimbabwe, added flavor to every day of the CONGRESS.*

space is only for those who know, directed towards those who don't know. The flavor of knowledge appears when there is partnership, and when the flavor is more than just intellectual pleasure. Theological education that has grace as its root, radiates grace when academics become a means rather than an end. We need to go farther than the scientific discussions. It is necessary to reproduce and multiply the possible meanings in order to impact the concrete life of the community and of persons in their historical moment.

This statement does not devalue academics. A tendency towards academic excellence is important. The most revitalized meanings of the texts emerge when the text is analyzed profoundly. Many of the things that are not observed on first glance, are clarified when an analysis such as the above is done. For example, a curious person could ask why document Q writes that the salt is no good either for the soil or for the manure pile. It is easy to understand salt as an element that seasons and gives flavor to food. But what does it have to do with the soil? One possible answer is that document Q alludes to an old agricultural practice known in Egypt and Palestine in which salt was thrown onto waste so that it would better fertilize the earth. The fertile earth will produce fruits, which are the good works of those who are "salt." The last Mathean redactor does not have this meaning in mind; perhaps because, at that time, the practice was no longer well known, or because he wanted to assign a culinary meaning to the salt that gives flavor to everything, as with the light, illuminating a whole room.

When we speak of theological education in the seminaries, we must go further than the academic level; since there exists before us a horizon for which we have opted by vocation: to serve the churches, the people of God, and finally to serve the Kingdom of God, in the midst of a society that tends to be more and more inhuman. Institutions of theological education, in order not to become hardened, must keep the surprise and indeterminacy of the Holy Spirit ever-present. In practice, this means giving space to conversation and communion within the academy. When we talk about a "good" textual study, we are referring to a "serious" study. Does that mean that a joyful and delightful study is superficial? Perhaps, instead of talking about academic seriousness, we should talk about the joy of academics and rescue it from that state of "tediousness."

Let's return to the logion of Matthew. These four logia speak of wisdom, teaching, and the good works that the disciples must do in order to radiate, penetrate, give flavor and knowledge to all and everyone. If we stay within the literary analysis (however profound it may be), paradoxically, it will manifest the opposite of the meaning of the texts analyzed, which is sharing, celebrating, and putting into practice that which is learned.

In the first logion, Jesus says to his disciples that they are the salt of the earth. The salt was an image used for that which gives flavor, purifies, or preserves. The disciples are called to be "salt." This is manifested by their works, their fertile message, their wisdom. With those things they give flavor to the soil, they help to mold life. Here in Matthew the soil is the world and its inhabitants.

The second logion (14a and 16) speaks of the disciples as the light of the world that should illuminate everything and everyone. This logion is joined to the previous one by the works that must shine through the disciples, to the extent that the community celebrates, glorifying God.

The third logion repeats the obvious meaning that what is beautiful must show itself: "a city built on a hill cannot be hidden." The fourth logion insists on the same meaning with

the figure of the lamp. The lamp must be placed in an appropriate place so that it illuminates everything.

The four logia point to the same thing: participating, sharing, putting knowledge into practice, all for the celebration that comes from the glorification of God.

The opposite message is also present. The salt is of no use if it does not give flavor; the light is of no use if it is under a bushel basket and does not give light, not just for the disciples themselves, but for the communities served. Applied to theological education, the logia teach that institutions that are centered solely on knowledge in and of itself, that are indifferent to persons and communities, to specific contexts, that do not give importance to reciprocity, sharing, and celebration, that do not attempt to discover new pedagogical methods that incorporate partnership as an integral part of the teaching, are flat (tasteless) and, as such, are of no use for anything. They are a lamp placed under a bushel. They are a city built in a cave that no one knows. They do not produce good works, and, therefore, they do not assure celebration in the glorification of God.

### **3. Partnership in the face of the globalization of the neoliberal market**

The invitation to consider partnership in theological education is not a simple proposal of a new modality in educational policies. It is a counter-current proposal in the contemporary reality of the globalization of the free market. It is said that the implementation of free market competition is generating an exacerbated individualism, lack of solidarity, consumerism, and fear. The experience of partnership does not fit with the current lifestyle that is imposed by force on the global society. Partnership, conversation, and communion are dimensions that belong to a different order than that proposed with free competition. The theological institution that sets its educational policies from the angle of partnership does not promote utilitarianism or meritocracy. Competitiveness among its members has no place. It does not fall into the consumerism of course contents, rather the reciprocity of mutual enrichment. Fear gains no foothold in an attitude of conversation; and individualism remains outside because communion and dialogue prevail.

The reality of unequal economic globalization that engenders anti-partnership attitudes is a challenge to institutions of theological education that wish to offer more human life alternatives, in accord with the spirit of the gospel.

### **4. Toward new models of theological education**

In reality, the classical structure of many theological institutions, their curriculum, and educational model do not facilitate partnership relations. The curricula are generally closed, centralized, impersonal, atomized, and abstract. If a vision of partnership is not achieved in the residence model, much less will it be achieved by extension when the students, on their own, only relate to the didactic materials they receive.

A structural renovation is needed, not just for partnership, but because the current reality of dominant and one-dimensional globalization demands it. For the last five years, the Latin American Biblical Seminary, founded in 1923, has been implementing a decentralized model, combining residential studies with extension courses. The students come to San Jose, Costa Rica, for short periods and return to their countries to continue their studies by extension. The model allows the students to study communitarily in groups, whether in the classrooms or in study circles, and at the same time, not disconnect from their cultures and churches. The curriculum, besides being adapted to the decentralized model, is integral, contextualized, and is written in accordance with the particular interests of the students. The professors do not just give classes in San Jose. They travel to the other countries to give intensive courses where there are groups of students. The trips allow the professors to know the places from which the students come, their culture, and their churches. The covenants signed by the various educational centers that share the same curriculum and the same perspective facilitate the relationship of partnership in theological education.

A current example that illustrates the vision of partnership in education is the current campaign called “One Million Women Building Our Dream,” launched by the Seminario Biblico Latinamericano on March 8, 1995. The Campaign is gathering the names of one million women from all over the world, given by men and women, accompanied by a dollar per name, to construct the new home of the Biblical Seminary—which is in the process of becoming a university. The campaign is in many parts of the world. We already have names from 113 countries. The symbol is very significant. The new facility will be constructed “from below” (by grassroots efforts), and it will remind everyone that theology, Bible study, and ministry are done “from below.” The names of the women from all centuries will become an historic memorial so that women will never be forgotten in theological education. The campaign has become the dream of many people, women and men, weaving a new network of grassroots solidarity, in a society which, because of its neoliberal economic policies, generates insolidarity. WOCATI is invited to join this campaign in solidarity.

## 5. The Institution oriented by the logic of grace

I would like to end with a brief commentary on the tension between the institution and its norms, and what we have called the logic of grace.<sup>3</sup>

Leaders often complain of not being able to do anything because the institution does not allow it, or because it runs counter to tradition; and this occurs even when it is clear that what is desired is good, or even better than what the institution offers. We are talking here of the logic of the institution, which is the logic of law, contrary to the logic of faith or of grace about which Paul talks in Galatians and Romans. The logic of law enslaves and does not allow the conscience of the subjects to

intervene to reorient it in favor of persons and the community. Conscience, heart, and profound reflection are not what orients its actions. Instead, its actions are oriented by what the law and tradition dictate, independent of opinions about them. It is thus that dehumanization occurs frequently in the operation of the institutions, both for those affected by the application of the law and for those who apply it. It is clear that it is not possible to function as a theological school without the institution and without norms. We need them. Nevertheless, there is a great difference if this institutional necessity is assumed from the perspective of grace. Those of us who are in the leadership of the theological institutions should claim the gift of freedom and not allow ourselves to be enslaved by the norms that we ourselves have created. When the leaders of institutions are oriented by the perspective of grace, they have in mind the gift of the new creation in all areas: the educational model, the curriculum, the norms. Humanization and the desire not to exclude also permeates the execution of the regulations. In this way, the institution puts itself at the service of persons and of the community, and not the reverse.

So it is that any institution of theological education that wants to be oriented from the angle of grace will have to consciously assume the tension between the logic of the institution with its norms and traditions, and the desire to advance an alternative education on behalf of the life of the persons and communities which it serves. Its educational model will have to be capable of assuming a high level of flexibility and exceptions to the norms, as well as the constant search for new possibilities and a readiness for constant changes. With this attitude, it is possible to speak of “partnership in theological education: conversation and communion,” without feelings of guilt for departing from tradition and recognized norms.

The rationality of grace is much more challenging and demanding than the rationality of institutionality. But even if it causes enormous headaches, doing what in good conscience must be done on behalf of the those we serve gives one great satisfaction.

## ENDNOTES

1. Popular education has much to offer to higher theological education. Its emphasis centers not on institutionality but rather on the “original dimension of human existence.”
2. The literary analysis is taken exclusively from *Sinopsis de los Cuatro Evangelios*. Benoit, Boismard, Malillos, 1977.
3. I wrote part of this reflection in “The Logic of Grace in Theological Education (Galatians 3:23-29)” in *Theology, Ministry and Renewal of God’s People. Sixteen Bible Studies*. Ed. John S. Pobee. Geneva, WCC, 1995.

## WOCATI EXPLORES NEW COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

In the 1980s, with the increase in international communication and travel, many theological students and faculty began to feel the need for a global network of organizations supporting theological education. At that time concern for theological education was found within the sub-unit of the World Council of Churches, known as the Programme on Theological Education (PTE); within Vatican offices concerned with oversight for Roman Catholic theological education; within regional associations of theological schools; among Evangelical networks supporting theological education; and in organizations exploring alternative approaches to theological education. There was no single organization with the capacity to support theological education in all of its diversity.

At that time a coalition of leaders from several parts of the world met in Indonesia to create a new body—the World Conference of Associations of Theological Institutions (WOCATI). Individual institutions do not belong to WOCATI; rather, WOCATI is an association of associations. Schools relate to WOCATI through one or more member associations. In this way WOCATI brings together organizations that are already coordinating and overseeing the growth and quality of theological education. It seeks to foster closer cooperation at local, national, and regional levels. It supports confessional organizations that are focused upon theological education in specific faith traditions. It works to advance the shared visions, purposes, and common concerns of educational leaders involved in theological education around the world.

In order to facilitate communication among associations of theological institutions, WOCATI has published seven issues of *WOCATI NEWS*. These newsletters have contained articles of interest to theological educators worldwide and have circulated study documents leading up to CONGRESS 96 in Kenya. The distribution of *WOCATI NEWS*, however, has been costly and not highly effective. Therefore, the Executive Committee is exploring a totally new approach to communications for WOCATI. This is the final issue of *WOCATI NEWS* as a printed newsletter.

Three components of a new communications plan are being explored for global communication that, it is hoped, will be more reliable and more cost-effective:

1. **WOCATI NEWS FAX**—A method is currently being explored to distribute information to member associations and interested schools through a two-page FAX several times a year. The FAX distribution list would begin with the delegates who attended CONGRESS 96 in Nairobi. Others will be added to the news fax list as the system develops.

2. **WOCATIOCCASIONAL PAPERS**—From time to time, occasional papers will be printed and distributed in bulk to member associations and interested schools. Requests or orders for occasional papers will be handled by FAX. Occasional papers will allow WOCATI to make more substantial theological and educational materials available to member associations and interested schools.

3. **WORLD WIDE WEB**—A WOCATI page on the World Wide Web is being explored as an avenue of communication with those who have access to the Internet. Unlike electronic mail, which requires individual associations and schools to have their own electronic addresses, the World Wide Web can be reached from many libraries, government, or business organizations that are able to connect to the Internet. In the coming years this type of communication should become increasingly available to member associations and interested schools around the world. Through this medium, associations can go to the WOCATI World Wide Web page to access all the information distributed by fax or published as occasional papers, as well as lists of associations, addresses, and other items of interest to theological educators around the world.

Initially, WOCATI was financially supported by grants from Lilly Endowment Inc., The Pew Charitable Trusts, and The Henry Luce Foundation. Member associations pay modest dues of one hundred USD per calendar year. Since its founding in 1989, WOCATI has held two international meetings—CONGRESS 92 in Pittsburgh, PA, USA, and CONGRESS 96 in Nairobi, Kenya. It anticipates holding a third CONGRESS in Asia during or shortly after the year 2000.

The financial future of WOCATI is not secure. The Executive Committee realizes that dues will never make WOCATI self-supporting. Therefore, the Executive Committee is seeking additional funds for the future work of WOCATI. Member associations will be asked to underwrite the travel costs for delegates to future CONGRESSES by obtaining local grants. If travel funds cannot be found, it will be impossible to hold another WOCATI CONGRESS.

This issue of *WOCATI NEWS* is the final edition of this newsletter series.

## THEOLOGICAL SCHOLARSHIP AND RESEARCH (ABSTRACT OF PRE-CONGRESS PAPER)

Theological education is being carried out all over the world. However, as theological education has become more global there is growing concern that standards for theological scholarship and research are being overly influenced by Western/Northern academic traditions which are heavily organized into specialized disciplines.

This paper examines the usefulness of the term “globalization.” Within North America, globalization rightly challenges particular theologies and methods that claim to be universal. However, the paper insists that globalization and contextualization should not be placed in opposition to each other. The paper suggests that theological scholarship and research need to seek “a coherent, ecumenical, global perspective.” 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. The concept of dialogue is explored and the question of where the locus of Christian faith resides is also addressed.

### **Excellence of Theological Scholarship**

The first section of the paper examines understandings of excellence in theological scholarship, using Robert Schreiter’s suggestion that there are four forms of theological expression throughout the world: theology as variations on a sacred text, theology as wisdom, theology as sure knowledge, and theology as *praxis*. Contextualization enables theology to open church tradition to local realities. Globalization enables theology to explore existing unities.

The paper suggests that scholarship involves various methodologies beyond those normally associated with writing and research completed within a university context. It argues that greater attention must be given to critical inquiry, especially as theological scholarship draws upon traditional partner disciplines of philosophy, history, and literary and textual studies, and more recent fields of psychology, sociology, and hermeneutics. It also suggests that the disciplines of political science and economics are increasingly important.

Excellence in theological scholarship must also explore new partnerships with the whole people of God. This means recognition that Christian theology is influenced by people of other faiths and by peoples who have been forgotten and ignored by dominant cultures.

### **Essential Components in Contemporary Theological Scholarship and Research**

Building upon an understanding that theological scholarship and research must come from a coherent, ecumenical, global perspective, the paper outlines four essential components for quality theological scholarship and research:

Quality theological scholarship and research is deeply connected to particular cultural contexts. 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. For this reason it needs to be carried out in the indigenous languages of the people, and great care must be taken when indigenous languages are translated into Western languages.

Quality theological scholarship and research requires that dialogue be an essential component, exploring the relationship between dialogue and contextualization, dialogue and theological education, and dialogue and contextual theologies. It is hoped that WOCATI will provide an important forum enabling theological scholarship and research to go beyond what is held in common to encourage new dynamic forms of interaction for our mutual enrichment.

Quality theological scholarship and research must move beyond understandings of unity that perpetuate forms of domination that endanger the autonomy of various contextual theologies, while at the same time centering on the unity of the church received as a gift from God.

Quality theological scholarship and research will use critical inquiry to sustain excellence; evaluating sources, remaining accountable to contexts, and using dialogue effectively to expand critical inquiry beyond the rational and historical forms that dominate most Northern theologies. It will recognize that there are ways of knowing that are outside of the commonly accepted forms of critical understanding (intuitive, artistic, and emotive). This awareness leads to a *scholarship of praxis*, incorporating the nonrational elements of understanding, and the goal of personal and social transformation which is at the heart of the Christian message.

### **The Emerging Relationship between Theological Scholarship and Ministerial Formation: Ongoing Questions**

Is ministerial formation a by-product of theological scholarship and research, or do our efforts to shape ministry define excellence in theological scholarship?

How does liturgy overcome the break-down between scholarship and the church caused by the fragmentation of theology into autonomous disciplines?

If contextual theology requires active engagement with concrete situations in particular societies, should this lead to a greater involvement of ministerial students in the socio-political life of their society?

### **Emerging Issues to be Addressed by 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 the future of human life and human communities; The use of technology for the enhancement of theological scholarship and research especially in regard to libraries.

## THEOLOGICAL SCHOLARSHIP AND RESEARCH (CONGRESS 96 RESPONSE)

The tension between the so-called “academic” and “practical” aspects of theological scholarship and research was a key issue for all groups discussing the paper.

A “mark of excellence” for theological education today, it was noted, is how theology relates to the life of the people. The shift to a more community-oriented approach was recognized as urgent and necessary. The responsibility of doing “crisis” or “issue-oriented” theology was seen from the point of view, of some areas, to be crucial. A relevant problem-centered theology could look at such issues as child labour, land mines, ocean and air pollution, for example, as issues that are affecting the whole inhabited earth and of concern to all people. Participants in the theological reflection, as well as items on the theology agenda would cover a much wider range than is generally the case.

Forming hermeneutical communities was identified as a proper way of theologizing. Educating Christian leaders without educating Christian communities was seen as an incomplete and distorted approach. Furthermore, the tendency in some places, to remove theology from the lived experience of the people resulted in many theological graduates and “scholars” returning to their homes and countries as “misfits.”

Positive “breakthroughs” were seen in some areas where newly formed lay people, educated for theological reflection from the grassroots contexts, are now engaging with the pastors, teachers, and “theologians.” This theological conversation is calling forth a fresh and authentic response to real life issues.

Also of encouraging interest was the reminder that in certain places the three-way “conversation and communion” between the local church community, the institution, and the students, reflected the quality of the theological education. This dialogue determined the nature of the scholarship and research. When the conversation occurred before and after the period of formal training, “theology for life” was more assured.

Many groups acknowledged the needs, and sometimes the demands and expectations, to conform to Western standards and approaches. This worked against doing contextual theology and hampered the growth of good theological scholarship and research in the Christian community.

Awareness of the importance of shared leadership raised implications for theological education. Sensitivity to this and other cultural matters meant modifications of curricula and methodologies. Recognition of shared leadership issues pointed to opportunities for new directions in doing theology.

Sharing of views and experiences related to modern technology emerged as another major area of importance. Use of teleconferences, working with the Internet, and accessing tutors through e-mail, for example, were recognized as important new ways of improving the quality of information and communication.

But while positive aspects were noted, e.g., possibilities for strengthened communal dimensions in theology, concern was also expressed in relation to the potential of modern technology for widening the gap even further between the “haves” and the “have nots.”

The issue of globalization was discussed, with the group recognizing the potential for control and domination as well as opportunity for enrichment. Sharing vision and resources in a universal church with a global context being both ecumenical and cross-cultural was seen by many participants as a way of strengthening rather than weakening the whole Christian family.

The “starting point” for theology and the search for the “common points of reference” were other key areas of importance in the response. The group affirmed the paper’s statement about the shift from doctrine to experience, recognizing *the* experience for the Christian family being the incarnation of the Son of God.

Incarnational theology—recognition of and response to the Word of God in the world—was understood as utterly basic and paramount for the theological enterprise. The Word, the person and message of Jesus, was seen as “starting point” and, along with this, an understanding that the common point of reference we search for is already present in our suffering humanity and in our world. The group highlighted the fact that our theological scholarship and research needs to shape its educational framework from this place of need, brokenness, struggle, and hope.

There were two issues (picked up during and after the plenary session) which were named as particularly important. The paper states that doing theology through nonrational ways is “admissible and desirable.” This is not enough. We would want to say that the intuitive artistic and emotive aspects are *absolutely critical* to the learning process and to any fully human response to theological scholarship and research. Along with theory and praxis, these ways give room for imagination and silence, for creativity, and especially they make space for the Holy Spirit. Furthermore, theology may even need more radical and profound changes than this. A completely new “logique” and way of doing theology may need to be addressed or may in fact emerge.

Finally the relationship between theological scholarship and ministerial formation was seen to be an issue of particular concern, not to be regarded as an additional item or a useful “extra” but as absolutely integral to the whole task and responsibility of theological scholarship and research. The ongoing spiritual formation of both students and staff was recognized as a priority. Without the commitment to personal and communal Christian transformation, the theological educator and “educated” are without roots and unable to give life to the Christian family and to the world.

## WOMEN IN THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION (ABSTRACT OF PRE-CONGRESS PAPER)

This paper seeks to respond to the concern of WOCATI CONGRESS 92 to deal with injustices resulting from the “constraints, prohibitions, failures, and denials of persons (particularly women) who seek the services of theological education or who feel called to be theological educators.” It was prepared by four female theological educators from Africa, Europe, Latin America, and the South Pacific.

### I. The Present Context

#### 1. *Faith has passed from woman to woman, but formally organized theological education has been largely restricted to men and dominated by the requirements of clergy training.*

(a) In some churches theological education is still totally male; (b) Women must continue to struggle as a minority group whose interests are often unseen. Where tokenism is detrimental for both men and women. Women are disadvantaged: in the daily administration of theological institutions; in male models of ministerial formation; in the syllabus based upon a male biblical and theological canon; in having to deal with predominantly male faculty role models and a male “unwritten syllabus” shaping institutional community life; and in situations where a *token* female presence simply maintains the *status quo*; (c) Women students face an insecure future in terms of unemployment, placement, and recognition; (d) Women suffer from a two-tier system of theological education; (e) Women have limited educational opportunities because the full range of ministerial vocation is still not available to women. Their roles are regularly undervalued in the curriculum of theological education.

2. *Theological education is an alien country which many women want to enter.* However, women have not yet built their own homes or planted their own gardens. (a) Theological discourse about key Christian concepts such as sin, grace, and redemption still lean upon the interpretive world of men. Women students must use a new language to voice their female experience; (b) Concerns that determine women’s lives have not been the subject of ethical reflection. Female and male students do not have a framework to respond to: the violence that women suffer at the hands of men; the moral and relational conflicts grounded in women’s reproductive lives; specific cultural traditions, such as female “circumcision” that form and deform women’s lives; (c) Collaboration and “unsystematic” theology produced by women is misunderstood when individual academic achievement is the ideal; (d) Access to communication (publishing and emerging information technology) is often gender-biased against women; (e) Women in influential positions resist being linked to women’s issues, therefore they maintain the status quo; (f) Some progressive centers of theological education do enable women to move beyond current expectations.

3. *Obstacles to women’s full participation continue.* (a) Chronic underfunding; (b) Scarcity of trained women because they have left due to a lack of local opportunity; (c) Distress over the upsetting insights of women’s theological work.

#### 4. *Acts of liberation are required to make women full partners in theological education.*

(a) Economic recessions and conservative social movements have made the position of women worse; (b) Women themselves need to make some hard choices—academic women need to support local initiatives to train lay women; Western women need to keep silent and share power; women need to stay in their local cultures, even when greater freedom and financial security may be enjoyed elsewhere. Women need to work towards change, not merely ameliorate intolerable situations; (c) Relinquishing privilege and working within systems is essential; (d) Theological imperialism must be broken down by a greater openness to dialogue.

### II. Women in Theological Education: The Achievements

In spite of great obstacles, women have become an important presence in theological education during the past 25 years. Feminist theology has emerged. It is not only a new way of doing theology, it is a springboard for divergent forms of theological reflection leading to significant research.

Women are sharing information about the role of women in theology. They are doing theology from a *woman’s* perspective, forming groups all over the world. Women’s theological activities are not merely an additional way to do theology; women are challenging theological narrowness in the curricula and breaking out of establishment theological education. They are widening the space within which theology is to be done, for example, by pushing the curriculum beyond the classroom and the library, and developing international networks and consultations. Continuing watchfulness is needed to sustain women’s participation as *subjects* in theological education, rather than as *objects* of theological analysis.

### III. Issues for Ongoing Consideration

(1) WOCATI associations must continue to empower women; (2) leadership patterns within associations should be analyzed to check for gender bias; (3) the activities of teaching institutions in member associations should be surveyed to assess their effectiveness; (4) more research on religion and women is needed; (5) lay theological education for women should be promoted; (6) curricula should be reviewed to see how they liberate men and women and recognize the contributions of women; (7) theological education should relate to matters of direct concern to women, e.g. sexual violence, reproductive issues, etc.; (8) institutions should unambiguously support research and publication by women; (9) residences built for male students need to be adapted for women; (10) more opportunities for teaching and child care are needed; (11) workloads should be equalized and adjusted to meet the needs of women; (12) the elitist structure of theological education needs to be changed; (13) women’s voices need to be heard in practical matters, e.g. faculty selection, budget, buildings, and curriculum; (14) female role models are important; (15) when women leave, institutions need to examine the situation to discern motivations for departure.



## WOMEN IN THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION (CONGRESS 96 RESPONSE)

The 1992 WOCATI CONGRESS mandated the Executive Committee to address itself to the issue of injustices arising out of the 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 paper on Women in Theological Education was the response to that mandate. The process of writing the paper was itself an expression of partnership, the result of collaborative consultation, debate, and conversation among four women from around the world. It is an example of a different way of doing theology.

The main issue we found was underrepresentation; this takes place in several ways:

- a. The actual exclusion of women from theological education, which has largely been the prerogative of men.
- b. Even where the churches formally accept women in theological education, there are many factors that continue to inhibit the participation of women.
- c. The problem of tokenism where women are admitted in theological institutions, but their presence is not felt, their voice is not listened to, their work is not affirmed or acknowledged.
- d. Through methods of doing theology which continue to be male-centered.
- e. When the language of theology does not speak to, or of, women's experiences, but reinforces negative images of women.
- f. When unorthodox and often disturbing theology produced by women, grounded in women's experiences, is dismissed as sub-standard and not acceptable.
- g. When the diversity and complexity of women's experiences results in diversity in women's theological voices, women are stereotyped as lacking focus and incapable of communicating, even among themselves.

We want to affirm that theological education is not done in a vacuum; it always takes place in concrete social, political, and historical contexts. Global issues of social justice (or its lack), especially impact women and may prevent the effective participation of women in all settings of education. For women, therefore, the issue of social justice lies at the core of all theology.

We need to recognize women's achievements *and* determine next steps for theological education.



*The women delegates to CONGRESS 96.*

## ACADEMIC DEGREES AND CREDENTIALS IN THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION (ABSTRACT OF PRE-CONGRESS PAPER)

This paper examined the ways in which academic credentials are used by theological institutions around the world. It considers the nature and significance of academic credentials (certificates, diplomas, degrees, etc.) in theological education. It proposes ways whereby various academic credentials can be assessed and interpreted by institutions in countries and cultures other than their sources of origin.

The first section of the paper summarizes various arguments against the use of academic credentials in theological institutions: (1) they are seen as unrelated to competencies for church leadership; (2) “theology by the people movements” believe that academic degrees fail to recognize leadership skills developed outside the academy; (3) academic degrees cultivate a professionalism unrelated to the work of the Holy Spirit; (4) churches need inclusive leadership that can never be produced by traditional credentialing programs; and (5) the variety of credentials offered and what they represent make earlier patterns of credentials obsolete. This section concludes with an argument that contextualizing theological education requires a new appreciation of past traditions and new efforts to relate emerging indigenous credentialing systems to the global community of theological schools.

The paper proceeds to describe the origins of academic credentials in Europe and their development in the West to certify academic competence and to confer the right to practice the profession of teaching. Such academic credentials were initially considered irrelevant to preparing clergy. Eventually, however, a distinction was made between academic degrees (M.A., Ph.D., Th.D.) and professional degrees (B.D., M.Div., D.Min.). This distinction has been helpful, but it has also created new problems—especially in the recent global expansion of universities and colleges, whereby some churches have founded independent theological institutions to provide education for ministry.

What is the rationale for theological degrees in the preparation for ministry today, and how do they relate to the needs of the churches and the standards of the academy? The paper assumes that degrees “are the structured means of certifying the fulfillment of educational ends by a duly constituted third party.” The contemporary structure of degrees flows from the history of academic credentials in the world. Such certification also carries certain recognized rights and privileges, in order to reassure the church that credentialed graduates can effectively practice ministry. Furthermore, the competency that theological institutions are best able to assess and most qualified to certify is always limited and directly dependent upon a constructive relationship between the churches and academic institutions.

Recognizing that degrees increasingly mean different things in different parts of the world, and are used in different ways by universities and churches, the paper sets forth three standards for quality theological education: degrees should be “theological”; degrees should accommodate the real differ-

ences between and among theological institutions, e.g., pluralism; and at the same time there should be a global pattern of degrees to provide an overarching structure for all theological education.

The paper proposes eight (8) types of academic credentials that might be commonly embraced by theological institutions and ecclesiastical authorities to provide a consistent pattern for global theological education. These credentials seek to value the traditions of the academy and also to be responsive to the changing realities of the churches:

1. **Preparatory Certification** (preparatory programs devoted to preparing persons for university or college study)
2. **The First Degree** (general liberal arts education of two to four years beyond secondary education, building upon various patterns of secondary education)
3. **The Intermediate Degree** (one full year of full time study beyond the first degree)
4. **The First Professional Degree** (basic preparation of several years full-time study that prepares graduates for the practice of ministry as it is commonly recognized by ecclesiastical bodies)
5. **The Intermediate Professional Degree** (one full year of full-time study beyond the first professional degree)
6. **The Final Professional Degree** (the Doctor of Ministry in North America is the only degree that presently fits this category; it involves advanced study of ministry in the context of professional practice)
7. **The Academic Doctorate** (a multi-year program of academic preparation for teaching and research)
8. **The Post-Doctoral Degree** (additional academic work resulting in significant publications, thereby qualifying its holder for appointment to a university professorship)

It is hoped that some pattern of credentials similar to this one could be established and commonly understood by all theological institutions and all ecclesiastical bodies. Such a pattern would enable a conceptual framework of equivalents for all degrees and credentials in theological education. It could also challenge theological educators and ecclesiastical leaders to define more accurately the levels of academic achievement needed for appropriate recognition and service within various communities of faith.

The WOCATI CONGRESS 96 was asked:

1. To reach consensus regarding the ingredients of a general and defining system of theological degrees and credentials.
2. 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.

## ACADEMIC DEGREES AND CREDENTIALS IN THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION (CONGRESS 96 RESPONSE)

It is widely accepted by the participants that credentials in theological education is a problematic area and solutions to problems may not be easy to find. Nevertheless, the participants were of the view that WOCATI affords the best forum to discuss openly and freely problems related to standards in credentials. That exchange of information may lead to greater understanding, and the discovery of ways for sharing vexing academic problems.

Participants were generally reluctant to adopt the proposed eight types of academic credentials that were suggested as part of global theological standards in credentials. The proposal, while helpful in some respects, is seen to be weighed too much in favor of the North American system of theological education. Yet the problems related to finding equivalency among several types of degrees and diplomas, as they are awarded in different parts of the world, is indeed a pressing

problem. It is hoped that WOCATI may be able to gather all the relevant information regarding various types of credentials and degrees from all the affiliated associations, and establish a mechanism whereby academic standards and equivalency in credentials may be more easily established.

There was also some discussion regarding the “competency” of individuals who graduate from our theological institutions. Academic competency, while essential, is not sufficient for ministry. Graduating pastors and theological educators must inculcate values that affirm our contexts and communities. Theological education must be geared not just toward training a few clerics but toward empowering local congregations. To this end, indigenous forms of learning that affirm local language, culture, and context must be encouraged. The process of “globalization” that ignores this local expression of learning and formation must be resisted.



*Enjoying a break were (from left) Ruth Muthei, Teresia Hinga, Diane Jagdeo, and Hannah Kinoti.*



*Dancers performed in an African cultural program.*



*Sharing a working session were (from left) Wanda Deifelt, Ruth Muthei, and Heather Walton.*



**The key above identifies the persons in the photograph on page 1. Following is a list of the WOCATI associations and CONGRESS participants, listed alphabetically by the association name.**

- ACATE (Association of Centres for Adult Theological Education) [in the United Kingdom]: Inderjit Bhogal, Helen Stanton, Heather Walton (Executive Committee)
- ANZATS (Australia/New Zealand Association of Theological Schools): John Olley, Robyn Reynolds, Ian Williams (Executive Committee)
- ASIT (Asociacion de Seminarios e Instituciones Teologicas) [Spanish]: Alberto V. Guerrero, Leonor Rojas
- ASTE (Associancao de Seminarios Teologicos) [Portugese]: Wanda Deifelt, Odair Pedroso Mateus
- ASTHEOL-Central [French]: (Association des Institutions d’Enseignement Theologique en Afrique Central): no representative
- ASTHEOL-West [French]: (Association des Institutions d’Enseignement Theologique en Afrique Occidentale): no representative
- ATEM (Association for Theological Education in Myanmar): Peter Joseph
- ATESEA (Association for Theological Education in South East Asia): Aileen Khoo, Kang Song Koh, Yeow Choo Lak (Executive Committee)
- ATIEA (Association of Theological Institutions in Eastern Africa): Eliphaz Maari, Ruth Muthei, Teresia Hinga (Executive Committee), and Nairobi hosts: Douglas W. Waruta, Mary Getui, Peter Choi, Hannah W. Kinoti, Peter Bisem, Gerishon Kirika, Peter Ensor
- ATIME (Association of Theological Institutions in the Middle East): no representative
- ATISCA (Association of Theological Institutions in South and Central Africa): no representative
- ATS (The Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada): James Costen, Diane Kennedy, Barbara Brown Zikmund (Executive Committee)
- BTESSC (Board of Theological Education of the Senate of Serampore College): Daniel D. Chetti
- CATI (Conference of African Theological Institutions): Rabiatu Ammah, Ambrose Moyo
- CATS (Caribbean Association of Theological Schools): Hyacinth Boothe, John Holder, Diane Jagdeo (Executive Committee)
- COTS (Conference of Orthodox Theological Schools): Dimitra Koukoura, Petros Vassiliadis
- Erasmus/Socrates Network of European Theological Institutions: Petros Vassiliadis
- MATS (Melanesian Association of Theological Schools): Wesley Kigasung, Hazel Nate
- NEAATS (North East Asia Association of Theological Schools): no representative
- NETEN (Network for Theological Education in Nordic/countries): Lennart Bostrom
- PERSETIA (Indonesian Association of Theological Schools): Augustina Oematan-Litelnoni, John Titley
- PTCA (Programme for Theology & Cultures in Asia): Zenaïda P. Lumba, Joseph Patmury
- SESIOR (Society for Ecumenical Studies and Inter-Orthodox Relations): Dimitra Koukoura
- SPATS (South Pacific Association of Theological Schools): Jovili Meo, Lisa Meo
- WAATI (West African Association of Theological Institutions): no representative.
- Affiliate members, observers, and guests included: Terry Provance (United Church Board for Homeland Ministries); Roger Kemp (International Council for Evangelical Theological Education); James L. Waits, Melva Costen (The Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada); Patrick Matsikenyiri, worship leader; Elsa Tamez, keynote speaker.

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