The Mediator

A Journal of Holiness Theology for Asia-Pacific Contexts

ASIA-PACIFIC NAZARENE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Bridging Cultures for Christ
1 Timothy 2:5

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Contributors iv
Preface v

Part 1: Induction Addresses

Mission History: A Study in Subversive Fidelity
Christi-An Clifford Bennett 1

Domesticating the Prophetic Voice in Asia and the Pacific
Stephen J. Bennett 17

In Search of Wisdom and Knowledge
Stanley Clark 58

Part 2: Bangkok Education Conference Papers

A Calling to Fulfill
Albert L. Truesdale, Jr. 72

Quality Theological Education from a Wesleyan Perspective
David McEwan 94

We Believe in Quality Education - *Selah*: Musings on the Subject of Quality Education
Jim and Carol Rotz 109

Part 3: Information

News Briefs 119

Call for Papers 126

Application Information 127

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PREFACE

Those who have been involved in theological education for some time may recognize some of the recent and significant changes in the way this education is being done. Some of these shifts are needed and welcomed; others may discomfit and question long-held assumptions. Almost all theological educators find themselves challenged to learn new methods of instruction. For many, this involves consciously modifying the methods by which we ourselves were taught. For others, it provides opportunity for innovative approaches to instilling time-tested and experience-proven doctrines within the lives of our students. The challenge for all theological educators is not to lose sight of the message while engaged in evolving methods.

Those from within the Wesleyan tradition view this passage from a unique vantage point governed by certain theological presuppositions. In particular, theological education from a Wesleyan perspective is driven by the optimism that divine grace can truly transform the lives of our students and the people whom they will influence in their ministries. Can educators from the Wesleyan tradition offer the academic world insights into methodology based upon particular theological underpinnings?

This issue of *The Mediator* offers some evocative articles on the nature of theological education that move the dialogue involved in addressing this question further along. Included in this issue are the full-length induction addresses of three new faculty members who began teaching at Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary in the 2000-2001 academic year. These messages represent the philosophies

of theological education from the perspectives of the specialists in their various fields of study.

In addition, included in this issue are three revised papers presented at *Bangkok 2000: Asia-Pacific Regional Education Conference*, sponsored by the Church of the Nazarene in the Asia-Pacific region. These papers represent only a small part of the significant dialogue that took place at this conference, both in the formal presentations and informal discussions. Educators from throughout the region gathered in Bangkok, Thailand, on October 29-November 3, 2000, to discuss - theory and practice, and those who participated felt more closely bound in purpose and fellowship as a result of this conference.

We seek to make *The Mediator* a journal that will move this dialogue along with intended focus upon issues relevant to the Asia-Pacific region. We have appreciated the feedback from our readers concerning the October 2000 issue. As we look ahead, we continue to invite quality articles for the journal. Please find more information about this on page 126.

David A. Ackerman, *Editor*
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MISSION HISTORY:

A STUDY IN SUBVERSIVE FIDELITY

Christi-An Clifford Bennett

An Induction Address Delivered on August 22, 2000

The Anglican Church, England's national church, was in a sorry state in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Overly entwined with national politics, it had become the original church of the "politically correct." The straight-laced, hot-headed Puritans had been excluded for their anti-royalist positions. The Jacobites had been excluded for their extreme loyalist positions. The Church's legislative body, the Convocation, had been effectively silenced by its own internal quarreling.

The pulpit was used to preach manners, patriotism, and class-duties.[1] Rocking the boat was out-of-fashion. Warm-hearted enthusiasm was frowned on. Moderation was the watchword of the day. Materialism was quietly accepted. Clergy appointments were made largely on the basis of political loyalty rather than Christian piety. Many clergy received livings from several pulpits at the same time and then hired poor curates to do their work for them. New towns grew up that challenged old parish boundaries, and multitudes were left without regular pastoral care. The rich worshiped in locked,

[1]J. Wesley Bready, *England: Before and After Wesley. The Evangelical Revival and Social Reform* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1938), 92.

cushioned pews while the poor were relegated to rude benches at the rear of the churches. In Gerald Cragg's words,

> The Hanoverian Church of England . . . , stood sorely in need of reform. The age of reason had forgotten certain fundamental human needs; natural religion might satisfy the minds of some, but the hearts of multitudes were hungry. The weaknesses of the established church—its failure to provide adequate care, the inflexibility of its parish system, its neglect of the new towns—left a vast and needy population waiting to be touched by a new word of power.[2]

Into this church, John Wesley was born. It would have been hard to love the Anglican Church more fervently than John Wesley did. He was the son of an ordained Anglican minister, the brother of Anglican ministers and himself an ordained Anglican minister. Wesley loved and preached the church's doctrines. He faithfully attended the church's sacraments. He required no pulpit or payment from the church, but instead he threw his energies into extending the ministry of the church to its neglected members across and even outside parish boundaries.

When John Wesley began to organize his Methodist societies, it was not to compete with the church, but to support and supplement its ministries. His stated aim for his societies was, "Not to form any new sect; but to reform the nation, particularly the church; and to spread scriptural holiness over the land."[3] Wesley poured his boundless energies into extending the church and bringing revival to it. Though often encouraged to lead his societies out of the Church of

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[2]Gerald R. Cragg, *The Church & the Age of Reason 1648-1789* (New York, NY: Penguin Books, 1970), 141.

[3]Minutes of Several Conversations between the Rev. Mr. Wesley and Others from the year 1744 , to the year 1789, *The Works of the Rev. John Wesley* (Grand Rapids, Mich: Zondervan, Reprint from 1872), 299.

England, Wesley stubbornly resisted. He loved the church too much to leave it the way it was. So he stayed. Criticized, ridiculed and often abused by the sons of the church, Wesley stayed and labored as a lowly unassigned minister to revive both church and country. The revival spread with force as Wesley preached, and discipled and organized converts throughout the United Kingdom.

As Wesley's ministry grew and his societies multiplied, something else began to happen in England. English merchant ships were ruling the seas and establishing thriving power bases in North America, the West Indies, India, Africa and in the far South Pacific. Explorers, merchants and merchants' chaplains began to write descriptive accounts of their travels and the places they visited. Revived British Christians read the accounts and in their hearts began to grow a concern to send the life-giving gospel to the peoples of those faraway places. Thomas Coke was one of them.

Few people loved John Wesley and the Methodist movement more than Thomas Coke did. An ordained Anglican minister himself, Coke gave his life's energies to serve the Methodist cause. Coke's heart and his ministry first began to catch fire when he was ministering as a curate in the village of South Petherton. Coke's Methodist sympathies became so irritatingly obvious as he conducted services that he was publicly dismissed in 1777.[4] Within a year he was serving zealously among Wesley's societies. Forty-five years younger than Wesley, Coke became Wesley's right hand man in Wesley's senior years. Wesley relied on Coke both as his secretary and as his personal representative to the societies. Coke responded with enthusiastic devotion. It was to Thomas Coke (along with Frances Asbury) in 1784 that Wesley entrusted the setting up of a church government for the Methodists in the newly-independent United States of America.

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[4]John Vickers, *Thomas Coke: Apostle of Methodism* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1964), 22-30.

Coke made eighteen trans-Atlantic sea voyages in his service to Wesley's Methodism in the USA.

But Thomas Coke had read of lands in Africa and the East where people had no knowledge of the one true God. As much as he loved Wesley and his British mission, Coke was not satisfied. It was not enough for Coke that Methodism work to convert the people of Britain and Ireland. Coke heard God calling the vigorous Methodist societies to send preachers to the ends of the earth. Just as Wesley had devoted his energies to turn English and Anglican hearts to God, Coke devoted his most ardent efforts to turning Methodist hearts toward the world.

Coke had been out of his curacy less than a year when he began campaigning to involve Wesley's Methodists in world missions. Wesley was not impressed with Coke's efforts to recruit Methodist preachers to respond to a call from ex-slaves in West Africa. The Methodist Conference considered the call and decided the time was not yet right for such a mission. Coke accepted the decision and continued serving faithfully in the British Isles, but he did not forget the larger world.

In 1784 Coke released a plan for establishing a missionary society. His particular interest this time was in the East, in India and Ceylon (now Sri Lanka). Again Coke's efforts were rebuffed by Wesley and the Methodist Conference. Coke once again accepted the decision and gave himself wholeheartedly to the new work laid on him, that of establishing the foundations for the Methodist Church in America, but he did not forget the world.

Coke tried again in 1786 to call Wesley and his preachers to embrace a world mission. This time he called their attention to a more familiar world, to the Scottish highlands and outlying British Isles, to Nova Scotia and Newfoundland in North America and to the West Indies. He won some ground this time and secured the appointment of missionaries to several of the places mentioned, including the West Indies where a Methodist shipwright was already evangelizing

slaves. Wesley ordained these missionaries himself, five years before his death.

No missionary society was immediately established to support these Wesleyan missionaries, so Coke took on himself the duty of their support. For 25 years, Coke tramped up and down the streets of England, knocking on doors to raise financial support for the expanding Methodist world missionary enterprise. He poured the best of his physical and financial resources into promoting and supporting Methodism's world mission, repeatedly dipping into his own pocket to make up the missions' deficits.[5]

In the meantime, following Wesley's death, the Methodist societies seceded from the Anglican Church. Finally, in 1813, the Methodist Conference assented to allow Coke to fulfill his life-long dream. They appointed him and several other preachers as missionaries to India and Ceylon. Thomas Coke died on the ship before he ever reached India. The British Methodists responded by establishing the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society and choosing, at last, to identify themselves as a church with a world mission. Thomas Coke loved Wesley's Methodism. He loved it too much to leave it as it was. Though often rebuffed and criticized, Coke pressed on, laboring hard for the extension of the Methodist societies throughout the British Isles, the USA and the world.

By the middle of the nineteenth century, both the Wesleyan Methodist Connexion of Britain and the Methodist Episcopal Church of the USA had identified themselves as wholehearted missionary churches. They had sent scores of missionaries to all corners of the

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[5]For a full discussion on Coke and Wesley's disagreements regarding world missions see Christi-An C. Bennett, "John Wesley: Founder of a Missionary Church?" *Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society* (May and Oct, 1996): 159-70, 229-36. See also Bennett, "The Development of the Idea of Mission in British Wesleyan Thought, 1784-1914" (Ph.D. Thesis, University of Manchester, 1995), 30-55.

globe, armed with the message of a free and full salvation. In 1836 James Dixon declared to a national gathering of British Wesleyan Methodists, ". . . my greatest delight in my Methodism is that it . . . contemplates the conversion of the whole world."[6]

The Methodist missions, however, were running into a stumbling block. The mission boards were appointing only male missionaries who were accompanied by their wives to their mission assignments. In Asian countries like India and China, women were so completely segregated from men that they could only be evangelized by other women. Additionally, the missionary wives saw that these Asian women needed education so that they could read the Bible, give Christian leadership to their children and effectively participate in the social transformation of their own countries. The missionaries' wives had hearts for the work and many of them took on evangelistic and educational tasks, but found themselves too tied down in caring for their own families. To these compassionate missionaries' wives, the answer seemed simple: recruit single female missionaries to minister among the women of Asia.

American Methodism owes the founding of its missionary women's work to two missionaries' wives, Mrs. Lois Parker and Mrs. Clementina Butler, both of whom served in India.[7] Warm-hearted holiness women, these missionaries' wives loved Methodist missions too much to leave them as they were, struggling hopelessly to find the key to the heart of the Indian family. They were not willing to wait for the general mission board to decide to initiate a women's missionary program—generations would pass into eternity before that was likely to happen. Lois Parker and Clementina Butler loved Indian women

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[6]Notes and Transcripts, 59, Special Series, Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society Archives, School of Oriental and African Studies.

[7]This story is recounted by Dana L. Robert in *Women in Mission: A Social History of Their Thought and Practice* (Macon, Goergia: Mercer University Press, 1996), 125-88.

too much to leave them any longer as they were, unevangelized, uneducated, and oppressed. Other women had begun to form female missionary societies to focus on ministry to women— why not the American Methodists, too?

On furlough in 1869, Lois Parker and Clementina Butler went to work to make their dream a reality. The two of them met in Boston with a woman who had been involved in organizing the Congregational women's missionary work. They took her ideas to a group of leading Methodist women in Boston. Those efforts gave birth to the Women's Foreign Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

The officers of the general Methodist missionary board did not like the women organizing independently of their control. Consequently they restricted the women from raising money in church services and public meetings. Control issues surfaced on mission fields, too, where some general board missionaries found that the women's work did not always fit comfortably into their narrower ideas about mission. The male missionaries were not accustomed to working with strong-minded single women, dogged in their determination to better the lot of their sisters. Sometimes conflicts arose, but the Methodist women pressed forward anyway, laboring with all their resources to bring the light of the gospel to women of other lands. Their work produced the largest, most influential woman's missionary organization in the United States, sending out scores of female teachers, doctors and evangelists; and establishing hospitals, schools and colleges that effectively served women for generations.[8]

The history of mission is, in many ways a history of subversive fidelity. Eminent mission historian Andrew Walls speaks of the missionary societies formed in the modern missionary era as "the

[8]Ibid.

fortunate subversion of the Church."[9] Those missionary societies were instigated by men like William Carey who deeply loved their churches, but plainly recognized that without a new way of thinking and a new form of organization their churches could not fulfill their worldwide mission. They loved their churches too much to leave them as they were, spinning their wheels while untold millions waited for the gospel that the churches held but had no means to send. In their stubborn loyalty to the church, they organized for change.

Many of these promoters of global missions worked from the bottom up, circumventing the circles of power. They established sending organizations that operated alongside their churches, thus goading them to a deeper commitment to missions. Ordinary laymen and women had grown used to being ignored in the larger affairs of the Church of England. Mission organizers changed all that by forming those ordinary people into the heart and soul of a global mission enterprise. William Carey was a poor bi-vocational pastor, but it didn't take money to instigate the organization of a missionary society. It took heart and hand and voice. Carey gave all three. John Wesley stubbornly clung to the Anglican Church whilst doing what the church was not equipped to do: evangelizing and discipling the ordinary people of the British Isles. He was a lowly priest with no political power in the Church, but political power wasn't saving Britain anyway. Britain needed spiritual power and Wesley's preachers delivered just that—from the bottom up. Thomas Coke was an oddity in the Methodist Connexion and never extremely popular, but getting his movement involved in missions didn't require popularity—just stubborn love and determination and those Coke gave in large measure. A seat on the general mission board of the Methodist Episcopal Church was not required to begin a missionary movement of women's work for women. What were needed were a large

[9]Andrew Walls, "Missionary Societies and the Fortunate Subversion of the Church," *The Missionary Movement in Christian History. Studies in the Transmission of Faith* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1996), 241-54.

helping of compassion and a few concerned friends. Clementina Butler and Lois Parker found both near at hand.

When I was a girl, my parents taught me a little motto, "Leave things better than you found them." "Leave things better than you found them," they repeated it often and they modeled it always. I didn't realize then the subversiveness of their advice. They were counseling me not to accept the status quo, not to be satisfied with things the way I found them. They were encouraging me to believe that, however weak and unempowered I found myself, I could help to improve the world around me, I could work from the bottom up for renewal and change.

When he was still a college student my father began to pastor a small, struggling church. The church had been small and struggling for decades and pastor after pastor had come and gone, staying two or three years, then resigning, leaving the church the way it had always been. But my parents loved that little church too much to leave it the way they found it. Surely God wasn't satisfied for a holiness church to crawl along lifeless and ineffective. My father walked door to door in the most spiritually neglected corners of the town sharing the gospel of Christ. Hungry souls began to respond. My parents prayed and worked and stayed. For 34 years they stayed, through criticism, a church split, a church merger, economic hardship and even a mafia threat. They stayed—loving that neglected church and that neglected town. The church grew strong and healthy, discipling new converts, and, over time sending more than 20 men and women into ministry.

When my parents finally moved on to a new assignment, they left a church that was transformed. Hardly anything was left of the old church my father had gone to pastor those years before—the location, the building, the denominational ties, the programs, the leadership, the spirit, the worship patterns—all were new and constantly being renewed. In the new building, set on a hill, worshiped a throng of people transformed by the grace of Christ. I can still hear their testimonies ringing; I can still see their faces shining and I can still feel

the power of that congregation's prayers. My parents' motto and their model of subversive fidelity form my life's challenge.

The modern missionary movement has accomplished wonderful things, but our world remains a hurting place. After two hundred years of modern missions, I find myself today in a world where nearly four thousand ethno-linguistic groups still lack an adequate gospel witness, where the Bible is completely unavailable in half the spoken languages, where the most populous nations have very little access to the gospel, where two billion people remain essentially cut-off from the gospel. After two hundred years of modern missions I find myself in a world where women make up one-third of the world's official work force but carry two thirds of the world's work hours. [10] After two hundred years of modern missions, I find myself in a world where over one-third of the women are illiterate, where in some countries female illiteracy exceeds 90 percent. After two hundred years of modern missions, I find myself in a world where famine and war have created 15 million refugees,[11] where 750 million people are chronically undernourished; where 34 thousand children die every day of hunger and preventable diseases.[12] After two hundred years of modern missions, I find myself in a world where sixteen thousand people a day contract HIV,[13] a world where the innocence and health of unknown numbers of children is sacrificed on the altars of adult lust and greed. These are the lost Jesus came to seek and to save. After two hundred

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[10]Dana Robert, "Revisioning the Women's Missionary Movement," *The Good News of the Kingdom: Mission Theology for the Third Millennium* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1993), 114.

[11]Ibid.

[12]World Relief Corporation, "State of the World," *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement*, eds. Ralph D. Winter and Steven C. Hawthorne (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1999), 569-70.

[13]Ibid., 573.

years of modern missions, what will it take to reach these poor and lost ones?

After John Wesley's first experience preaching in an open field, he recorded this in his journal,

> At four in the afternoon, I submitted to be more vile, and proclaimed in the highways the glad tidings of salvation . . . to about three thousand people. The scripture on which I spoke was this, (is it possible any one should be ignorant, that it is fulfilled in every true Minister of Christ?) "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor. He hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted; to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind: To set at liberty them that are bruised, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord."[14]

When Jesus quoted that passage in Nazareth, his people tried to throw him off the edge of a cliff for his subversive fidelity. After 200 years of the modern missionary movement, millions of people are still waiting to see the fulfillment of that text in the fields where they live. In the words of Gerald Cragg, there is still "a vast and needy population" out there "'waiting to be touched by a new word of power." What will it take to reach them? It will take courage. It will take ingenuity. It will take stubbornly persistent love. It will take a subversive fidelity that is willing to challenge the church to new patterns and new passion. It will take dedicated disciples of Jesus Christ who love the church and the world too much to leave them as they are.

David Wells characterizes petitionary prayer as "rebelling against the status quo." In his words, "to come to an acceptance of life 'as it

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[14]"The Journal of the Reverend John Wesley," *The Works of John Wesley*, Vol. I (Grand Rapids, Mich: Zondervan, reprint of 1872 edition), 185.

is,' . . . is to surrender a Christian view of God."[15] Wells suggests that Christians have lost their righteous anger at the evil so prevalent in our world. "Unlike the widow in the parable [of the unjust judge] we find it easy to come to terms with the unjust and fallen world around us—even when it intrudes into Christian institutions. It is not always that we are unaware of what is happening," Wells states, "but simply that we feel completely impotent to change anything."[16] That is the kind of mentality that paralyzed the church in eighteenth century England. But we are no more impotent to change our world today than John Wesley, Thomas Coke and Clementina Butler were to change their world of the past. Christians, in their praying, and in their acting, are called to rebel against the paralyzing status quo wherever it is found. The lost of the world will only be found, the hurting of the world will only be healed, the captives of the world will only be freed when godly rebels steadfastly refuse to accept the status quo.

With all the need in the world today, one might wonder why I give my energies to studying and teaching stories from the moldy past. One might wonder why I don't just pour my energies into acting in the present and planning for the future. Let me be very careful to assert that the model of subversive fidelity I am presenting is not a model of radical discontinuity with the past. It stands in loving, faithful continuity with all the holy labors that have gone before. It does not advocate rubbishing the past. It is subversive, yes, and brimming with newness and life, but it is also faithful, respectful and grateful in respect to the past. Subversiveness that lacks faithfulness tends to destroy rather than to build and it is doomed to failure. David Howard puts it this way:

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[15]David Wells, "Prayer: Rebelling Against the Status Quo," *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement*, eds. Ralph D. Winter and Steven C. Hawthorne (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1999), 143.

[16]Ibid., 144.

> We learn from the past so that we can live effectively in the present and plan wisely for the future. He who will not learn from history is doomed to repeat her mistakes.
>
> We learn about the Lord's work in past times so that we can understand him better and trust him more fully.[17]

We study and teach church history not so that we can learn to slavishly replicate the structures and methods of the past. There is no need to rebuild what has already been built. We study church history so that we can faithfully build the upper stories of the church on foundations that have already been laid and on lower stories that have already been built by our spiritual ancestors. As we study the history of the church and its mission, we discover how we can become co-laborers with the workers of the past, advancing the work which they began.

When Jesus read from Isaiah, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me . . . ," he was consciously building his new Kingdom on a foundation already laid by the Old Testament law and prophets. Moses and the prophets of the Old Testament would never have envisioned the path Jesus took to fulfill the truths they proclaimed, but surely they would have rejoiced in the results. When the British and American Methodists transformed their churches into world mission centers they were consciously building on a foundation already laid by the expansively evangelistic spirit and work of John Wesley. Frequently at their missionary rallies and in their missionary publications the Methodists quoted his words, "I look on all the world as my parish. . . ." And yet, when John Wesley spoke those words, he was talking about a British world, not a global world. Wesley never could have imagined the organized world missionary endeavors those words would inspire, and yet I am sure he would have rejoiced in the results, even if he did

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[17]David M. Howard, "Student Power in World Missions," *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement*, eds. Ralph D. Winter and Steven C. Hawthorne (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1999), 277.

resist Coke's early efforts.[18] When the men of the Methodist Episcopal Church established their general mission board, they never anticipated the sending of single female teachers, doctors and evangelists to serve as missionaries. Yet, when Lois Parker and Clementina Butler urged the women of Boston to organize the Women's Foreign Missionary Society, they were consciously building on the labors of that board to win the lost of the world, and when the men of the general board began to see the wonderful results of missionary women's labors achieved in spite of male resistance, they soon began to rejoice.

I teach mission history not to preserve the ways of the past but to point the way to the future. Each new generation is challenged to find new, more effective means to deliver the gospel to a lost world. Each new generation is challenged to love the church and the world too much to leave them the way they find them. This is not a rejection of the past, but an honoring of it, a building on it, a fulfilling of its hopes and dreams in ever new and more exciting endeavors. The Apostle Paul told the church at Corinth, "By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as an expert builder, and someone else is building on it. But one should be careful how he builds. . ."(1 Cor 3:10). We study the past so that as careful builders we can build a work that will survive when tested by fire, as Paul assures us it will be (3:12-15).

From the faithful of the past, we find the road to the future—and it is not the way of passive acceptance. It is not the way of simply taking what is handed to us and handing it on intact—just a foundation with nothing built on top of it. It is a more difficult path than that. The road to the future is the path marked out by John Wesley, Thomas Coke and Clementina Butler. It is the path of subversive fidelity, the path of the loyal, holy rebel, faithful but not slavish, challenging but not arrogant.

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[18]Bennett, "John Wesley: Founder of a Missionary Church?", 234-236.

I once heard the Nazarene World Mission Director state that he was looking for "loyal rebels" to serve the mission of the Church of the Nazarene.[19] I thank God that I serve a church that has the wisdom to embrace subversive fidelity, a church that still listens to the challenging voice of change as it calls up from the bottom. In listening to that voice, the Church of the Nazarene has established this seminary; it has begun to internationalize church government; it has embraced compassionate ministries in urban centers, formed a partnership with Campus Crusade for Christ in the use of the JESUS film, and approved innovative approaches to church planting. These efforts, as they grow and develop, have the potential to produce revolutionary results in the church, its polity and its leadership.

Today, there are more warm-hearted Christians in Asia than in North America. At the same time the largest populations of unreached people are in Asia. The vital center of the Christian Church has moved from the Western hemisphere to the Southern hemisphere, to Africa, Latin America and the South Pacific. As an American missionary I am a representative of the "western" ways of the past. As a church historian I teach the stories of the past. As a missiologist I have come to APNTS to use the stories of the past to point the way to the future. What that future will look like I do not know, but I do know what it will be built on.

I have come to APNTS to help train careful church builders to build on a firm foundation. I have come to challenge a generation of Asian and Pacific students to love their church enough to leave it better—more passionate, more compassionate, more holy, more missionary—than they find it. I have come to APNTS to train a generation of loyal, church-loving rebels who are willing to work hard enough, stay long enough and speak loudly enough to begin a movement of holy transformation in the world in which they serve. Perhaps one of you will become the John Wesley, Thomas Coke or

[19]Louie Bustle, New Missionary Leadership Training, February 2000.

Clementina Butler for which your generation is waiting. I love my church and I love this weary old world for which Christ died. I love them too much to leave them the way they are. My prayer is that I will have the grace to embrace the holy transformation that will come as the loyal rebels of Asia and the Pacific begin to challenge the old structures and methods in which I myself have grown too comfortable.

DOMESTICATING THE PROPHETIC VOICE IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

Stephen J. Bennett

An Induction Address delivered on August 29, 2000

Introduction: The Prophetic Voice

Sit! Down boy! Nice doggy. Sit down! Ah yes, the domestication of the dog. That ferocious wolf-like canine that could easily kill a man with a few snaps of those sharp teeth; obedient and submissive to the every wish and command of the master; domesticated.

Even the dog "Buck" in Jack London's *The Call of the Wild* was not immune to domestication. Although determined to resist all advances in his new northern home, he soon learned to submit when beaten with a stick. And yet that "call of the wild" rose above the voices of domestication once again.

There are domesticated prophets, the kind that support the *status quo*, quietly toeing the party line and never challenging any of the power structures. And then there are the spirited wolf-like canines that refuse to be domesticated. The call of the Holy One keeps them from submitting to the *status quo.*

Isaiah heard that call from the Holy One. In the presence of God he realized that he was unfit in comparison with God's holiness. It was he who first heard the now famous words, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" (Isa 6:8 NIV). He could not block out the sound of that call. When Jeremiah tried to walk away from his call, the words

of God were like a burning fire in his heart (Jer 20:9). He could not keep silent. The call of God, the character of the prophet, and the needs of the community would not allow him to.[1] It is God who provides the initiative for the prophet's call. It is God who will raise up his prophets, just as was predicted for the ideal prophet of Deuteronomy 18:15. Amos emphasized this fact when he claimed that he did not come from a prophetic guild or from a lineage of prophets, but his call was from God (Amos 7:14-15).

So the prophets were to speak for God. They were divine mouthpieces (Deut 18:18; Jer 1:9; Ezek 3:4). Only false prophets speak their own message. They speak it because they have deceived themselves (Jer 23:26). But a true prophet's authority comes from the originator of both the message and the call: God himself (Deut 18:15, 19).

Isaiah's experience shows the importance of the life and character of the prophet. He was not ready to hear God's call until his language had been cleansed (Isa 6:5-7). He could not speak the words of God until his own words and speech became more godly. The prophets could not speak to the culture of their day unless they stood apart from the ungodly aspects of that culture. Yet there was often a feeling of inadequacy on the part of the prophets. Moses felt unworthy for his commission, but received God's reassurance (Exod 3:11-4:17). Jeremiah felt that his youth was an issue preventing him from the prophetic task. From God's perspective this was not an issue (Jer 1:4-8). God would be with his prophet; the message of God would be accompanied by the very presence of God and there was no reason to fear.

The rationale for the prophetic call was to be found in the nature of the prophet's community. The community was in need of a transformation in the direction of God's standard of holiness. The

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[1]Otto J. Baab, *Prophetic Preaching: A New Approach* (New York: Abingdon, 1958), 19.

prophetic message must communicate this standard, but not as a matter of intellectual curiosity. The message was designed to bring change.[2]

So the task of a prophet is to be prophetic; to be an agent for change as a spokesperson for God. Despite the popular fascination with the predictions of prophets, the call for change takes priority over prediction. Prediction was only ever *supportive* of the central task of the prophets. Predictions were not made to satisfy curiosity but to give weight to a call to repentance.

That call to repentance may be broader than what may be regarded as the well-known obvious sins, such as breaking the Ten Commandments. The prophet also spoke to more subtle departures from God's will for his people—departures involving worship practices and participation in the accepted systems of culture.

The message of the Old Testament prophets often focused on judgment or hope. The judgment was pronounced as a result of disobedience, but there was hope in a brighter future where obedience to God would prevail. The disobedience showed itself in empty ritual observance of God's law, accompanied by syncretistic adaptation to the practices of surrounding nations. This often involved oppression, injustice, and immorality. Jesus exercised his prophetic voice along the same lines. He exposed an empty observance of ritual laws accompanied by an acceptance of and accommodation to current cultural practices.

The holiness of God demanded a higher standard than this. The only true and living God is unique in his holiness and requires a relationship of submission from his people. It is only then that they can reflect his holiness and it is only then that they can proclaim that

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[2]Cf. Levi A. Olan, *Prophetic Faith and the Secular Age* (New York: Ktav Publishing, 1982), 117, "Philosophers and theologians explain the world, the prophets were men dedicated to changing the world."

holiness to a hurting world. This is the bold extent of the prophetic vision. It is only the wild prophetic voice which can resist the forces of conformity and domestication and proclaim such a message beyond the limits of popularity and common acceptance. This is the task of the prophet.

I. The Prophetic Voice in the Bible

The biblical prophets held a high standard of covenant loyalty. Yet they lived in an environment of plurality. The Canaanite presence and influence in Israel was significant. Canaanite religion and culture was widely practiced in full view of the Israelites. Accommodation to these practices soon became the norm—practices involving intermarriage, Asherah poles and high places, Baal worship and child sacrifice.

The message of repentance and judgment for sin was central to the message of the prophets. Part of this was their call to reject the syncretism that had crept into Israel's worship and lifestyle. The people were taking their cues from the surrounding culture rather than from Torah.

The prophetic task, then, became twofold. It was to reform the worship of Yahweh and even what had become organized religion, and to reform the civilization of Israel by challenging contemporary culture. Both had been influenced by Canaanite practices. Israel's vision of God and the social system had been compromised.[3]

This assessment of the situation is largely contrary to the usual Sunday School type understanding of the conquest of Canaan. There a linear picture is usually painted whereby the tribes of Israel, one by one, expel or extinguish the Canaanite civilizations. This all began with the grand show of "people power" in the destruction of Jericho

[3]Robert McNeill, *Prophet, Speak Now!* (Richmond, Virginia: John Knox, 1961), 33. Cf. Baab, 32.

under the leadership of Joshua. The balance of the biblical account, however, paints a more complex picture. While the twelve tribes eventually spread out over Palestine, they continued to live among or adjacent to many of the original inhabitants.

The religion of these inhabitants became very attractive to the young nation of Israel. Baal worship was usually represented by a bull, the symbol of fertility including fertility of the land. The "high place," an outdoor shrine, provided the place of worship. Essential elements were a stone pillar to represent Baal ("lord"), a tree to represent the female consort (Asherah), a table for offerings, an incense altar, and a couch for sacred prostitution. The focus of worship was to encourage fertility in family life and agriculture. The goal was materialistic.[4]

Israelite syncretism did not involve acceptance of this religion as such. There was no blatant rejection of Yahweh. What were accepted, at least at first, were the religious practices of other religions. Yahweh was worshiped in the same way as Baal was worshiped. Yahweh was still accepted as sovereign, but then little baals were kept to encourage fertility of a particular plot of ground.[5] The prophets spoke against this widely accepted practice. God's sovereignty and holiness and uniqueness demanded exclusive loyalty.

In the northern kingdom of Israel, political and economic success in the eighth century BC brought new challenges to the exclusive worship of Yahweh. King Jeroboam II had conquered new territory and brought increased prosperity despite his wickedness. The northern kingdom had a history of broken covenant. Idolatrous golden calves were set up in Dan and Bethel right at the birth of the nation. Jeroboam I had set up these calves for political reasons. As the king of a new nation he did not want his people to go back to Jerusalem to worship, and so possibly shift their allegiance back to

[4]McNeill, 26.

[5]Ibid.

that center of leadership (1 Kgs 12:26ff). There was still religious activity, even in the name of Yahweh, but the covenant heart was missing. There was not the concern for an exclusive relationship with God, and Baal worship was practiced openly.

Israel learned from the Canaanites that agriculture would only be successful with the consent of Baal, the god of fertility. The name Baal means "owner, lord, master, husband"; thus he was considered lord of the ground, and each area had its own Baal.

Four prophets from the eighth century BC provide examples of the prophetic voice in Israel that was willing to speak out against these trends. These prophets are Amos, Hosea, Micah, and Isaiah.

Amos offered his prophetic voice against the abuses in the northern kingdom of Israel. Coming from the southern kingdom of Judah he was in a special position to be objective about the sins of Israel. The increased prosperity had been accompanied by a wider demand for luxury items (Amos 4:1; 6:1,4). As these goals gained prominence in popular life, morality and religion took second place. Bribery was used to gain large tracts of land at the expense of the smaller land holders. Those deprived of their land then had no recourse to the court system which was also corrupt (Amos 5:7, 15, 24).[6] Oppression of the poor and immorality became characteristic of the lifestyles of Israel (Amos 2:6-7; 4:1). Along with this went a hypocrisy in worship. Amos noticed the people worshiping at Bethel, Gilgal, and Beersheba, without really seeking the Lord (Amos 5:4-5).

Domesticated prophets kept quiet about these atrocities. They were benefitting greatly from the new prosperity and the generosity of the crowds who came to the shrines. Amos was not so easily bought. His message was one of judgment for those who had broken Yahweh's covenant. Three times he described God as the one "who

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[6]Roland Kenneth Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1969), 885.

brought you up out of the land of Egypt." It was the exodus which was foundational for the covenant. Prosperity had brought rejoicing but Amos prophesied judgment leading to mourning. Prosperity had brought plenty but Amos prophesied want, and fainting and falling in the place of strength and youth (Amos 8:9-14).

The response of the priest: "Amos, take your visions and get out! Go back to Judah and earn your living there as a prophet." (Amos 7:12 CEV). But Amos was not working for money like the domestic prophets. He was raising a conspiracy (Amos 7:10).

Hosea also ministered to the northern kingdom of Israel. As a northerner himself he was not as harsh as Amos, but focused instead on the love of God. Still his objective was the same as that of Amos, and Hosea was no less appalled by the religious syncretism that was occurring in his own land.

While Amos focused his preaching against social injustice and the exploiting of the poor, Hosea's concern was directed to the moral, religious, and political problems of Israel. Such offenses denied the "loving father" (Hos 11:1ff.) and "faithful husband" (Hos 2:2ff.) which God longed to be to his people.

Hosea addressed the issue of Israel's broken covenant and announced that the people had broken God's covenant and law (Hos 8:1). The idolatrous golden calf is evidence of this lack of loyalty to Yahweh (Hos 8:5ff.). Hosea again refers to the calves in a general attack of idolatry and expresses disbelief that people would kiss calves! (Hos 13:2).

Micah and all the "writing" prophets except Amos and Hosea ministered to the southern kingdom of Judah. The cultural situation which Micah addressed involved improper worship practices and injustice toward others. Micah showed contempt for idols and Asherah poles, temple gifts, shrine prostitution, and witchcraft (Mic 1:7; 5:12-14 [Hebrew 11-13]). He condemned injustice (3:1-3, 9)

including bribery and oppression (3:11; 7:3), fraud, and illegal seizure of land (2:1-2, 8-9).

One manifestation of injustice involved market place trading. Dishonest merchants were increasing their profits by weighing out produce with light weights to make it appear that more had actually been purchased, and by weighing out gold with heavy weights to make it appear that the merchant had paid out more than was actually the case. There was no effective system of justice for the weaker parties to gain justice. The laws of the jubilee year and the provisions for the helpless were also neglected. These were designed to protect the poor, the widows, orphans, and foreigners.[7]

The domesticated prophets, of course, turned a blind eye to this situation. In an oracle directed against these prophets, Micah announced: "You lying prophets promise security for anyone who gives you food, but disaster for anyone who refuses to feed you" (Mic 3:5 CEV). The domestication of the prophetic voice takes money and coercion, but those who wish to domesticate are willing to pay the price because their material interests are at stake. And then there were those prophets who liked to sell fortunes for money (Mic 3:11). But Micah was not working for money. He refused to be domesticated.

Isaiah also ministered in Judah contemporary with Micah (in the second half of the eighth century BC). Isaiah too was concerned about empty rituals and the poor moral climate. Priests and prophets were ineffective as teachers because they were intoxicated (Isa 28:5-10). The motions of piety were carefully adhered to and people would fast and "humble" themselves but it made no difference in their lives. They continued to exploit their workers and were engaged in quarreling and even brawling (Isa 58:1-5). Sacrifices were offered and incense burned, but these practices were merely part of the pluralistic compliance with whichever religions were expedient. Along with

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[7] Ralph L. Smith, *Micah-Malachi,* Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 32 (Waco, Texas: Word, 1984), 5.

sacrifices to Yahweh, all-night vigils were kept in secret at grave sites, and the forbidden flesh of pigs was being eaten (Isa 65:2-5).

The low moral climate was characterized by lying, stealing, oppressions, and murder (Isa 1:4, 21-23; 5:20; 9:17 [Hebrew 16] - 10:4; 30:12; etc.). This kind of lifestyle produced an attitude of arrogance and faithlessness (Isa 3:11-15; 22:15-25; 32:5-7; 59:5-8).

One evidence of the domestication of the prophets is seen in their drunkenness. They, along with the priests, staggered from wine and reeled from beer (Isa 28:7). Perhaps the domesticated prophets turned to alcohol to find some relief from the internal conflicts associated with turning away from the true task of their calling. Isaiah did not turn away from his calling but spoke out against the syncretism and injustice around him.

The prophets called Israel to forsake the elements of their lifestyle which reflected the surrounding culture and religion but conflicted with Torah. The people were not in every instance aware that their practices were counter to God's will. "Everyone was doing it." The prophets' message addressed issues relating to world view, worship, business, and justice.

It was natural for the Israelites to think in ways that reflected their neighbors who lived near them and even with them in the same towns. The world view of these neighbors was one of polytheism. Their attitude would have been an acceptance of Yahweh as another god in the pantheon. Yahweh had his jurisdiction and Baal had his. No conflict would have been obvious in the polytheistic mindset.

Spilling over into worship, it would have been easy enough to go so far as to identify Yahweh with Baal. Rituals learned from the Baal-worshiping Canaanites may have been "sanctified" for use in Yahweh worship; the Canaanite forms of worship would have been used while naming Yahweh as the God being worshiped. This was apparently happening at the high places which were a concept that came from Canaanite culture. It may also have been happening at the Israelite

(northern) shrines of Bethel and Dan where Jeroboam had set up golden calves "who brought you up out of Egypt" (1 Kgs 12:28 NIV). Baal was also represented by a calf (bull) and the people may have thought of these idols as physical representations of Yahweh.

The normal practice in business dealings was apparently based on dishonesty on the part of the vendor: heavy weights used in weighing out goods (so less is given, in effect) and light weights used in weighing payment received (so more is received, in effect). Israelite merchants who were competing in the same market with Canaanite merchants would soon adopt these practices also. That would have been the commonly accepted method of doing business.

Bribery was the norm in the culture that surrounded Israel. Israel's legal system soon accepted this characteristic also and so justice was compromised. Only a person of means had a chance of getting justice. The normal way of conducting these legal affairs would not ordinarily have been challenged.

The prophets of the 8th century BC did, however, challenge these practices. They pointed out that these practices came from the surrounding cultures and not from the Torah (which should have been Israel's foundation). In this regard they were doing more than calling for repentance from known sins. They were calling for an understanding of the sinful nature of commonly accepted practice and culture.

In this sense Jesus stood within the prophetic tradition and exercised a prophetic voice. Indeed he was considered to be the fulfillment of the ideal prophet which Deuteronomy 18 described (John 6:14; 7:40). He also referred to himself when he said that a prophet is without honor in his own land (Mark 6:4). Like the Old Testament prophets, he challenged the empty religious ritual and cultural accommodation of his day.

Jesus was concerned with attitudes of the heart along with outward observance of the law. Laws which did not relate to motives of love were discarded in favor of a response of love. The laws of retaliation and divorce fit into this category. Ceremonial hand

washing was thus seen as having little importance. Sabbath obser vance was given greater significance when Jesus took it out of the realm of legalism. He condemned even tithing when it was an empty form unaccompanied by a true concern for justice. Likewise he was appalled when a show of righteousness was made out of prayer and giving to the poor. Neither did he condone using religious piety as a means of discrimination against others. Jesus took more joy in seeing a repentant sinner. Injustice associated with religious observance drew Jesus' most violent reaction when he dismissed the merchants from the temple courts. But Jesus would not be drawn into violence. In fact, his most subversive proposal was the rule of love which demanded peace and non-violence. He promoted this idea in a time when many had begun to believe that violence was the only rational solution to attain liberation from Roman oppression.[8] Jesus did not direct his prophetic voice to the oppression of the Romans against Jewish society, but to the oppression within Jewish society.

Jesus spent much of his time talking about money.[9] Much of the oppression that he witnessed stemmed from greed for money. Yet the issue went deeper than money alone, so much so that a Greek word would not suffice for Matthew's record of Jesus' words: "You cannot serve God and *mammon*" (Matt 6:24). Traditionally *mammon* has been understood to mean "possessions" or "money." This is how

[8]McNeill, 59f., quoting "Speaking for God—The Prophetic Role of the Church," Division of Christian Relations, Board of Church Extension Report, General Assembly, Presbyterian Church in the United States, 1958, p. 5.

[9]For example, in Mark 10:17-25 the rich ruler must sell everything, and it is difficult for rich to enter the kingdom; in Matthew 6:19 Jesus gave a warning about storing up treasures on earth; and in Matthew 16:26 he said that one can gain the whole world but lose his or her soul.

the word is used in the Dead Sea Scrolls.[10] The assumption is that *mammon* comes from the Hebrew root *man*, "to confirm, to support, to trust." So serving *mammon* would refer to overly trusting material things.[11]

John W. Wright has indicated, however, that recent research is pointing in a different direction. It may be that *mammon* came not from a Hebrew word but from the Canaanite language. Here the term *mon* means "provisions" or "stored goods." Trade and commerce were, even in Jesus time, integral to the Canaanite culture. "In such a society, life was about *mon*. *Mon* provided social status, power, influence, and the ability to create more *mon*. The more *mon*, the more security one had. 'Possessions, stored goods' - *mon* represented the secret of success to people in Canaanite society. Serve *mon*, and *mon* will serve you well!"[12]

Jesus was not merely challenging an aspect of culture when he spoke about money. He was challenging the foundations of culture. He believed that the accumulation of possessions and wealth has a way of drawing one into the whole value system of the Canaanites. Jesus challenged everything the people, including the most religious of the people, were working for. Probably unconsciously, they had bought into a system that was contrary to true worship of God.

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[10]*Community Rule*, 6:2, "The man of lesser rank shall obey the greater in matters of work and money [*mammon*]"; and *Damascus Document*, 14:20, "[Whoever] deliberately lies in the matter of property [*mammon*]."

[11]John Wesley Wright, "Mammon—A Word Study: How Has Canaanite Philosophy Influenced Today's Culture?" *Illustrated Bible Life* (March/April/May, 1998), 12-13.

[12]Ibid, 13.

II. Prophetic Vision in the Bible

The prophetic voice identifies what needs to change. It challenges the sinfulness of the *status quo*. But it does not have a destructive or negative posture. The prophets longed to see a right relationship between God and his people. This is the positive side of the prophetic message; this is the prophetic vision. The foundation of this vision in the Bible is holiness.

The centrality of holiness in the Old Testament is seen in the prophetic preaching and concerns. The essence of the prophetic message is a call to return to covenant loyalty. This relational concept is the essence of human holiness which is always derivative of God's holiness, and therefore depends on a right relationship with God.

Holiness is the "meaningless" word to describe the "otherness" of God. He is different, transcendent, divine, not like us, perfect, just, whole, love, unique, indescribable, etc. We have no human frame of reference for this concept. No metaphor can do justice in describing God in his essence. A word must be dedicated to this task; a word that does not have an anthropomorphic reference point. God is without human reference; he is holy.

Human holiness is therefore a mere reflection of God's holiness and is on a different level. It is dependent on relationship. In the OT this relationship is institutionalized in the covenant. *Ḥesed* is the word describing the bond: unconditional love. Love and holiness are inextricably linked; they are one.

The relationship then has implications for ethics, morality, ritual, loyalty, etc. The ten commandments spell out these implications. Those in a right relationship to Yahweh (submission) will not have any other gods, graven images, blasphemy, or irreverence for Sabbath. Submission to Yahweh involves a recognition that he is unique (holy) and therefore there is no room for other sovereign loyalties.

The vertical relationship has a corresponding horizontal element. Those who are in a right relationship with God (i.e. holy) will not demand dominion over fellow humans. This would be taking the position of God. The horizontal relationship will also be characterized by love (*ḥesed*). Thus those who are holy (i.e. reflect God's holiness) will have certain ethical and moral standards: no killing, stealing, adultery, neglecting elderly parents, coveting, or lying in court. This is what a right relationship with God looks like from the outside. This is holiness (human holiness).

The syncretism of the Israelites along with rebellion had moved many far from this ideal. The prophets' main concern was to bring them back to it. They were concerned with holiness. They preached repentance and judgment. In a continuing cycle of apostasy and repentance, the prophets called people back to a right relationship with God—a relationship characterized by submission and exclusive loyalty.

The prophets of the eighth century will again serve to illustrate this prophetic vision. Amos focused on the sovereignty of God and also his justice. He was convinced that the holiness of God would not allow him to tolerate the violations of moral law which were prevalent in Israel.

The holiness of ritual would never be enough to avoid punishment in the thinking of Amos. He condemned the festivals, offerings, and rituals which were offered with no regard for morality. He warned that God, in fact, was ready to destroy the altar with all its emptiness (9:1). Amos condemned the rituals of Gilgal, Carmel and other places, along with the abuses that were associated with them (2:7, 8, 12; 5:26; 7:9; 8:14). He also shattered popular reliance on the "day of the Lord." The day of the Lord would not conform to the popular idea of blessing, but would be one of judgment. In this sense, the holiness of God would be revealed. His justice would be clear on that day.

The prophetic vision of Amos involved an ideal of divine-human relationship where the human side would reflect divine holiness in an ethical sense. Amos' condemnation of injustice was a call for human holiness based on a right relationship with God.

While Amos emphasized the judgment side of God's holiness, Hosea emphasized his love. Love is the characteristic of the relationship between the holy God and his people. Despite the lack of response from Israel, God continued to reach out in love, and even his judgment was a loving discipline designed to convince the people of their need of repentance which would restore that relationship.

The popular conception of God's requirements was a mechanical participation in the ritual observances. Hosea's metaphors of father and husband for God called for a more intimate level of divine-human relationship. The loving kindness of God (*hesed*) was to be matched by an emotional and spiritual involvement from the human side also. Israel was hopelessly deficient in these moral and spiritual qualities which would necessarily be involved in repentance (Hos 5:4; 11:7). The people lacked *ḥesed*.

The description of God as the Holy One in Hosea 11:9 stands in stark contrast to the unholy descriptions of the people. God is no mortal that he would behave or react as humans do. To be holy is to be divine. There is nothing intrinsically holy about humanity.

Yet this is no excuse for human immorality and idolatry. On the contrary it is all the more reason why humans should offer their allegiance to the holy God. It is because God is holy that his people should be faithful in covenant with him. When such a relationship is in place, people can reflect God's holiness in worship and morality. This was Hosea's vision for his people: an intimate relationship with the holy God that impacted every aspect of their lives.

Micah's name is a question, "Who is like Yahweh?" (cf. Mic 7:18), which expresses the essence of divine holiness. God is holy precisely because there is no other like him. That is what holiness is—divinity.

Like the other prophets, Micah saw the impending judgment as a result of the people's departure from holiness, as well as the hope that was anticipated as the holy God reached out once again to his people.

When Micah asked the question, "What does God seek from his people?" (6:6-7), he did not mention sacrifices. God is concerned that acts be just, that his people's loves, desires, and motives be true and faithful, and that their relationship to God be one of humility and cautious fellowship. Micah's attitude toward sacrifice was essentially the same as that of Isaiah (1:11-13) and Amos (5:21-22). Sacrifices had no value in themselves, but gained value in the attitude and action of the worshiper. This is what constitutes human holiness: the act *and* the attitude. A right relation with God involves both (cf. 6:8). Thus, Micah too called the people of Judah to reflect God's holiness.

Isaiah also expressed the uniqueness of God with a question, "Who compares with God?" (Isa 40:18 CEV, cf. 40:25; 44:6,8; 45:5-6,21). Isaiah's call in chapter 6 emphasizes God's uniqueness, separateness, and transcendence. Isaiah's emphasis on God's transcendence is essentially an affirmation of his holiness. The designation "the Holy One" is used in Isaiah twenty-eight times (and not often elsewhere in the Old Testament)(1:4; 5:19, 24, etc.). Isaiah also asserted that only God has the right to be called holy (6:3; 17:7; 40:25, etc.).

The holiness of God is seen in his moral and ethical perfection. Thus he is just (5:16). This is a significant contrast to the human experience, and Isaiah could only respond, "I am unclean" (6:5). This response refers to more than a ceremonial uncleanness, as his lips, that is his speech, were unclean. Here Isaiah's failing parallels one of the problems of his culture: lying. The other common sins of the people in Isaiah's day—stealing, oppressions, and murder—further contrast the human condition with God's holiness and perfection.

Despite the divide between the human condition and God's holiness, Isaiah also saw in God's purpose the principle that his people should share his character, and thus his holiness (35:8; 48:2;

60:14; 62:12). Redemption is more than a forgiveness of sin, but also deliverance from sin (4:3-4; 6; 11:9; 32:15-18; 35:8-10; 60:21). Lives of justice, righteousness, and purity, which human effort could not achieve (Isa 40-55), are the result of divine provision (Isa 56-66). This was Isaiah's vision of holiness for the people when they stand in a right relationship with the Holy God.

In the New Testament, Jesus both continued the prophetic vision of holiness and provided an answer to the problem of (the lack of) human holiness. The terminology of love is more significant in the Gospels than that of holiness. The two ideas are integrally related. "Love" describes the relationship of a person who stands in a right relationship with God. Such a person reflects God's holiness (which is love) and also makes love the characteristic of inter-human relationships.

Love and holiness are primarily internal matters, although they are evidenced externally. As such, it is the Sermon on the Mount which provides Jesus' most succinct expression of holiness because it deals with the internalization of the law. The internal element was missing from contemporary Jewish observance of the law, but it was never missing from the Old Testament ideal of covenant law. The command to love God and others was already given in the Old Testament record (Deut 6:5; Lev 19:18). Jesus took this concept and applied it to individual laws. The law against adultery he applied to lust. The law against murder he applied to hate. He even extended the law of love to those who are considered enemies.

In his prophetic vision, Jesus was profoundly counter-cultural. In the Sermon on the Mount he blessed all those who were not respected in the culture (where *mammon* reigned supreme): the poor in spirit, those who mourn, the meek, etc. And just to clarify the matter, he said, "Do not think that I have come to abolish the law and the prophets; I have come not to abolish them but to fulfill them" (Matt 5:17). Jesus fulfilled the Old Testament writings by continuing in the prophetic tradition and making the vision of the prophets a reality. It

was his death and resurrection, and the coming of the Holy Spirit that took the standard of human holiness out of the realm of vision and into that of reality.

III. The Prophetic Voice in Contemporary Culture

It is all very academic and convenient and clean to discuss the cultural accommodation of the Israelites and the Jews. Everyone knows that they killed the prophets and now let us all join in the Pharisee's prayer: "Thank you Lord that we are not like them!" But we *are* like them. We have accommodated to the surrounding culture and have scarcely given it a thought. The prophetic task must be renewed in every generation and in every culture.[13]

McNeill describes the prophetic function as:

> preaching a full-orbed gospel with stress upon present conditions both personal and social, teaching the Scriptures from the standpoint of what the author intended to say rather than borrowing his words to support our own preconceived notions, speaking forthrightly both publicly and privately on what he considers to be the will of God on sensitive, even painful issues, championing justice at all costs in order that grace be effective, chastening for confession yet soothing for redemption, feeling the sins, hurts, and aspirations of the people so keenly that they become a part of his own spirit.[14]

What would the prophets say if they were preaching here? It would be impossible in a study such as this one to contain the content of the prophetic voice for the many cultures represented by the realm of Asia Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary. After a mere two months in only one culture among so many cultures, I am not the one

[13]McNeill, 28.

[14]Ibid., 43.

to suggest what the prophetic voice would say. Perhaps that is not the appropriate role of the Old Testament professor anyway. Rather than offering prophecies, APNTS should be training prophets. It is the students and graduates who go back to their cultures who will need the tools to assess cultural values and to do so on the basis of a firm foundation of sound biblical interpretation.

This is not to absolve the professor from giving examples and drawing attention to the literature which attempts to contextualize. Students must have models of the prophetic voice which are relevant to their setting. The biblical prophets provide the foundational model.

Biblical prophets addressed two broad areas of disobedience: empty ritual observance of God's law, and syncretistic adaptation to the practices of surrounding culture. These two broad categories are no less relevant for contemporary culture and the church, and they are still closely connected. The modern world, as in the biblical world, is characterized by plurality. Different cultures and religions live side by side. Urban and rural world views live side by side in growing cities, and values characteristic of different generations live side by side. In an important sense, the church and the world live side by side. Christians are influenced by the culture of their world every day. That culture is part of their identity. Often they do not realize when their values are from the world and not from Christianity. They accommodate to the world without even realizing it until the values and practices of the church coincide with the values and practices of the host culture. If such accommodation continues to go unrecognized, church attendance and involvement can become empty ritual. The church can become just another club which meets personal needs but does not challenge personal behavior and values.

This is not to say that Christians consciously reject Christian values. As the Israelites slowly drifted into the religious and moral practices of their neighbors (and co-habitants), so Christians today may accommodate to their host cultures without a great deal of

reflection. They need modern day prophets who will engage in the needed reflection on culture and God's Word, and who will point the church back to the right path. These prophets must resist the forces of domestication and speak out about accommodation to contemporary culture.

There is still a need to be "in the world but not of the world." Christianity must not be disengaged from culture to the extent that it has no impact. Newbigin describes this balance as steering between irrelevance and syncretism.[15] The middle road between irrelevance and syncretism is contextualization. The starting point is Scripture. The fact and truth of revelation is not negotiable. What are negotiable are the forms that are used to convey that truth. These forms should be relevant to the culture in question and not imported without reflection from another culture.

The taxonomy of David Hesselgrave would classify this approach as "apostolic contextualization." The focus is on meaning and relevance. His definition of "prophetic contextualization" goes further. It involves not only words, but actions. Prophetic insight into the culture is needed so that one may see what God is doing and saying, and then may speak and work for needed change.[16] Thus healthy contextualization is both positive and negative. It finds cultural modes of expressing the gospel and it also speaks to cultural

[15]Lesslie Newbigin, *A Word in Season* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 67. Cf. Charles van Engen, *Mission on the Way: Issues in Mission Theology* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker, 1996), 198.

[16]David J. Hesselgrave and Edward Rommen, *Contextualization: Meanings, Methods, and Models* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker, 1989), 149f.

values which are contrary to the gospel.[17] This is the model provided by Jesus and the Old Testament prophets.

Arthur Glasser sees the positive side of contextualization in the Old Testament prophetic activity of symbolic action. Thus Hosea contextualized his message when he entered into marriage and family relationships that symbolized the love of Yahweh (Hos 1-3).[18]

Contextualization is also seen in the forms of speech chosen by Amos. These were drawn from the literary conventions of his day. For example the form of a funeral dirge was used to announce the coming doom of Israel (Amos 5:1-2). "Woe sayings" were composed to express the certainty of this coming doom—it was as if Israel was already dead (Amos 5:7,18; 6:1). Priestly forms were used to mimic and attack the empty ritual observances (Amos 4:4f; 5:4, 21-24). Amos also used riddles, comparisons, proverbs, folk wisdom, and images from contemporary agriculture.[19] This is the positive side of contextualization by the biblical prophets that goes along with the negative side ("prophetic contextualization") which was discussed in the section "The Prophetic Voice in the Bible."

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[17]Cf. Dean S. Gilliland, in Charles Van Engen, *et al* (eds.), *The Good News of the Kingdom: Mission Theology for the Third Millennium* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis, 1993), 108, "Contextualization is a faulted discipline if it simply 'fits' the situation and does not prophetically seek to change what is less than biblical." This is a reference to Dana Robert's article in the same volume, "Revisioning the Women's Missionary Movement," where she says, "Missiologists need to put women's issues at the top of the agenda in ongoing discussions of the theories of contextualization" (p. 115).

[18]Arthur F. Glasser, "Old Testament Contextualization: Revelation and Its Environment," in Dean S. Gilliland (ed), *The Word Among Us: Contextualizing Theology for Mission Today* (Dallas, Texas: Word, 1989), 42.

[19]James L. Mays, *Amos* (Old Testament Library; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1969), 5-6.

Prophetic contextualization as applied to contemporary culture can be found in current literature.[20] Walter Brueggemann, for example, is an eminent Old Testament scholar who has been very influential in his application of Old Testament study to current structures in the American context. In his book *Prophetic Imagination* he claims that the "task of prophetic ministry is to nurture, nourish, and evoke a consciousness and perception of the dominant culture around us."[21] As the prophets of ancient Israel evaluated and criticized the culture that had engulfed the nation, so ministers today must be prophetic in their understanding of contemporary culture and how they help their congregations to respond to it.

Brueggemann considers the American church to be so enculturated by consumerism that it has little power to believe or to act. He asserts that prophetic ministry must promote criticism and dismantling of the dominant consciousness. Along with this goes the positive side which is the energizing of communities by promising another time toward which the community of faith moves. There is a possible alternative community which is not dominated by the prevailing systems of injustice. Moses is the prophetic model of this approach. He evoked a consciousness which was alternative to Pharaoh's politics of oppression and exploitation. Prophetic criticism is not primarily

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[20]See also Edward Cell (ed.), *Religion and Contemporary Western Culture: Selected Readings* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1967); William J. Larkin, Jr., *Culture and Biblical Hermeneutics: Interpreting and Applying the Authoritative Word in a Relativistic Age* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker, 1988); Lesslie Newbigin, *Foolishness to the Greeks: The Gospel and Western Culture* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1986); H. Richard Neibuhr, *Christ and Culture* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1951); Mark A. Noll, Nathan O. Hatch, and George M. Marsden, *The Search for Christian America* (Westchester, Illinois: Crossway, 1983); Marsha G. Witten, *All Is Forgiven: The Secular Message in American Protestantism* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University, 1993).

[21]Walter Brueggemann, *The Prophetic Imagination* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1978), 13.

destructive or negative ("does not consist of spectacu-lar acts of social crusading or of abrasive measures of indignation"[22]) but begins in the capacity to grieve because things are not right. Prophetic energizing involves stepping out into the unknown, recognizing that God is for us, and appropriating the freedom of God by singing the doxology (which converts fear to energy). God is not contained by the empire.[23] This empire was, for Moses, the system ruled by Pharaoh. Today it is whatever social system is diminishing freedom by promoting a politics of injustice (consumerism in the American context).

Other works by Brueggemann have drawn similar analyses from every part of the Old Testament. The prophets and the Old Testament as a whole have a revolutionary, counter-cultural flavor. Brueggemann's work provides an excellent model for students from Asia and the Pacific to study biblical literature carefully and apply it to their own contexts—dismantling and energizing without succumbing to the cultural forces of domestication.

Another Old Testament scholar exercises his prophetic voice in the Asian context. Wonsuk Ma is a Korean missionary who teaches at Asia Pacific Theological Seminary in the Philippines.[24] In a recent issue of *Journal of Asian Mission*, of which he is the editor, Ma addresses nine Asian cultural traits which challenge the effectiveness of Asian missionaries. These traits are "missionary-receiving mentality," "historical baggage," "we don't have the stuff," "can-do spirit," "micro vision," "short-term approach," "neo-colonial psychology," "nationalism," and "not learning from history."[25]

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[22]Brueggemann, *Prophetic Imagination*, 110.

[23]Ibid., 11, 13, 15f., 23, 27.

[24]I took Ma's class on Hosea in 1991.

[25]Wonsuk Ma, "Mission: Nine Hurdles for Asian Churches," *Journal of Asian Mission* 2:1 (March, 2000): 103-24. http://www.apts.edu/jam.

Ma's approach includes promoting solid mission education for missionaries and pastors. This would involve biblical, theological, and historical perspectives of mission, and no doubt a development of skills in analyzing culture. He also promotes a concept of Christian community which transcends that of national allegiance. He writes, "Christians must demonstrate a kingdom perspective. Our identity with God and with fellow Christians should precede that of our earthly nation."[26] Ma also speaks out against a mechanistic view of applying church growth theory. This is based on his observation that church growth in Korea slowed down in the 1990s despite the continuing presence of the factors considered to lead to church growth. He writes, "The first thing Asian missionaries and churches need to have is humility. Church growth, economic growth and subsequent missionary movement should not be understood as a trophy of hard and brilliant work, but as God-given grace and opportunity."[27] In true prophetic spirit, Ma does not intend his evaluation to be destructive, but to point out areas for positive progress and change.

It is in the tradition of prophetic Old Testament scholars such as Brueggemann and Ma that APNTS must prepare its students. These kinds of prophets must be found at APNTS and produced by APNTS. The prophetic voice and vision must characterize its Old Testament studies so that graduates will have a ministry that is both faithful to God's revelation and relevant to their cultures. Old Testament study loses its importance when it becomes merely an academic pursuit that carefully analyzes the short-fall of the Israelites. It must examine, just as carefully, the involvement in empty ritual and syncretism of ourselves, those who are studying and teaching.

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[26]Ibid., 107, 110.

[27]Ibid., 115.

The prophets found that applying holiness in their contexts was not a popular task, and it is no more popular today. Modern prophets must resist the forces of domestication which come in a variety of forms. Five major forms of domestication are acceptance, distraction, disengagement, payment, and marginalizing or persecuting.

Acceptance is a very subtle form of domestication. It occurs when prophets are so much a product of their cultural environment that they accept the cultural categories without realizing that aspects of that culture are contrary to the biblical standard of holiness. Kean points out that in the Middle Ages, culture was considered to be equivalent to Christianity to the point that it was almost impossible to identify aspects of culture as non-Christian.[28]

Perhaps the best example of this in modern times is prosperity doctrine. The pursuit of wealth is so fundamental for Western culture that it is not surprising that there would be a movement legitimizing it. Kenneth Copeland views prosperity as the result of Jesus' death. He writes, "Prosperity is yours! It is not something you have to strive to work toward. *You Have A Title Deed to Prosperity*. Jesus bought and paid for your prosperity just like He bought and paid for your healing and your salvation."[29] Os Guinness decries a focus on God's abundance: "God's got it, I can have it, and by faith I'm going to get it."[30] These views are not true to Christian theology because they are self-centered and use God as a source for serving one's own self-

[28]Charles Kean, in Edward Cell (ed), *Religion and Contemporary Western Culture: Selected Readings* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1967), 85.

[29]Quoted by Stephen D. Eyre, *Defeating the Dragons of the World: Resisting the Seduction of False Values* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity, 1987), 26.

[30]Os Guinness, *The Gravedigger File* (Downers Grove, Illinois: Inter-Varsity Press, 1983).

interests. The focus is on control of God. Christianity, however, is essentially a religion of *submission* to God.

Prosperity doctrine arises not only from accommodation to Western culture. Ki Young Hong has identified Shamanistic forms in Korean churches. He seems to be referring to form when he writes, "I do not think that Shamanism is good or bad because it is a kind of tribal religion in Korea just as I do not think that Islam is good or bad."[31] Hong then suggests that Christianity should use Shamanistic forms to communicate the gospel. One of these "forms" which Korean churches have employed, however, is an emphasis on material blessings.[32] This is not really only a *form* of Shamanism, but is apparently part of the *content* of Shamanism. This content happens to be contrary to Christian theology, as noted above.

Ironically even the definition of what is prophetic is influenced by culture. Petersen has observed that in eighteenth century Germany, Old Testament prophets were understood to be romanticists who expressed the spirit of natural poetry. In the rationalist setting of nineteenth century England and Holland, the prophets were understood as sober rationalists who expressed strict moralisms. Then in the rebellious climate of the 1960s in the United States of America, the prophets were often understood as counter-cultural figures.[33] It was the culture of the interpreter which influenced the interpretation of Old Testament prophets. We have a tendency to mold even prophecy into our own image.

Blind acceptance of culture leads to a domestication of the prophetic voice because the culture can no longer be analyzed. It has

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[31]Ki Young Hong, "Planting an Indigenous Nazarene Church in Korea as a Basis for Church Growth," *The Mediator* 1:1 (January, 1996), 46.

[32]Ibid., 47.

[33]David L. Petersen (ed), *Prophecy in Israel* (Issues in Religion and Theology 10; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), 1.

already been accepted. Christians, however, should not be conformed to the world and its culture, but transformed with a new way of thinking (Rom 12:1-2).

A second form of the domestication of prophecy may be termed "distraction." This form of domestication involves focusing on an aspect of prophecy which does not require repentance or analysis of culture. Two manifestations of this form of domestication are a focus on externals and a focus on the prediction element of prophecy. Holiness is central to the prophetic message and while holiness is primarily a matter of the heart, it is evidenced externally. An over-emphasis on external matters can, however, lead to legalism and a neglect of the more important internal nature of holiness. This seems to be a tendency in former Nazarene pastor W.L. King's publication, *The Voice of the Nazarene*.[34] In one issue of this periodical a photograph of "real holiness folk" was included to provide evidence that such a phenomenon still exists. The evidence? The men in the photo did not wear neck ties.

This legalistic focus on externals was a major issue in the early days of Nazarene missions in the Philippines. Pioneer missionary Joseph Pitts led the Nazarenes in this kind of "purity." Women were forbidden to cut their hair or to wear makeup or jewelry including wedding rings. So strong was the distraction of this issue that a schism resulted (as had already occurred in the United States with the formation of the Bible Missionary Church following the 1956 Nazarene General Assembly). Ironically, Pitts saw his approach as being prophetic against an accommodation of the holiness lifestyle to culture.[35]

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[34]The Voice of the Nazarene, Inc., 6 Conklin Road, Washington, PA 15301, USA.

[35]Floyd T. Cunningham, *Holiness Abroad: Leadership in Nazarene Missions in Asia* (Taytay, Philippines: Asia Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary, n.d.), 350f.

Another form of distraction can be found in focusing on the prediction aspect of biblical prophecy. The current interest in prophecy is almost feverish, especially perhaps with the turning of a new millennium. But this very interest in prophecy can amount to a domestication of prophecy when the focus is exclusively on prediction at the expense of the prophetic call to repentance and avoidance of syncretism. The predictive element of Old Testament prophecy was always subordinate to the preaching element. Focusing on inconclusive speculation regarding future events is a distraction from the central message of the prophets: holiness.

A third form of domestication is disengagement. This might be characterized as "leaving things the way you found them." Many people have left the church altogether because their "prophetic" analysis led to the conclusion that they can be better Christians outside the church (a contradiction). This is what Brueggemann calls "destructive autonomy."[36] At times there seems to have been almost a movement of people claiming that God has called them out of the church. Keith Martinelli represents this viewpoint. He makes a scathing criticism of Christians whom he considers to be mostly "spoiled brats" with heretical theology, led mostly by so-called spiritual leaders who are really satan coming as an angel of light. Martinelli offers his reasons why he does not attend any church: after searching for five years he has not found a truly Christian church.[37] Martinelli has allowed his prophetic voice to be domesticated by disengaging from the church. He has heeded the instructions given to Amos: do not prophesy (Amos 2:12). When this situation is widespread, there is not much prophecy in the land (1 Sam 3:1).

The promise of payment, power, or position can be a domesticating influence upon the prophetic voice. A prophet is tempted to think

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[36]Walter Brueggemann, *Interpretation and Obedience: From Faithful Reading to Faithful Living* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991), 147.

[37]http://www.GodsPeople.com/members/keith.htm [no longer active].

twice when one of these elements is under threat. This is why the wild John the Baptist type of prophet is in a unique position to prophesy: he or she has nothing to lose—neither salary nor position. This type of domestication is evidenced in the following advice given to speakers on radio and television in New York City:

> Subject matter should project love, joy, courage, hope, faith, trust in God, good will. Generally avoid condemnation, criticism, controversy. In a very real sense we are selling religion, the good news of the Gospel. Therefore admonitions and training of Christians on cross-bearing, forsaking all else, sacrifices, and service usually cause the average listener to turn the dial. . . . As apostles, can we not extend an invitation in effect: "Come and enjoy our privileges, meet good friends, see what God can do for you!"[38]

To this way of thinking, the danger of listeners "turning the dial" is of more importance than the danger of having nothing significant to say to them. Those who are in the business of "selling religion" have already sold out to domestication of the prophetic voice.

The fifth form of domesticating the prophets is marginalizing or persecution. The impact of a prophetic voice can be reduced simply by asserting that such a person is not really to be taken seriously. The prophetic analysis is said to be marginal or not "mainstream." This form of domestication was attempted on Elijah when King Ahab labeled him "the troubler of Israel" (1 Kgs 18:17). Isaiah was also accused of conspiracy, but God reminded him not to call conspiracy what these people call conspiracy (Isa 8:12).

Persecution is also an attempt at domestication. Jesus pronounced a special blessing for those who suffer this fate: "God will bless you when others hate you and won't have anything to do with you. God will bless you when people insult you and say cruel things about you, all because you are a follower of the Son of Man. Long

[38]McNeill, 78.

ago your own people did these same things to the prophets. So when this happens to you, be happy and jump for joy! You will have a great reward in heaven" (Luke 6:22f. CEV).

Jeremiah was repeatedly persecuted for his prophetic voice. These attempts to silence him played very heavily on his emotions. He was thrown in an empty cistern, plotted against (11-12), placed in stocks (19-20), and imprisoned (37-38). The king even burned his scroll (36). His emotional response to these injustices and to the apostasy of his people led to his current designation as "the weeping prophet." Yet he stood firm in his resolve to speak the word of God. Indeed he tried to keep silent but he could not because God's word was like a fire in his bones (20:9).

Marginalizing and persecution can be very effective in domesticating the prophetic voice. The message is very direct, strong, and personal and the prophet is tempted to succumb. Like all forces of domestication, however, it must be resisted.

The Old Testament prophets who stood firm, stand in stark contrast to those who gave in to the forces of domestication (the false prophets). The true prophets continued to preach their messages from God even when it cost them all popularity and sometimes their lives. The modern prophet must do the same. Many of these forces of domestication are very subtle and so it is necessary for prophets to be careful students of the Word and of culture. Once forces of domestication are recognized, courage must be "screwed to the sticking point" to resist these forces and to act and speak in prayerful obedience to God.

IV. Prophetic Vision in Contemporary Ministry

The content of the biblical prophetic vision is holiness. This relational category must also be the foundation of the prophetic vision in contemporary ministry. In the pastoral setting, the minister must be aware of the common need to earn the right to be prophetic.

While conscious of this, Wesleyan prophets would do well to emphasis the categories of prevenient grace and the means of grace. A personal application of holiness must come first, however, for Wesleyan prophets.

A personal experience of God's sanctifying power would be the first necessity for applying the prophetic vision of holiness to the church. There is an emptiness in a proclamation of holiness that comes from a heart that has not yet fully surrendered to God. In this posture of submission, the key action is prayer. It is only in communion with God that we are able to reflect his holiness. The result of prayer is the power to perceive the world differently; to perceive it according to the reality of God's rule.[39] This new mode of perception amounts to a new way of thinking (Rom 12:2) and also a transformation of the Christian's social relationships with others.[40] It is a mode that involves a certain detachment from one's own culture (as well as the culture where ministry is taking place). It does not mean a retreat from the world and its people, or a rejection of contextualization, but a recognition that there is no Christian system in this world. Jesus said that his kingdom is not of this world.

This new way of thinking will require discernment. Prophets must develop skills for analyzing culture and avail themselves of resources which attempt to do so. Tools such as Paul Borthwick's "values check" would be helpful in this regard. In this simple questionnaire Borthwick suggests an analysis of one's priorities for time and money, lifestyle, sense of needs, Christian involvement, and for activity which has a lasting impact.[41] One New England preacher suggested

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[39]Brueggemann, *Interpretation and Obedience*, 35.

[40]Sherwood Lingenfelter, *Transforming Culture: A Challenge for Christian Mission* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker, 1992), 19.

[41]Paul Borthwick, *A Mind for Missions: Ten Ways to Build Your World Vision* (Navpress, 1987), 141-42.

analyzing one's date book and check book log to see if behavior actually lines up with personal values.

There are no objective criteria for documenting a transformed mind. With the complexity of cultural involvement, reflection on one's own participation in the practices of the world will occasion the need for repentance. Since there is no possible or desirable escape from all the influences of the world, a continuing attitude of humility and repentance is appropriate for today's prophet.

In ministry application of the prophetic voice, it can be helpful to look for God's hand already at work in the culture (prevenient grace), and also to encourage the appropriation of God's grace through the means of grace. This will set the stage for developing a community of faith which is bilingual (speaks the language of the church and the culture). But often the prophetic voice must first earn the right to be prophetic.

Not every audience welcomes a message of change. This was usually the experience of the biblical prophets as well as of prophetic voices today. Lyle B. Pointer identifies three stages on the way to becoming a prophetic pastor: Priest, Pastor, Prophet.[42] The newly arrived pastor is pastor in name, but not in role. He or she has not yet earned the confidence of the people, and can function effectively only at the priestly level. That is, the new pastor will be permitted to perform ritual functions such as weddings, funerals, baby dedications, baptisms, prayers, and preaching. If these functions are performed well, and a strong relationship is developing, the congregation may permit him/her to become their pastor. This move from priest to pastor is paved through personal (or perceived) relationships. These prove the pastor's love and gain the congregation's acceptance.[43]

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[42]Lyle B. Pointer, "Pastor as Leader," in "Fashioning Leadership Authority for Mission Engagement." unpublished paper.

[43]Pointer, 4f. Cf. McNeill, 43.

To become an agent of change in the church, the pastor must move to the position of leader or prophet. This will allow his/her suggestions for change to be accepted and implemented. It is only after a sufficient period of acceptance in the "pastor" role that this prophetic role can be attained.[44] This period allows relationships and trust to develop further until the prophetic voice of the pastor is accepted and taken very seriously by the congregation.

Pointer gives two examples of prophetic activity: (1) a prophetic pastor will risk confrontation (in love) with the purpose of helping people break out of sinful ways into righteous living; (2) set sociological groupings will be challenged with the purpose of encouraging existing members to accept new people. Throughout such challenges to the *status quo*, the pastor's continued effectiveness as prophet must be maintained through careful fostering of relationships and adequate evaluation of the climate of acceptance.[45] The pastor has had time to learn about and feel with his or her congregation.

There is a fine line between earning the right to be prophetic and succumbing to the forces of domestication. Motives and attitudes must be examined and the forces of domestication must be recognized. Prophets must have a thorough knowledge of their context: both the church and the culture.

The itinerant evangelist, in a sense, stands outside this need to earn the right to be prophetic. While the evangelist does not have the opportunity of building a long-term relationship with his or her audience, there is also less danger that prophetic preaching will be damaging to the relationship. Thus evangelists have a special place in the life of the church because they can speak prophetically with a greater boldness.

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[44]Pointer, 6.

[45]Ibid., 7.

The prophetic voice in ministry must look for evidence of prevenient grace in the host culture. John Wesley considered every commendable human action or virtue to be possible only by the grace of God. This grace is, however, extended to all humanity even to those who have not experienced saving grace. Thus it is called prevenient grace (it comes before salvation). These virtues, by the grace of God, are present in every culture, although the knowledge of moral law is usually vague and "tangled in cultural diversity." Wesley's understanding of prevenient grace, therefore, led him to rule out a distinction between "secular" and "sacred" forms of achieving God's purposes.[46]

It is the task of the prophet to analyze culture and to identify areas where God is already at work, that is, where God's prevenient grace is present. Thus God's initiative can be built upon for furthering his kingdom, rather than trying to begin our own framework. This is closely related to contextualization. The prophetic voice must look for what is right about culture as well as what is contrary to Christian values. The prophetic work is not fundamentally negative, but points toward the positive result of holiness, and builds on the activity of God which is already present in the world.

McNeill makes a similar point when he distinguishes between destroying basic social forms and the appropriate prophetic judging of those forms by their human consequences. So, for example, the Old Testament prophets were not against monarchy, but against the degrading effects it produced on the people. Likewise, the prophets were not against private ownership but against the heartless accumulation of property (Isa 5:8).[47]

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[46]Randy L. Maddox, *Responsible Grace* (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 1994), 84, 99, 245.

[47]McNeill, 35-39.

Ben Johnson applies his understanding of prevenient grace to personal evangelism. In his book, *Speaking of God*, he advocates a method of personal evangelism which begins by looking for an existing awareness of God in those outside the church. This involves identifying the activity of the Holy Spirit in their personal histories. He writes, "To help a person become conscious of Christ and to respond to that person is, after all, what evangelism is all about."[48]

Wesleyan prophets should also be familiar with the "means of grace" and would use these to help develop a counter-cultural sensitivity in those under their ministry. For Wesley these means of grace included those practiced by his Anglican church: fasting, prayer, Eucharist, baptism, and devotional readings. He introduced additional means of grace into Methodism: class meetings, love feasts, and special rules of holy living.[49] Even through these means, Wesley considered the Holy Spirit's presence to be immediately effective. They are the key to spiritual growth.

The Old Testament prophets spoke against empty ritualistic observance in worship. A sound appreciation for the means of grace can help to reduce this problem in contemporary churches. The modern prophet has an opportunity to help his or her people understand the significance of these means of grace for meaningful worship, spiritual growth, and purity from the influences of worldly culture.

The means of grace are counter-cultural in both form and content. They are counter-cultural in form because they involve submission, symbolized in acts such as kneeling; and they involve accountability in community. Both submission and community are not often valued by Western culture which values instead independ-

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[48]Ben Campbell Johnson, *Speaking of God: Evangelism as Initial Spiritual Guidance* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1991), 100.

[49]Maddox, 192.

ence and autonomy. The means of grace are counter-cultural in content because they make ample use of the Bible which is a counter-cultural document; and because we sing about suffering and hope in a world that values comfort but lives in despair.

The counter-cultural form and content of the means of grace must be emphasized by the prophetic voice in ministry. They can be used to foster cultural discernment both in regard to the world, and in the church, and in one's own life. As Randy Maddox puts it, what is required is "a persistent deepening of our awareness of the deceptive motivations and prejudices remaining in our life, because co-operant healing entails some discernment of that which still needs to be healed."[50]

Finding God's prevenient grace at work in culture and appropriating the means of grace in counter-cultural ways amounts to two poles of a paradox: Christians are to be in the world but not of the world. They are also to be in the church and to draw strength and growth in holiness through this community. These two poles are developed by Brueggemann in terms of creating a bilingual community. The metaphor comes from the encounter of the Israelites with the Assyrian messengers during the siege of Jerusalem. Jerusalem was locked up tight and the conversation was conducted while the Israelites stood on the wall and shouted down to the Assyrians. There was an argument over which language to use in the negotiation: Hebrew or Aramaic (the language of the Assyrians). The community of faith knew the language of those outside the wall (Aramaic). They were willing to communicate. But they had their own language for exclusive use inside the wall (Hebrew).[51]

By way of application to contemporary ministry, the prophetic voice of the pastor must foster in the church a community which is

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[50]Ibid., 202.

[51]Brueggemann, *Interpretation and Obedience*, 41-43. Cf. 2 Kgs 18-19.

bilingual. This community should speak the language of those in the world: it should know the culture and the categories and be able to connect; it should be able to see prevenient grace at work in the host culture. But the same community should have a different language inside the church. This is the language of holiness which understands what makes it different from the world and prevents acceptance of the values of the world (domestication). This is the language that is sung and heard and read and acted out in the means of grace. This is the language of prayer, worship, and ethical reflection.[52] The prophetic voice must call the church to speak this language in its pure form, without borrowing values from the host culture.

Conclusion: Prophetic Vision at Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary

The prophets of today are the pastors, preachers, evangelists, singers, writers, and teachers. Like Amos, Hosea, Micah, and Isaiah they are called to speak out about the accommodation to culture which they see in the church community which calls itself the people of God. Some have been domesticated and are preaching on "safe" topics. But others are as embarrassing as John the Baptist ever was. Even their diet is different from what the advertisers would prescribe. They are agents for change as spokespeople of God. They are champions of justice and of faithfulness to God. They have repented for their own involvement in the structures of injustice. They live in daily repentance for their own involvement when there is no obvious way to abstain from the complex structures of injustice.[53] They focus on their divine commission and on storing up treasures in heaven. They will not be domesticated.

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[52]Ibid., 64.

[53]Brueggemann, *Prophetic Imagination*, 112, "No prophet has ever borne an unconflicted message, even until Jesus (cf. Mark 14:36)."

This is my vision for APNTS. The Old Testament department should lead the way in training students to criticize and dismantle the empty ritual and syncretism where they serve. It should train students to energize their people by learning to sing a doxology of praise to God which imagines a new kind of community. This community will be one which stands apart from the non-Christian aspects of the host culture while always seeking ways to reach the people in that culture. To do this APNTS will need professors who are willing to stand back from their own cultures and become aware of the ways in which those cultures have lured Christianity away from its vision of holiness; professors who will look into their own lives and realize that they are inextricably entwined with structures of injustice in their cultures; professors who will dare to model servanthood and engage in menial tasks. To be this kind of school, APNTS must take a stand against the forces of culture which would compromise its essential mission. APNTS will have to be willing to hear the prophetic voice even when it is directed against itself. APNTS must become a community where truth can be told.[54]

A firm grounding in biblical truth is essential for training APNTS graduates to be prophetic. The Old Testament prophets did not create something new, but they called the people to be faithful once again to their "first love." The Word of God must be the starting point for contextualization. As Lingenfelter writes, "The key to the power of the gospel for transforming culture is an unwavering commitment to the Word of God."[55] The center of the Old Testament prophetic vision was holiness. As a Wesleyan school, APNTS must prepare students adequately in biblical, theological, and experi-

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[54]Walter Brueggemann, "Foundational Account of Israel's Faith," "Decisive Mutation of Israel's Faith," "Failed Account of Israel's Faith," Three lectures on the Psalms delivered at Nazarene Theological Seminary, Kansas City, MO, February 26-27, 1998.

[55]Lingenfelter, *Transforming Culture*, 212.

ential holiness. Old Testament theology must deal with holiness in depth, and exegesis courses must not fail to take account of holiness in whatever biblical books are being studied.

A foundational understanding of holiness leads naturally then to the necessity for intentional reflection on culture as well as identifying accommodation to culture within the church. Missiological tools are needed for this task. Analysis of Old Testament culture in biblical studies courses will set the stage for the development of these skills in missiological courses. Because ethnocentrism and cultural blindness are so prevalent,[56] APNTS must be intentional about training its graduates to be "students of culture."[57] The Old Testament prophets approached their calling in this way and so were able to apply holiness to their cultural settings.

A recent issue of *Holiness Today* is devoted to examples of how holiness applies in the whole variety of cultures. Franklin Cook's editorial describes the bridge building that can result from such a common theological conviction.[58] If APNTS is to "bridge cultures for Christ" it must accomplish this task through a message of holiness which is made relevant but never compromised. Terry Read's article suggests a metaphor for this task: "Bring the plant, not the soil." In this model culturally relevant forms of theological education, evangelism methods, church construction, and of new projects and ministries must be developed.[59]

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[56]Ibid., 23.

[57]Cf. Rick Kalal, "We've Got Trouble," *Christian Education Journal* (Spring, 1999): 55, "while seminary graduates excelled in exegeting scripture, they lacked ability to exegete culture," quoted by Joven Laroya, "Church Leaders: Theologians and Teachers," *The Mediator* 2:1 (2000), 37.

[58]R. Franklin Cook, "To the Reader," *Holiness Today* (August, 2000).

[59]Terry Read, "Bring the Plant, not the Soil," *Holiness Today* (August, 2000), 36f.

APNTS prophets participating in this task must resist attempts of domestication. There must be an application of prophetic ministry on a personal level and on the level of ministry. Personal application is an important starting point (and continuing concern) because we have a tendency to see the speck in the eyes of others without noticing the log in our own eyes. Andrew Walls uses the metaphor of a saw to express this: "we draw the teeth of the Scriptures so that they will not bite *us*, while still hoping that they will bite other people."[60]

Prophetic vision has a negative aspect in the analysis of what the church is doing wrong in its accommodation to culture. But a prophetic ministry is not essentially negative. As the biblical prophets were concerned to bring people back to a right relationship with God, so prophetic ministry today has a vision for holiness and a vision for helping people see how Christianity is radically counter-cultural, for helping them appreciate worship and the means of grace for their profoundly counter-cultural nature, and for leading them in worship (form and content) that continues to counter culture, resisting a domestication.

Effective Wesleyan theological education must produce prophetic graduates. As Brueggemann says, "the purpose of theological education is . . . *to reflect critically on the church's call to obedient mission*."[61] APNTS students will be challenged to renew this task in their varied contexts of ministry. APNTS cannot possibly give them all the content of their prophetic voice, but it must give them the tools and the imagination and the courage to be prophetic and to resist domestication. The Old Testament department has an important role in this task.

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[60]Andrew F. Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission of Faith* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1996), 54.

[61]Brueggemann, *Interpretation and Obedience*, 100.

Where can we find a school that will stand firmly and without apology in the Wesleyan tradition and train its students to be prophetic? Where can we find professors who will take up this task and model the much needed prophetic voice and vision? What students will stand apart from the pressures of conformity and speak holiness to empty rituals of worship and to the injustice and numbness where they live? The call of God continues to go out: "Who will go for me and whom shall I send?" Here am I Lord, send me.

IN SEARCH OF WISDOM AND KNOWLEDGE

Stanley Clark

An Induction Address delivered on February 27, 2001

It was Sunday morning—time for Sunday school in the local church. Faithful teachers, who had volunteered their time every Sunday morning for many years, moved toward their classrooms and greeted their students with sincere interest and friendly words. Newcomers were welcomed, and inquiry was made about regular class members who were absent that day. Soon it was time to start the lesson, and the teachers stood before their classes.

In the children's department, the classes began with choruses, games and refreshments. These activities always seemed to take longer than the teachers had planned for. There never seemed to be enough time to really finish the Bible story or practice the memory verse, but the children had come to expect something to eat. In the youth class, the teacher began by asking about the result of last night's basketball game in their community. There was a lot to discuss. Several class members were on the local team, and it had been a close game, with several interesting moments that invited comment. The materials provided for the young people were good, but it was hard to find time to get through them all. Omitting the Scripture reading did allow a little more time to get through the lesson outline.

Across the hall, the young married people began to talk about their upcoming class party. It was difficult to decide where to go and what to do and which evening was best and what time to start. Their

discussion continued. Everyone, including the teacher, had somehow put off lesson preparation until Saturday night, so it was all right to prolong the preliminaries a little bit this time. Downstairs, the teacher of the middle adults started by commenting on the shortcomings of the local restaurant where several in the class had eaten recently. An animated discussion of all the local restaurants was soon in progress. It was agreed that some local eating places were no longer up to par. In the class for senior adults, the teacher began as usual by reminiscing about the good old days when things were done differently and much better. The students spoke in agreement and the commentary continued. In a few minutes, the teacher referred the class to the three-point outline carefully written on the chalkboard, and read the Scripture. But for the rest of the class, the comments did not include any further reference to the Scripture or to the outline before them.

Are we describing here a typical Sunday school? We hope not. It is difficult to be critical of an institution as beneficial as the Sunday school. Our Sunday schools and our Sunday school teachers have contributed immensely to the nurture and growth of Christian believers in our churches. The description of the Sunday school given here is a composite of my personal experiences in Sunday school classes over many years, in visits to many different local churches. I have experienced all of the situations described above, but not in one single church. In many of the Sunday school classes I have visited, God's Word was read, explained and commented on by both teacher and students in a way that encouraged me and provided me with rich spiritual food. But on too many other occasions, I have attended classes that included little or no exposition of the Scriptures. Sometimes helpful comments were made, but God's Word was not opened to us, or at best only a few moments of class time was spent actually looking at biblical content.

As Sunday school teachers and Christian educators, where should we look for the content of the instruction we give to our new converts

and our maturing believers? What is the foundation for our Christian education curriculum? How should we teach in order to teach effectively? A look at current models of teaching (Joyce & Weil, 1996) and the latest innovations in the field of secular education reveals a wide range of possibilities. In the world of education, we find many instructional philosophies (Henderson, 1983), each claiming to be the best prescription for effective learning. Each school of thought has some merit, and each is supported by research data. What about Christian education? What is the best way to educate Christians in order to prepare them for Christian service and enable them to live victorious Christian lives, and most of all, what do we need to teach them? What should be the primary content of our instruction?

There are any number of educational theories in our world today which may lead us to various kinds of educational programs for our churches, different methodologies in our Sunday School classrooms, and numerous ways of approaching the task of Christian education. It is essential to be guided by biblical truth as we face the undertaking at hand. Christian educators in the past have looked to God's Word for guidance in the field of Christian education, and we must continue to do so today. In the letter of Paul to the "holy and faithful brothers in Christ at Colosse," he expresses his desire for those Christians, who are already walking with Christ, to

> be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (Col 2:2, 3 NIV).

In the world of secular education, reality is found for some in the physical world around us. Others believe we construct our own reality in our minds. The understanding that Scripture is a revelation of reality gives direction to Christian education (Richards, 1982), and in Paul's words (Col 2:17), reality is only truly found in Christ. It is in Christ that we have redemption and forgiveness of sins (Col 1:14), and as Pazmiño (1995) suggests in his comments related to this passage of

Scripture, it is in Christ that Christians must center their education, and it is in Christ that integration and wholeness in education can be found. As Pazmiño (1995) says, "It is essential that the Christocentric character of Christian education be recognized and affirmed at its roots. Christ himself is at the center of all of life from a Christian world and life view" (p. 37). Truth about Jesus Christ comes to us by means of God's revelation in the Bible. Scripture enlightens us and helps us understand more about Christ (Hemphill & Jones, 1989), and the life of Christ in turn helps us to understand more about Scripture.

God's Word: Our Source of Knowledge

So where do we find our knowledge of reality in Christ, and where do we search for the truth we need as Christian educators? There is a Philippine animal folk tale about a foolish and vain hen that borrowed an expensive ruby necklace from her friend the hawk. The careless hen lost the necklace in the barnyard and when the hawk returned to reclaim it, it was gone. The angry hawk threatened the hen and carried off one of her chicks. The frightened hen gathered the rest of her children under her wings, and they all began searching for the lost necklace in the barnyard. And so to this day you can see the hen and her chicks, their heads to the ground, looking for the lost necklace. Scratch, scratch . . . scratch, scratch . . . day in and day out. They will never stop until they find the lost rubies. They search for treasures in the dirt of the barnyard. They search for rubies, but they only collect bugs and insects, or sticks and stones, in the debris and rubbish of the barnyard.

As Christian educators, are we searching for treasures of wisdom and knowledge in the right place? Where does our lesson content come from? What are the essential elements of our Christian education curriculum? Are we spending our time in worthwhile activities? We may expend hours in preparation for Sunday school classes and Bible studies, but are we truly offering our students the treasures of God's Word? And does our teaching methodology contribute to our

students' innate ability for learning? Lesson content and teaching methodology are both important issues to consider. The focus of this paper will be the issue of the source of our lesson content and material, the basis for curriculum in the educational programs of our churches.

If we are to find our treasures in God's Word, then we should begin with a look at biblical history. As the nation of Israel began its existence, Moses encouraged them to teach their families to remember that God had always been active in the lives of their people. Where would they find the content of their instruction? It was to be found, as we see in Deuteronomy 6:1, 2, 4-9, in

> the commands, decrees and laws the Lord your God directed me to teach you to observe in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to possess, so that you, your children and their children after them may fear the Lord your God as long as you live by keeping all his decrees and commands that I give you, and so that you may enjoy long life.
>
> Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates (NIV).

In Deuteronomy 31:9-13, Moses again emphasizes the source of instruction as we see that he "wrote down this law and gave it to the priests, the sons of Levi, who carried the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and to all the elders of Israel." At the end of every seven years, the law was to be read to them in solemn assembly. They were to "follow carefully all the words of the law."

As Pazmiño (1988) suggests in his comments on these passages,

> God is the author and discloser of all truth, and both teachers and students stand under this truth. God calls teachers and students to understand, grow in, and obey God's revealed Word (p. 19).
>
> God's Law is a trust, a heritage that is to be shared not only with adults but also with children and youth in the community of faith . . . God's Word provides the essential content for teaching . . . (It) is to be passed on from generation to generation with the intent of fostering a response of faithfulness on the part of the hearers (p. 23).

As we move through Jewish history to the time of the monarchy, we find continued exhortation to attend to God's written word. Psalm 78 exhorts God's people to teach their children the statutes and laws which God had given them, so that "the next generation would know them, even the children yet to be born, and they in turn would tell their children. Then they would put their trust in God and would not forget his deeds but would keep his commands" (vs. 6, 7). Wisdom and understanding come from God's revelation to his people through his written word.

For the Jews, neglect of instruction in God's word led first to apostasy and later to their punishment by means of the Babylonian captivity. After the exiles returned to their homeland, Ezra read the Law to the people. Through instruction from God's word, the Israelites came again to a place of obedience to God's will for their nation. So wisdom comes from God, who has revealed it in the written word. Any wisdom inconsistent with God's revelation through his Word cannot be trusted. Christian educators must base all knowledge and instruction on that revelation.

As we move into the time of the New Testament, Jesus' disciples are once again urged to educate the followers of their Lord. In this new setting, the disciples' purpose and focus of instruction must be to move those followers toward obedience of Christ's commands. This will not be easy to accomplish, but we have Jesus' personal assurance

in Matthew 28: 18-20 that his continuing presence and authority will enable us to teach obedience to his spoken word, the word which has been transmitted to us in writing by the authors of the New Testament. Pazmiño (1988) suggests in this context "the New Testament model for Christian teaching . . . centers upon the shared Christian vision, mission, and memory, as the followers of Jesus Christ seek to be faithful to God's calling in the world" (p. 31).

Luke also provides us with insights into Jesus' teaching methods, as he relates the story of Jesus' encounter with two disciples on the road to Emmaus. Of particular interest for us here is the fact that the content of Jesus' teaching on that occasion was based on "what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself" (Luke 24:27). The basis for the disciples' new understanding of Jesus' death and resurrection was to come from the written word of God.

Henderson (1983) points out that Jesus related Scripture to life. He employed existing life situations, posed hypothetical situations, or constructed cases for the working out of scriptural principles. The Word of God in practical application was his basic tool for the development of godly qualities in those he taught. He taught his disciples to be taught by the Holy Spirit. There was no sense of desperation in Jesus' ministry over the fact that his disciples were not learning quickly enough. He introduced them to a process of life-long learning from God's word, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. He taught them to pray and thereby opened a whole new dimension of learning to them.

Jesus returned to heaven, but his church continued to grow. After Paul's conversion to Christianity, he began his missionary activities, evangelizing, preaching and teaching, explaining to his listeners both his priorities and the basis for his message, affirming with his companion Barnabas "we had to speak the word of God to you first" (Acts 13:46). It was "the word of the Lord spread through the whole region" (Acts 13:49) that brought growth to the early church. Paul, Barnabas and many others "taught and preached the word of the

Lord" (Acts 15:35) as they traveled from place to place. They entered into the synagogues, reasoned with their listeners from the Scriptures, and encouraged the Jews to examine the Scriptures for themselves to see if Paul's teachings were true. God's written word was to form the foundation for instruction in Christianity, as it had in times past for the Jewish faith of the Old Testament. Paul, along with John and Peter, insists that there must be a standard of truth for the gospel they preach. For them, and for the Christian teacher of today, this standard is provided in the Scriptures.

Christian educators will utilize the best that secular education has to offer in the area of learning theories and educational methodology, but as Henderson (1983) reminds us, "unlike education in the secular realm, Christian education begins with repentance. The point of entry into the life of Christian discipleship is a humble and contrite spirit" (p. 863). So from that point of entry, we will begin and move forward with the life-long task of Christian education.

As Zuck & Getz (1970) assert, "the centrality of the Bible is a major plank in the platform of evangelical education." Christian education should not be "speculative, tentative or exploratory. It is rooted in the truth that God's Word is authoritative" (p. 23). The Bible is the original source of Christian education (Hayes, 1991), and biblical content must provide the basis for Christian education.

As Pazmiño (1988) suggests, the authority of teachers and educators is derived from biblical authority and must be evaluated in the light of the Bible, the primary source of God's revelation. As we share biblical content, we should also seek understanding of the implications of the biblical message for our lives, and work together to apply those biblical principles to our daily Christian walk. "Hearing" is not enough. There must also be "doing." But it all begins with careful attention to God's Word, and God's Word must provide us with the foundation for our instruction of believers.

God's Word: Our Sure Foundation

White (1999) relates the story of the English physicist Stephen Hawking who told of an elderly woman who was asked to describe Earth's place in the universe. "The world rests upon the top of a giant turtle," she said. The inquirer smiled and asked, "And what does the turtle stand upon?" "Another turtle," she replied. The patient teacher then asked, "And what does *that* turtle stand upon?" With a satisfied smile the woman replied, "I know where you are going young man, and I've got an answer. It's turtles all the way down!" As one who studied and worked in secular institutions of higher learning where the "scientific" basis for research and learning was fostered, I have often seen "knowledge" based on quotes from authors who based their statements on quotes from previous authors—a method of inquiry and research that left me with the sense that it was "turtles all the way down."

In contrast, Christian educators must stand on the firm foundation of God's written word. As Gangel (1989) suggests, the Christian educator is one who "has committed himself to thinking in a context which defines morality in terms of biblical absolutes and subjects all conclusions to Lord and Word" (p. 78). As White (1999) says, "The world needs truth, not one more shaky opinion. It needs to hear God's Word asserted with a complete confidence rather than in a quivering, self-conscious, half-embarrassed whisper. It is always right to speak the Word of God with boldness, so long as our confidence is in the Word and not in ourselves" (p. 80). In this way, as Hanke (1967) affirms, God's written word "becomes divine intelligence to man as the Holy Spirit bears witness in his heart. Through revelation man lays hold of divine truth which cannot be reached by reason alone, and cannot be reduced to some rational system of man without the direct aid of the Spirit of God" (p. 495).

We also believe the revelation of God to humanity through his written word invites investigation of biblical teachings. We do not shy

away from intellectual inquiry into our faith. Reason should not be an enemy of the Christian faith. Peter said to his listeners that they must "always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have" (1 Pet 3:15). Christian teachers have tested human experience, ideas and theories in the past by means of biblical precepts and we must be willing to continue to examine them in the light of the Scriptures. The Bible is reliable and trustworthy, and Christian educators and thinkers must be able to "integrate faith with learning in any form" (Gangel, 1989, p. 83).

God's Word: Our Source of Nurture

A return in our churches to a teaching ministry based on God's Word will provide spiritual nurture for our believers. As new Christians begin their walk with God, and as mature Christians move forward in their walk with Him, we must provide them with spiritual food that comes from the Bible. Long ago, Moses told the Israelites that God had allowed them to experience physical hunger in the wilderness so that they would come to understand that "man does not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord" (Deut 8:3). As Jesus began his ministry here on earth, he quoted this Old Testament passage at the moment when his loyalty to God and to God's plan for his life and ministry were called into question. Jesus resisted sin and temptation on that occasion, not by doing a miracle or by resorting to his divine power, but by receiving spiritual nurture that gave him strength and victory over temptation through the power of God's written word.

Many years before the beginning of Jesus' public ministry, Jeremiah said, "Your words were found, and I ate them, and Your word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart; For I am called by Your name, O Lord God of hosts" (Jer 15:16). Jeremiah assimilated and internalized God's word (Freedman, 1992). It became a part of his very being, and through it he received nurture, spiritual food that

the Psalmist had declared was "sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb" (Ps 19:10).

Philip P. Bliss spoke in his hymn of the life-giving nurture that we receive through God's written word:

Sing them over again to me – wonderful words of life;
Let me more of their beauty see – wonderful words of life.
Words of life and beauty, teach me faith and duty:

Christ, the blessed one, gives to all wonderful words of life;
Sinner, list to the loving call – wonderful words of life.
All so freely given, wooing us to heaven:

Sweetly echo the gospel call – wonderful words of life;
Offer pardon and peace to all – wonderful words of life.
Jesus, only Savior, sanctify forever:

Beautiful words, wonderful words of life.

In 1960, Glen called for a recovery of the teaching ministry in the life of our churches:

> The teaching ministry is the one ministry which when taken seriously assumes the responsibility of communicating the truth at the human level and in human form. It insists that the substance of the Bible and of its faith, including the substance of the great confessions of the church, are essentially intelligible and must be communicated from one generation to another if the church is to be the church and men and women are to hear the word of God. This means that the teaching ministry is the guardian of what may be regarded in the best sense as the tradition of the church (p. 25, 26).

In the words of Sanner and Harper (1978),

> The Bible is the Word of God: it is the Foundation and final Authority for the goals and content of Christian education. In it the Christian finds his heritage from the past and his hope for the future. He discovers that he is part of a great teaching tradition. The Hebrews used instruction effectively to perpetuate their faith and their way of life—they taught through the parents, the priests, the wise men, the prophets, the Temple, and the synagogue. Jesus himself was the Master Teacher, his disciples spread the Good News through preaching and teaching.
>
> God honors such teaching with his grace. Biblical principles of education challenge us to perform our teaching tasks with total commitment. We cannot rest content until all men come to know Jesus whom to know is life eternal. To love him, to be like him, to serve him, is the fulfillment of Christian education (p. 49).

When you share God's Word with your class, use the best methodology you can find, so that you can teach in the best way possible. Be familiar with the way your students learn, so that you can use the best of learning theory that is compatible with God's Word. But when you choose lesson content, use the Bible.

For each one of us, teaching is part of our ministry. Whatever our assignment might be in the church, as teachers, Christian educators, pastors or administrators, may we all echo the words of Moses who said: "Let my teaching fall like rain and my words descend like dew, like showers on new grass, like abundant rain on tender plants" (Deut 32:2). Isaiah said, "The Sovereign Lord has given me an instructed tongue, to know the word that sustains the weary" (Isa 49:4).

The concepts and thoughts presented here are not new, but as Christian educators, we must remind ourselves constantly of the most

important source for the content of our instruction. From God's Word we will search for treasure, and we will share that treasure with those who need to hear. Upon the sure foundation of God's Word we will base our teaching, and from that word we will be nurtured.

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A CALLING TO FULFILL

Albert L. Truesdale, Jr.

From many nations and cultures we have gathered here in Thailand. This is a country that in many ways serves as a way of viewing the broader world region in which you serve. The region is undergoing dizzying economic, political and social change, while at the same time remaining in many ways very much the same. Thailand is a meeting place where people of diverse backgrounds have pooled their cultural and racial characteristics. They have created something new, strong and vital. We have gathered in a mostly Buddhist country where less than 10 percent of the people embrace other faiths, including Islam, Christianity, Hinduism and Brahmanism.

We have come for the purpose of considering our calling as theological educators in the Church of the Nazarene, a task that will demand our best energies.

In *The Critique of Pure Reason* (1781), Immanuel Kant asked three questions that have become famous: "What can we know?" "What ought we to do?" and, "For what may we hope?" On the surface Kant's questions might seem rather simple. But Kant students know that the questions in fact provide keys for understanding his whole program. In this address I too want to ask three questions. My apparently simple questions introduce the most important dimensions of our responsibilities as theological educators in the Church of the Nazarene, with particular reference to Southeast Asia and the Pacific.

Hopefully my three questions will help me deal directly with the responsibilities, challenges and opportunities that greet you in this part of the world. My three questions are: "Where are we?" "Who are we?" and, "What are we to do?" At this juncture in history, when much of the western world seems to have lost its moral bearings,[1] there is no time for wasting our energies on denominational posturing or intellectual gamesmanship. The times require transparency of character and clarity of thought. To engage our world with any hope of being heard we must do the hard work of mind and spirit that the context demands. Being conversant not only with the theology we embrace, but also with the broader socio-political currents that mark our age is imperative.

I. Where Are We?

To appraise one's responsibility as a theological educator one must first know his or her location. "Location" has many dimensions, only the most important of which will be discussed here.

Let us begin with where we are geographically. The educators gathered here work in the Pacific and in Southeastern Asia, a geographically diverse region that reaches from the tropical islands of the Pacific to the T'aebaek Mountains of South Korea, and to the Great Sandy Desert of Australia. It spans both sparsely populated islands and the bulging cities, from China's rice fields cultivated as they have been for centuries to the advanced financial markets in Tokyo and Hong Kong. The immense geographical diversity of the region is not incidental to our mission. Geographical locations have played an historic role in the development of the cultures amidst which you serve, their relations with their neighbors, and in the spread of the Christian gospel.

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[1]See Alasdair Macintyre's description in *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981).

Mention of geographical diversity immediately calls to mind the diverse historical, social, religious, political and economic "locations" of this vast region. An area that includes Australia, New Zealand and Hong Kong whose social and political institutions bear the direct stamp of western history, Thailand that so vividly reveals its oriental and Buddhist heritage, and Indonesia with its indebtedness to Islam and Hinduism—to name a few—will not yield to monolithic categorization.

Given the steady march in both East and West toward a global economy, the homogenizing impact of cyberspace, the growth of democracy in the Pacific and Southeastern Asia, and the exportation of western pop culture, one might be tempted to minimize the differences between East and West. Doing so would be a mistake. Without diminishing the important differences between Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, and the Sikhs, the Orient and parts of the Pacific have been largely shaped by ideas and values that are different in fundamental respects from the dominant themes that have shaped the West.

The characterizing ideas and values of Asia and the Pacific have yielded distinct understandings of persons, human destiny, social organization, familial relations, ethics and even history itself. Ernst Troeltch, Willard Van Orman Quine, and others have shown that a culture and its visions of ultimate reality are tightly entwined. In the West, for example, democracy as it has developed is unthinkable apart from the Gospel's appraisal of persons. In India, for another example, one cannot understand *caste* apart from the Law of Karma and the social distinctions that emerged after the ancient Indo-European Aryans moved into northwest India. We have not even mentioned the influence the ancient tribal religions of the Pacific have had on social values and social organization.

The historical, religious and social locations in which we work demand to be understood and appreciated. Apart from a deep reading of culture, the impact of the gospel will likely be superficial.

All over the world, alert observers are keenly aware of the geo-political developments now shaping this region, and that play a major role in answering the question, "Where are we?" Riveting symbols of the changes—not to be naively overstated—capture our attention. One must not rush to conclusions, but neither should we ignore the winds of change that are blowing.

Politically we are located amidst escalating hopes for socio-political changes that will grant people greater say in how they live and are governed. The hopes appear to be indistinguishable. Think of the contribution to this ferment that access to other cultures and ideas *via* the Internet is making. People, economies and governments from Samoa to Beijing must come to grips with the primary changes in our perceptions of time, space and boundaries that cyberspace is provoking. Theological education in the Church of the Nazarene must take account of the hopes that fire the imagination of many people, as well as the stubborn injustices that plague millions.

Though we must not overstate the importance of our economic location, its importance must not be overlooked. Protests in Seattle and Prague against the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund notwithstanding, we are well into economic globalization (international economic integration). This reality that has already immensely affected relations between governments and peoples. I do not have the expertise needed to weigh the *pros* and *cons* of economic globalization,[2] currently one of the most heated debates in the international community.[3] But I do know that economic globalization is vastly increasing interdependence among countries, and that it can apply moderating pressures on countries that might otherwise be

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[2]For a recent discussion of the current debate see, "New Image: A Human Face," Joseph Kahn, *The New York Times on the Web*, September 26, 2000. http://www.nytimes.com/2000/09/26/world/26FUND.html.

[3]See "The Case for Globalisation," *The Economist*, September 23-29, 2000, http://www.economist.com/editorial/freeforall/current/index_ld6368.html.

more belligerent. Economic globalization leads to an accelerated exchange of goods and ideas among people. The temptation to make war on one's neighbors declines because it would disrupt one's ties with its trading partners.

But economic globalization also tends to shape local economies, societies, and even governments in the interest of large multinational corporations. Sometimes this occurs at the expense of local values and histories. As the last Asian economic downturn demonstrated, economic globalization also makes the economic success or failure of one nation heavily reliant on its neighbors. The September 23, 2000 issue of *The Economist* makes a strong case for globalization as the best weapon we have for combating third world poverty.

Karl Barth said it best a long time ago. We must learn to preach with the Bible in one hand and the newspaper in the other. We who teach future clergy persons must know how to read the signs of the times and must teach students how to address the Gospel to the "locations" in which they minister. We must educate wise readers of the Scriptures and wise readers of culture.

Many people believe that we are also located at the end of modernity and at the beginning of postmodernity. I will not here debate whether a "postmodern turn" has occurred. I believe that it has, but the following observations do not depend on that assessment.

Some of the alleged characteristics of postmodernity bear directly on the question, "Where are we?" One characteristic is religious pluralism, not to be confused with a plurality of religions. The centerpiece of religious pluralism is the refusal by any one religion to make absolute and exclusive claims about its own vision of reality. Doing so would depreciate other religions. Religious pluralism leaves persons and communities to respond to their encounter with "transcendence" in ways that suit their experiences and expectations. It does not interfere with other religions. Religious doctrines and practices are thought to be largely, if not completely, relative to the communities in which they arise and are cultivated.

I should be careful not to speak as though religious pluralism is monolithic anywhere in the world, for we need only note the rise of religious fundamentalism throughout the world. When surveying popular religion on the world scene, one may wonder just how much ground religious pluralism can legitimately claim.

Nevertheless, among those who participate as leaders on the world stage of religious studies and interchange, literate persons are supposed to have embraced religious pluralism. They should have left behind all religious exclusivism and proselytism. A "missionary religion" is thought to commit the error of "totalizing." That is, by claiming to "know" *totally* what is right for everyone, a "missionary religion" claims entirely too much and thereby becomes oppressive. It is blind to just how historically conditioned its "absolutes" are. Only philistines and provincials fail to get the message.

Closely associated with religious pluralism is a recognition of the community-indexed nature of truth. What religious adherents normally believe to be transcendent, ultimate truths, are in fact relative to the communities in which their stories (narratives) are nourished. A story's authority does not reach beyond the community that embraces it. Commentators on the postmodern condition often speak of *the loss of metanarrative* as marking the postmodern turn. A metanarrative is a more or less overarching (religious) story that shapes a people and gives their lives meaning.

The importance for our consideration of the "loss of a metanarrative" in the West is that Christianity has largely lost whatever "authority" it once held for shaping the western worldview. With that loss has gone any alliance between Christianity and western expansion. During the Modern era the West forcefully moved East. Today, particularly in religion, the East has moved West. Witness the prominence of eastern religions in the United States and England. The powerful attraction that eastern visions of reality and human life have for many in the West clearly signals that the tide does not flow one way only.

A Christian theological educator in this part of the world at the beginning of the third millennium is in important ways *located* differently from his or her predecessors, particularly those who arrived from the West. Now he or she is just one more voice in an ancient discussion that easily predates Christianity. But if the gospel is indeed the gospel of God, then the changes in *location* represent no major loss at all. "How much space does the Church need," asked Dietrich Bonhoeffer? He answered, "Only so much space as it takes to proclaim the Gospel."

Our location raises the second and third questions.

II. Who Are We?

Recently my wife and I took my eighty-nine year-old mother from the health care center where she lives, to spend some time with us in our home. On the second morning, she awoke completely disoriented. In near panic she repeatedly asked, "Where am I?" Before we could succeed in answering her first question she frantically asked another, "Who am I? Who am I?" The occurrence was both humorous and sad.

My mother's second question is one currently being asked by some organizations and emerging nations. It is also being asked by many Christians who seem to have lost their bearings amidst a plurality of religions and moralities. I confess my astonishment at the need some Christian thinkers have to re-invent the Christian faith. John Hick, for example, has redefined Christianity in a way that Paul, Augustine or Luther would not have recognized.[4]

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[4]See John Hick, *A Christian Theology of Religions: The Rainbow of Faiths* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1995); *An Interpretation of Religion: Human Responses to the Transcendent* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989); *God has Many Names* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1986); and *The Metaphor of God Incarnate: Christology in a Pluralistic Age* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1994).

To be sure, no Christian or Christian body should smugly assume that they perfectly understand the Christian faith. Continued exploration and growth are essential for discipleship and the Church's life. No one and no denomination will ever perfectly embody the Christian narrative. Our knowledge, the Apostle Paul tells us, will be imperfect until the day we see our Lord "face to face" (1 Cor 13:8-12).

In the Christian faith there is abundant room for humility, and for confessing the times when we have equated "the Faith" with our own petty interests and limited vision. Nor is the theological enterprise ever complete. The dynamic character of human life and human history, and the liveliness of the gospel require that we "answer for" and systematically articulate "the Faith" in each new generation and in the diverse cultures in which the Church bears witness. In the Church of the Nazarene, for instance, we are moving into a maturity that recognizes the need to articulate the Wesleyan-Arminian Tradition in diverse cultural contexts. We should have a growing number of denomination-wide theologians who influence the church by writing from an African, Latin American, European or Asian perspective. Many in the Church of the Nazarene will progress in this direction, and all of us will be enriched. There is plenty of room in this denomination for theological discussion and appropriate variety.

However, humility and the need for lively re-articulation notwithstanding, at the beginning of the third millennium we have abundant resources for unambiguously knowing "who we are" as theological educators in the Church of the Nazarene.

Who are we? **We are Apostolic Christians**. We embrace the Apostolic Christian faith—one Lord, one faith and one baptism for the remission of sins. This means first of all that unambiguously we confess Jesus of Nazareth to be the Christ of God. We believe that in Jesus of Nazareth the Creator of Heaven and earth, the God of the Patriarchs and the Prophets, became incarnate. With the Apostles and all subsequent apostolic Christianity, we affirm that Jesus who is the Christ *is* the Gospel of God. He both *is* and *preached* the Good

News. In Jesus, the Incarnate God acted definitively to reconcile the world—all persons *and* the creation—to Himself. In our Lord, the Father inaugurated the long expected Kingdom of God. Christ is the *eschaton*, the *telos* of God.

Who are we? **We are Apostolic Christians**. We believe that in the cross of Christ the Triune God took upon Himself the sin of the world and made reconciliation for all humankind. To those whose minds are enlightened by the Holy Ghost, God reveals the cross to be both His wisdom and His power. We believe that in the Easter resurrection, God the Father, by the Spirit, confirmed forever the witness and atoning work of His Son. Never can there be any good reason to doubt the meaning of either event. We believe that the entire Christ event—our Lord's birth, life, death, resurrection and ascension—definitively reveals the very Person of the One, Eternal God (John 1:14-18). To know this Christ is to know God Himself.

The current "uncertainty" about God among some Christian thinkers that passes as humility before other religions is not humility at all. It is a failure of theological nerve, a failure of faith. And it patently betrays the apostolic witness (Gal 6:12). The claim to "know" God in Christ, and by the Spirit in the Church, has everything to do with obedient response and nothing to do with arrogance. Revelation is God's act, not a human fabrication.

So ours is a confession of faith. As the New Testament makes clear, the Christian confession occurs in response to God's deed (Acts 2:36; Rom 3:19-26). Our faith in Christ is called forth by the Holy Spirit of God Himself. Christians in their communities do not create their faith, as John Hick and others seem to believe. The Christian Church, we believe, is the creation of the Holy Spirit, not the construction of a particularized "narrative community."[5] We confess our

[5]See John's Hick's contributions to *Four Views on Salvation in a Pluralistic World*, Dennis L. Okholm and Timothy R. Phillips, eds. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1996).

faith because we have, through the Church and by the Spirit, been grasped by the Divine Reality that we call the gospel of God, the gospel of the Kingdom, the gospel of our Lord.

Ours is an apostolic faith because we believe in the definitive authority of the Holy Scriptures in all things regarding faith and practice. We believe that the Old and New Testaments belong to the Spirit and to the Church. They authoritatively and definitively serve the redemptive purposes of the Spirit, and the holy life of the Church as the worshiping and witnessing *koinonia* of the Spirit.

Ours is an apostolic faith because we confess the Apostle's Creed and the great ecumenical creeds, Nicea and Chalcedon holding special Trinitarian and Christological importance. We do not *deify* the creeds. We recognize the limitations of the language, culture and conceptuality associated with them. We are not ignorant of the sometimes less than honorable human maneuvering that occurred in conjunction with the Councils. Nevertheless, with all orthodox Christianity we believe that in spite of notable limitations, the Holy Spirit worked in the life of the Church to create the Creeds. They do now faithfully articulate the Triune God—the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Ours is also an historic faith. We affirm the Church, the Body of Christ. We believe that we are members of Christ only as we are members of His Church, His community of redemption and self-disclosure. We know that only as members of the Church can we rightly learn and live God's story of creation, covenant, justice and salvation.

We are aware of and shamed by the many instances in which the human institution we loosely call the Church has grossly missed the will of God, betrayed the gospel, allied itself with injustice and given a sorry witness in the world. For this we readily and humbly confess. However, we believe that through this all-too-faulty history God is bringing "many children to perfection." We believe here the resurrected Christ, through the Holy Spirit, dwells. In this most human

"rock" that confesses Jesus to be the Christ, God is even now working toward that day when the Kingdom will be consummated. The Son will be revealed as Lord of all—and to all—and God the Father will be universally proclaimed and exalted. We believe that in the Church of Christ, the story of God is being told in the lives of faithful and obedient sons and daughters. They are being forgiven, transformed, sanctified and filled with the Spirit of Christ. In the Church of Christ we hear the living Word of God in proclamation and in the sacraments. Here we meet the Christ who is our Lord and learn about the people that we are to become.

Who are we? We are Protestants. We mean this not in a sectarian sense, but with reference to some defining affirmations. First, we believe in the supreme authority of the Scriptures as the definitive witness to the Gospel of God. They must always be made to stand above tradition, reason and experience—including denominations and human subjectivity. We understand what Paul Tillich meant by "the Protestant Principle." "Protestant" first means that no finite person or institution should ever be permitted to take the place of the free God. The Spirit "protests" against all such efforts and will surely bring them to naught.

As Protestants we unambiguously affirm that we are justified, reconciled to God, by grace through faith alone. It is not of works lest any person should boast. From beginning to end our salvation is of God. We believe that both grace and faith are God's active gifts. Furthermore, as Protestants we believe that justification by grace through faith forever remains the only basis for our being "in Christ." We both begin and continue "in the Spirit," never in the flesh. "For through the Spirit, by faith, we wait for the hope of righteousness" (Gal. 5:5). Sanctification, which we hold so dearly, rests on, continues and is the *telos* of justification, never its substitute.

As Protestants we believe that the Church is where the Spirit creates the *koinonia*, where the Word of God is preached, and where the sacraments are rightly administered.

We also believe in the priesthood of all believers. All of God's people are called and empowered by the Holy Spirit to minister to God, to their sisters and brothers in the Church, and in the world. No one other than the Spirit of the resurrected Christ "mediates" Christ to His people. As servants gifted and empowered by the Spirit, we are all priests to God and priests to one another. We offer a sacrifice of praise and worship before the Lord, glorifying the Name of the Lord, even as Christ glorified His Father. The Christian minister, ordained to the Christian ministry, has a special responsibility to study and preach the Word of God, and to celebrate the sacraments, but not to lord his or her position over Christ's people.

Who are we? We are Wesleyan and Arminian. This part of our identity distinguishes us in Christ's Church. But it should not make of us a party or sect. The Apostle Paul's stinging rebuke to the Corinthian schismatics should not be lost on us: "Has Christ been divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul" (1 Cor 1:13)? In the Church those who place party loyalty above primary unity with their Christian sisters and brothers are guilty of schism and are subject to judgment. With all Christians, we are Christ's and Christ is God's. That which unites us is far more important than that which distinguishes us. Distinctions should enrich the Church, not tear at its fabric. If we have something to teach the Church, we also have much to learn. Let the word "uniqueness" never cross our lips. Only schismatics aspire to that dishonor. Mary Artemesia Lathbury's nineteenth century hymn, "Lift Up, Lift Up Thy Voice" asks,

And shall His flock with strife be riven?
Shall envious lines His church divide,
When He, the Lord of earth and heaven,
Stands at the door to claim His bride?

—Mary Artemesia Lathbury (1841-1913)

What we in the Wesleyan and Arminian tradition embrace we hold to be absolutely faithful to the spirit and teachings of New

Testament, and to historic Christianity. We recognize that not all of Christ's Church views the Faith in all details as we do. But we seek to practice Christian charity toward all parts of the Church, no member excepted.

Just what is the vision that marks us? First, with absolute conviction we believe that the Father has in Christ elected or chosen all persons to partake fully of His salvation (Rom 5:15-17). We would agree with Karl Barth that Christ is God's first elect One, that the Church is elect through Christ and that all persons are elect in Christ through the Church. We resolutely reject the notion that God is in any way partial in His love and grace.[6]

We believe that to be human is to be graced by God. Wherever there are persons, there the gracious God is present, prompting them toward eternal life. This we believe not necessarily because of what we can observe, but because of what we believe about the will and actions of God. For us, God—not individuals—is the one who asks "the question of God" in us. And the very asking of the question is a sign that God is being faithful to His promise to draw all persons to Himself. For us the "natural man" as one who is apart from God's grace is a mere abstraction.

We believe that for all persons the *telos* of prevenient grace is an *evangelical* (gospel) encounter with the Christ who through the Spirit convinces persons that Jesus is Lord. The New Testament teaches that while there are many who witness to Christ, there is only One—the

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[6]Clark Pinnock says that "most Reformed believers in Europe, including McGrath, have accepted what was enshrined in the Agreement of Leuenberg (1973), which involved a drastic revision of Calvin's thought. It tossed out double predestination and spoke of God's election of humankind in Jesus Christ, as Barth does. . . . I am grateful to reformed theology for having reformed itself—though I wish more evangelicals in North America would get the message" (*Four Views on Salvation in a Pluralistic World* [John Hick, Dennis L. Okholm, Timothy R. Phillips, eds.; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996], 187-91). See also *A Wideness in God's Mercy: The Finality of Jesus Christ in a World of Religions* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992).

Holy Spirit—who discloses, convicts, convinces, and transforms hearers and respondents (John 16:7-11). Not until the Holy Spirit "convinces" has one in the strict sense *heard* the gospel. Only the Holy Spirit can make of the "preached word" the "living word of God." In our tradition we are patient to wait upon the Holy Spirit. We should never make the mistake of thinking that nothing is happening if a person does not immediately embrace our message. Though diligent in our witness (John 15:26-27), we wait upon the Spirit of God.

We are not reluctant to say that through enabled response to prevenient grace a person may evidence signs of aspiring toward God. We affirm that all longings for God are through-and-through *Christic* in character. That is, we identify religious hunger as the result of God's activity through Christ, not as a rejection of Christ. All persons have been visited by prevenient grace, and the prevenient Christ prompts all persons toward evangelical conversion. Nevertheless, we do not diminish the sin and error that mark all persons apart from hearing and receiving the gospel. We recognize and stress an all-important distinction between anticipating the Christ in prevenient grace, and fulfilling that anticipation in an evangelical (disclosive) encounter with the Savior. Only in that liberating, reconciling event can one confess, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God" (Matt 16:16). Only then do old things pass away, and all things become explicitly new in Christ (2 Cor 5:17). When the Spirit reveals the Christ as the Redeemer, then one can be "born anew from above" (John 3:1-21).

Hence, in the presence of religious pluralism we both affirm without reservation the scandal of particularity—the Christological confession, while at the same time affirming the presence and activity of the prevenient Christ in all persons, even through the instrumentality of other religions.

We reject the old artificial distinction between general and special grace that permitted God to generally reveal himself to all, while selecting but a few for evangelical revelation and salvation. As noted

above, if Clark Pinnock is correct, the number of theologians willing to embrace the old Reformed position has greatly diminished. As Wesleyans, we believe that all grace is *Christic* and intentionally redemptive.

Ours is a Christocentric rather than a Logos theology. We boldly embrace the scandal of particularity. In Jesus the lowly Galilean, and nowhere else, the eternal God became incarnate and secured redemption for all the race. The scandal of particularity is God's doing and it isn't to be tampered with or eroded by embarrassed theologians.

As Wesleyans we confidently establish the primacy of transformation and sanctification over the primacy of sin and impotence. Not all parts of the Christian community do this and we should be most intentional regarding our posture. For some parts of Christ's Church, preaching, worship, theology and Christian life are done according to a vision that gives the primacy to sin, to the "not yet." The primacy of transformation (sanctification) belongs to eschatology. We, on the other hand, believe that the atonement and Pentecost even now establish the primacy of regeneration and sanctification, a primacy not to be construed as sinlessness or as collapsing the *not yet* into the *already.* A current primacy of transformation and victory *as realized eschatology through the atonement and the Pentecostal outpouring of the Spirit in purity and power* is the issue.

Without reservation we believe that the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus sets us free from the law of sin and death. Our doctrine of regeneration and sanctification is simply a celebration of *Christus Victor* in *life and doctrine,* as we believe to be the cardinal theme of the New Testament. We believe that in Christ, God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, God has dealt the death blow to all that alienates us from God, that thwarts our worship of God in true holiness, and that blocks our loving our neighbor as the righteous law of God commands.

Lift up, lift up your voices now!
The whole wide world rejoices now;
The Lord has triumphed gloriously,
The Lord shall reign victoriously.

In vain with stone the cave they barred;
In vain the watch kept ward and guard;
Majestic from the spoiled tomb,
In pomp of triumph Christ is come.

And all He did, and all He bare,
He gives us as our own to share;
And hope, and joy and peace begin,
For Christ has won, and man shall win.

("Lift Up, Lift Up Your Voices Now," John Mason Neale, 1851)

We do not diminish our unending need for confession and forgiveness from God and our neighbors. We recognize our failures to love mercy and pursue justice in all things. Nevertheless, we believe that through Christ's atoning work and the indwelling Spirit the just requirements of the law can be fulfilled in anyone who will be crucified and raised to new life with Christ, who yields to regeneration and sanctification by the Spirit (Rom 6). The primacy of transformation over the primacy of sin means simply that when the Spirit of Him who raised Christ from the dead dwells and reigns in us, then we can live according to Spirit and not according to the flesh. By the Spirit's renewal we can set our minds on the things of the Spirit, not on things of the flesh (Rom 8:4-11; Gal 5:25-26).

So we preach and celebrate the indwelling Spirit of Pentecost who by the authority of Christ's resurrection cleanses believers of that which would countermand Christ's reign. He empowers us for witness and service, for holiness and justice, in the Church and in the world. We also believe that the New Testament clearly establishes the primacy of the fruit of the Spirit over the gifts (Gal 5:22-24). We believe that the fruit of the Spirit is *uniform and confirms* His baptism,

while the Spirit *diversely* dispenses Christ's gifts in the Church for witness and service.

Our optimism regarding God's grace extends also to the whole creation. Itself the result of a gracious creative deed, the creation is fully included in the redemption our Lord has won. It too is and will be numbered among the children of God, "set free from its bondage to decay, to obtain its share in the freedom of the glory of the children of God" (Rom 8:19-21).

Creation's future, as is ours, is one with the future of Christ. Contrary to the Gnosticized Christianity prevalent among many conservative Christians, everything that is other than God is His creation and the object of His care. Neither do we despair regarding culture and the plane of human history. The realm of political and social structures will some day be made whole in Christ. Justice and peace will be the order of the nations. The kingdoms of this world will become the kingdoms of our Lord. The redemption of the world our Lord inaugurated will be consummated in the power and time of Him who raised the Son from the dead (1 Cor 15:20-28). Exploitation of the poor and defenseless, the rape of women, the abuse of children and ancient hatreds that pit one nation against another surely tempt us to despair. But our hope rests in the meaning of Christ's resurrection by the Eternal Father. "How" and "when" all of this will occur is of no interest to us. We know only that the consummation of the Kingdom will look just like the Christ who inaugurated it. Jurgen Moltmann is correct; we already know the world's future because we already know Christ who is the future of God. *Maranatha*!

III. What Are We To Do?

The third question is reminiscent of the one asked of Peter on the Day of Pentecost by those who had heard his stirring message. The power of the Gospel prompted their question and called them to action. So it must be with us.

Theological educators in the Church of the Nazarene do not have a "job" or a "position." They have a ministry and a mandate to educate Christian ministers who can faithfully preach, model and teach the whole counsel of God. Our assignment is a trust placed upon us by the church. What could be a higher responsibility or joy than this?

As a theological educator I have lived with a holy fear every day of my professorial life. I have taken seriously James' warning, "Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, for you know that we who teach shall be judged with greater strictness" (James 3:1). I have walked into each class session as a steward who knew in advance that he would some day be judged. On that day I will appeal to God's mercy, not to my own success or failure.

What are we to do? *First*, theological educators in the Church of the Nazarene must be deeply committed disciples of Jesus Christ. Erudition, no matter how exalted, is never permitted to replace discipleship. Quite simply, the highest honor that a theological educator must ever know is that he or she has by grace been admitted to the school of Jesus. For us, study of the theological disciplines begins and proceeds in faith. Theology, for us, is worship. It is a disciplined and systematic examination of God's self-disclosure in Christ, and His living among us in the power of the Spirit. As teachers we serve and worship God through the use of our minds. In the best sense of the term, as Douglas Hall puts it, we "think the faith"[7] as persons who have tasted and seen that the Lord is good.

Second, theological educators in the Church of the Nazarene have a fiduciary responsibility to the sixteen Articles of Faith. True, an educator must have appropriate latitude to work creatively and to employ the rich resources of the whole Christian family. I have found

[7]Douglas John Hall, *Thinking the Faith : Christian Theology in a North American Context* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1991).

that the church grants this latitude. However, the classroom in the Church of the Nazarene does not belong to the teacher. It belongs to the Church of the Nazarene, as the church belongs to Christ. The theological educator is a steward of the Articles of Faith and should be ready at all times to give account for his or her stewardship.

As a good steward of the church's faith, a theological educator should leave the denomination richer than it was when he or she began to tend the vineyard. Imaginatively and faithfully, theological educators in the Church of the Nazarene should lead students to understand, appreciate and hopefully embrace with conviction the faith of the church. Neither a pedantic, wooden repetition, nor a skeptical dismissal of our theology should ever occur in a Nazarene classroom, extension program or any other instructional setting. A teacher willingly makes himself or herself accountable to the church. This occurs not because of coercion but because of love, wisdom and maturity.

Third, we are to transmit to our students a first generation love for Christ and his Church. For us education can never be reduced to the transfer of information. We are interested principally in the transmission of spirit. I shall not forget the day in class when William Greathouse, displeased over his charges' apparent failure to receive the spirit of his instruction, suspended his lectures and placed us on our knees to pray. The "prayer meeting" kept us in session for over two hours.

That students will recognize our learning, our ability to teach, and that they will master the information we want to transmit, is important. But it is not all-important. Most importantly, students must know that we have partaken of the first fruits, and that our greatest passion is to "follow Jesus all along the way."

Fourth, the teacher must first be a student. The one who would teach must first be teachable. One must be mastered by—come under

the governance of—what one proposes to teach. Arrogance and theological education are mutually exclusive. Neither are authority and arrogance to be confused. Jesus, the Servant, taught as one "having authority," not as an arrogant one. Teachers must communicate to their students a recognition that the field of study they are pursuing transcends the teacher, and that there are criteria of investigation, understanding, argument and interpretation by which the teacher also abides.

Teachers who are first of all students love to learn. They do not try to acquire a marginal body of information that will keep them one step ahead of the students. Teachers who are students first will exercise the diligence and discipline that characterize a student because they want to, not because some external authority requires it of them. Sad the "teacher" whose thirst for learning has been quenched. Honorable is the teacher for whom the whole world remains a fresh horizon to explore. Only such a teacher can ever hope to transmit to his or her students a love of learning and to help them develop patterns of study that will equip them for independent study.

Fifth, theological educators must seek to introduce to their students the whole Christian story. In the Church of the Nazarene there is no place for transmitting a narrow, defensive and sectarian image of the Christian faith. Ours is a catholic faith. The whole Christian story belongs to us and we to it. Martin Luther, John Calvin, Karl Barth and Karl Rahner are ours too. Consequently, we have a responsibility to introduce the theology of the Church of the Nazarene in its most catholic dimensions. The doctrine of Christian holiness, for example, is not this denomination's only "string" and it should be taught only within the context of a holistic theological framework.

Properly, we should rely heavily upon the formative theologians of our own tradition. But our students must also drink deeply, and critically, from all the Church's great teachers—from the Early

Fathers to its current exponents. So let theological education in the Church of the Nazarene be marked by fidelity to the church's Articles of Faith, to the entire Christian story, and by teachers who know how to mine the best of Christian scholarship in each century and in all its branches.

Finally, as theological educators in the Church of the Nazarene we are to teach students how to shepherd Christ's flock. For us theology is a "churchly" enterprise. It occurs in and for the Church. This of course does not exclude us from the academy. Our scholars must be participants there too. But we must know the difference between the domains of a dispassionate scholar in the academy and a teacher of the Church (certainly the two are not necessarily opposed). Principally, theology must enrich the *koinonia* in worship, Christian ethics, mission, witness, evangelism, education and fellowship. The one who despises the Church as unworthy of one's mental energies, as is currently true of at least some in the academy, thereby forfeits the right to speak of oneself as a "Christian" theologian. The greatest and most lasting theologians in the history of the Church—whether biblical, historical, systematic or practical—have thought that their highest honor was gained by serving the Church well. The same must be true of the humble offerings we will make.

In the past hour we have engaged in a particular form of worship. So I will now conclude all my questions and answers by quoting a hymn to the Trinity that we sang in our church on the Sixteenth Sunday of Pentecost. Alexander Viets Griswold (1766-1843) wrote the hymn:

Holy Father, great Creator, Source of mercy, love and peace,
Look upon the Mediator, clothe us with his righteousness.
Heavenly Father, heavenly Father, through the Savior hear and bless.
Holy Jesus, Lord of Glory, whom angelic hosts proclaim,
While we hear thy wondrous story, meet and worship in thy Name,

Dear Redeemer, dear Redeemer, in our hearts thy peace proclaim.
Holy Spirit, Sanctifier, come with unction from above,
Touch our hearts with sacred fire—fill them with the Savior's love.
Source of comfort, source of comfort, cheer us with the Savior's love.
God the Lord, through every nation let thy wondrous mercies shine.
In the song of thy salvation every tongue and race combine.
Great Jehovah, Great Jehovah, form our hearts and make them thine.

QUALITY THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION FROM A WESLEYAN PERSPECTIVE

David B. McEwan

Introduction

At the outset I would like to emphasize that this paper is a personal reflection on the topic rather than an academic research paper, and its primary goal is to provoke discussion rather than to provide answers. Partly this is a result of limited preparation time to do justice to the topic, but more importantly, I value the input of this forum to aid me in my own journey as an educator helping to prepare men and women for the work of the ministry within the Church of the Nazarene. I began my ministry as a pastor in 1975 and only moved to my present position as Academic Dean of NTC-Brisbane, in December 1997. My own experiences as a pastor and reflection over the past thirty years as a Christian are what give shape to my current role in ministerial education. The opportunity to present this paper has given me a chance to organize and share some of my growing convictions regarding the nature of quality theological education from a Wesleyan perspective.

The last few years have seen the beginnings of a tremendous change in the whole secular education process, and we in the church are not exempt from its impact. The rapid growth of the electronic media is altering the whole way we conceive of life and human relationships on our planet, and the education field is both shaping and being shaped by these developments. The Church, as ever, is

faced with the decision to join the process wholeheartedly, with reservations, or to hold out against it. The danger, as ever, is that we will decide on purely pragmatic reasons rather than on theological ones, with the pragmatism being driven by the latest "findings" from science, technology, biology, sociology and the behavioral sciences. Education, like the Christian ministry itself, is not exempted from the winds of change; neither of them exists in some pure, disinterested, ideal form that allows for value-free judgements to be made about the best way to accomplish their goals in the current environment.

For this reason our education must be driven by explicit theological commitments from within our own Wesleyan tradition, rather than being driven by the secular philosophies undergirding the latest educational practices. It is vital that we make our theology the primary lens through which we develop our educational programs, while still being open to the best practices developed in the secular field. This applies to such areas as our curriculum development and teaching methods, as well as the selection and training of both administration and faculty. We need to be clear about our own theological tradition and how that impacts the whole process of education, informing our understanding of the role of residential and extension programs, as well as the role of the local, district and general church. It appears that much modern ministerial education is not driven in its conception and operation primarily by our theological understanding. Our focus is often narrowly defined as producing competent practitioners as quickly as possible to meet the demand generated by the growth of the church. If we do not take the time to reflect theologically on this, we are in danger of assuming too much and analyzing too little. Are we clear what we mean by "competent"? Is it simply the ability to perform certain tasks for which the students were trained in a relatively stable situation? In defining a "practitioner," are we focusing on doing over being, action over reflection, and techniques over relationship skills? In analyzing "demand," do we understand this as the agenda set by our church, by the society or by the Lord of the Church?

There are a number of dangers inherent in much of the modern ministerial education process, especially as we are under pressure to prepare ministers very quickly to meet the demand created by the numerical growth of the church. A major danger is that of viewing education primarily as the communication of data necessary to meet ordination requirements. In theory, the church has addressed this issue (in our denominational *Sourcebook on Developmental Standards for Ordination*) and sought to avoid it by requiring preparation that covers not merely content, but also competency, character, and context. In practice, with the pressure to train ministers quickly and with a minimal campus-based residential component, it is much easier to teach and examine content, competency, and context than it is character. This is further exacerbated by tying together maximum input with minimum time (education only by extension and in an intensive mode). Education is then little more than providing the fledgling minister with a "toolkit" of methods and techniques that enables him or her to be deployed in the minimum period of time and with minimal disruption to congregational life.

An associated danger is believing that we have accomplished our task when the student can memorize and repeat the theological material given to satisfy the ordination process, rather than being able to think theologically in every area of life and ministry. Theology then becomes one subject among many, and it is not a very "practical" one at that; so we minimize the number of hours devoted to it and maximize the number of hours in the "ministry" field, which is far more practical and immediately useful. The "perceived benefits" of teaching the syllabus in discrete units taught in discrete time frames (intensives) in isolation to other units and time frames may override the "actual losses" of increased fragmentation and a lack of integration. The accompanying danger of increased specialization then tends to make matters worse, so that we even teach "spiritual formation" as a specialized unit divorced from the total preparation of the minister.

There is a danger of seeing formal ministerial education as tangential to the "real duties" of the minister. It is merely preparation

for ordination, and once we have got that out of the way we can get on with "real ministry" (for which college never prepared us anyway!). In the process, it is easy to forget that it is perfectly possible to educate without ever inculcating loyalty to our tradition and its ethos. I would question whether this tradition can ever be effectively "taught"; rather, it is something that is "caught" by immersion in a faithful community that is aware of and exemplifies the 2000 years of its heritage. The Wesleyan tradition is surely as much an ethos as it is a formal theological system. Central to its self-understanding is the concern for holy living, both personally and corporately, influencing not merely the local church but the society in which it finds itself, and ultimately the whole of human life in all its dimensions. A minimalist approach to education requirements for ordination that is satisfied with a minimal exposure to an authentic Wesleyan community is surely short-sighted and counter-productive in the long run.

I. Key Theological Elements of the Wesleyan Tradition and Their Importance for Education

I would now like to propose several key theological understandings that I believe lie at the core of the Wesleyan tradition. They ought to shape our educational ministry and they should be at the center of our evaluations of educational process and methods suggested to us by secular society. A recent seminar by Dr. Al Truesdale given at our college has enriched my own reflections on this subject, and much of this material has been influenced by his input.

A. An Explicit Trinitarian Theology

Our theology is explicitly Trinitarian, though giving particular attention to the Person and Work of the Lord Jesus Christ. The doctrine of the Trinity is a needed corrective to much of Western theology that has tended to overemphasize the "oneness" of God, leading to a popular understanding of God as an "individual" rather than as "persons-in-relationship." This has obvious implications for

our understanding of what it means to be created in the image of God; for much of Western thought has focused on the autonomous, thinking "self" as central to our understanding of the "person." This has led to an unhealthy individualism at the expense of persons-in-relationship. We also need to be reminded that Christ is the Living Lord, who is always at work through the Spirit in the life of the Church and in the lives of the whole human race. Thus, there can never be a point of closure to the education process, for we must continuously respond to the fresh initiatives of Christ in His Church.

B. An Active God

We believe that God is always actively at work in our world, and in the lives of all persons. Our doctrine of prevenient grace assures us that the educational process is never simply a mental exercise that we have to accomplish merely by our own skills and abilities as teachers. Through the Holy Spirit, the Triune God is at work in, with, and under the whole education enterprise. This gives us confidence that God's purposes will be fulfilled as we are obedient to him. We can afford to allow time to pass in the process, for God's purposes are never achieved by only a short-term exposure to His Truth. We are committed to the Church Universal as a result of our theological convictions, and so our education is not characterized by a narrow sectarianism or provincialism.

C. A Life-long Journey for Students

Our attitude towards students is then one of inviting them to participate with us in a life-long journey of discovery, rather than seeking to force the pace to achieve an outcome measured simply by the gaining of an academic award or meeting ordination requirements. The process of transformation is never at an end this side of glory. We have an optimism of grace, but a pessimism of nature; thus, we deal realistically with the impact of personal and structural sin on the transformation process in the lives of students and their community.

D. Sanctification as Transformation

Sanctification is not merely an internal spiritual reality, but a profound transformation of the whole person, impacting every relationship and the concrete realities of a physical existence on earth. The goal of the process is the recovery of the full purposes of God for his creation in all its dimensions.

E. People in Relationship

Persons are not simply "individuals" but also "beings-in-relationship." Education must then be more than a private transaction between an individual and a teacher; it must also encompass a learning community, where we learn from and are shaped by that community. This helps to foster an holistic approach to education and not a piecemeal approach. The "community" is not to be thought of in narrow terms as simply a college campus-based group, for it involves the local church and the surrounding society, as well as any intentional group gathered for the purposes of education. Profound transformation can only occur as we meet with God in the lives of others, never as a private encounter with God alone.

F. Inclusive of All

As Wesleyans, we have an absolute commitment to the ministry of every person, and therefore, to the preparation of every person to the maximum of their potential in Christ. Education for ministry must be available for all at an appropriate level for all, and with the opportunity for all to progress from one level to another. We take seriously the implications of life in the Body of Christ, with the associated gifts and graces for service. Everyone in Christ has the graced capacity to be a faithful servant, and it is our responsibility to prepare every Christian for this calling.

G. A Distinctive Theological Method

We have a distinctive theological method, based on the primacy of Scripture, informed by reason, tradition and experience. This

needs to be comprehensively understood at all levels of education, so that the student's own theologising is in harmony with our tradition. Christian character and ministry are shaped through an integrated process of obtaining new information and reflection upon that in the context of mutual accountability.

H. A Recognized Call of God

We appreciate that the call of God to ministry involves both the person who receives the call and the church which examines the call. A crucial part of this examination process is the education experience of the student, involving the curriculum itself, the faculty, fellow-students and the local church community. A major role is played by the worshiping community to which students belong during their period of testing the call.

I. Pastors as Theologians

We are committed to the model of the pastor being the key theologian in the denomination. In Wesleyan thought, academic theology must always be practical theology, done by, in and for the community of God as it lives out its life in the world. In a very real sense, we do not have "specialist theologians," but rather faithful Christians who have a special role in helping the whole Body of Christ to think and act in a thoroughly Christian way. In much of the modern debate over the roles and functions of pastors, their key importance as practical theologians is either ignored or dismissed to the margins. This is a major violation of our Wesleyan tradition.

II. Some Implications of our Theological Tradition for Educational Practice

The list of points given above is by no means exhaustive, but they give us a set of reference points from which we ought to take our bearings in seeking to define quality education. Therefore, quality theological education from a Wesleyan perspective must be:

A. Focused on Transformation and not merely Information

The apostle Paul reminds us that the goal of ministry (and of ministerial education therefore) is to "present everyone perfect in Christ" (Col 1:28). Conceptually, this speaks to us of the primacy of character and that the goal of our education process is the transformation of the person into the image of Christ, not merely to acquire knowledge via effective data transmission. We are persons and not merely "biological computers" needing to be programmed with the maximum amount of data in the minimum amount of time.

B. Focused on Character and not merely the Intellect

While we do not deny the importance of intellectual preparation, it is not to be the primary goal. To have a great intellect and a selfish character is a lesser position than to have a poorly-developed intellect and a Christlike character. Human potential is to be seen in terms of our capacity for loving and holy service, rather than in our ability to perform outstanding intellectual feats. The early church saw a difference between *scienta* (the knowledge of temporal things) and *sapientia* (wisdom acquired in relationship to eternal things); the goal of Christian education was to be focused on the latter rather than the former.

C. Changing the Worldview and not merely the Beliefs and Behaviors

Simply defined, our *worldview* is how we understand the ultimate nature of reality and the framework we use for interpreting the meaning, purpose and values of life as a whole. We are not usually conscious of it until a confrontation arises from a significant dialogue or experience. All human learning seems to take place within the tension between what is pre-understood and what is presented for integration into, or transformation of, our existing worldview. This worldview has been formed in us socially long before we began a conscious evaluation of it. When our deepest convictions are confronted and called into question, we then have to decide whether

we retain, revise or reject the conviction at issue. As Wesleyans, we consciously seek to guide this process of reflection by Scripture as it is informed by reason, tradition and experience. The Fathers of the Early Church were convinced that a thoroughly Christian worldview does not occur at the moment of conversion, but must be intentionally developed within the Christian community. It is only too possible for a person to change their beliefs and behaviors, without changing their worldview. Thus, they conform outwardly (for example, articulating our doctrines and keeping our general and special rules), while inwardly evaluating life from a pagan perspective. An education process that does not address human life at this deepest of levels is an inadequate one.

D. Holistic and not Fragmented

Our goal is the transformation of whole persons in all of their relationships and not merely various aspects of their person (spirit, mind) in some of their relationships (family, church). At our best, we have never settled for a purely intellectual and spiritual transformation of the people who neglected their emotional, physical and social life in the widest possible context. Wesleyans are incurable optimists regarding the sufficiency of the grace of God to effect real transformation in every dimension of creaturely existence.

E. Process-Oriented and not Crisis-Oriented

While we gladly confess that God can and does work instantaneous change in human beings; nevertheless, transformational depth and extension comes as a result of process and not merely crisis. The goal of theological education is not reached in a one-week seminar, a four-week intensive, a three-year Bachelor's degree, ordination or even a Ph.D. It is life-long learning, even though that will have stages of intense activity and stages of application and reflection.

F. "Nurtured" and not "Forced"

With modern technology, we have been able to "force" plant and animal development to enable us to have access to food products

after a much shorter period of growth than previous generations of farmers were ever able to imagine. Being successful in applying technology in this area has made us equally confident that we can apply the same ideology to education. However, human beings and their relationships are much more complex than much of the modern scientific enterprise is willing to acknowledge. Life transformation is never the product of haste and pressure in an artificial, constructed environment. The process of education bears more relationship to natural biological growth than it does to production line methods, to the wisdom of the pre-modern farmer than the science of the engineer. We must deal honestly with the dangerous attraction of "short-cuts," quick fixes, and speeded-up processes to solve immediate problems at the expense of their long-term implications and consequences.

G. An Ethos to be Immersed in and not merely a Course of Study to Pass

In the process of education, some things are "caught" and not "taught." Here we encounter the "mystery" of human learning that is not reducible to a system to be followed, with outcomes guaranteed if the process is followed accurately. There are real limitations in any formal learning system; profound personal and social change through human interaction is often beyond our ability as educators to explain, document, and then replicate. Some of the most profound changes occur in the casual encounters that are part of any community life. This is where we see the importance of "immersion" in a learning community that has itself captured the ethos of our tradition, so that students may be "infected" by it in many subtle and unconscious ways. This is not to deny the validity of short-term learning communities (through intensives, retreats, and workshops for example), but they ought not to be a total substitute for a more extended immersion period and for some form of repeated immersion. If we fail to do this, especially in areas of rapid numerical growth in the church, we are in danger of developing an independence that is ignorant of the richness and subtlety of our theological tradition and may result in its eventual loss.

III. Elements in Quality Theological Education from a Wesleyan Perspective

Having briefly considered the key theological elements of the Wesleyan tradition and some of the implications for education, we now turn to trying to define some of the elements involved in quality education from a Wesleyan perspective.

A. Quality Theological Education Involves a Living Model

Theological education in a Wesleyan mode can never be purely abstract or ideational, based only on the reading of texts, watching of video images or interacting with cyberspace. Just as Christianity is a life to be lived, so education is a process to be modeled, and this requires living teachers who in their own lives not only point to Christ and ministry but also model Christ and ministry. We take the incarnational principle with utmost seriousness and we substitute artificial electronic encounters for this at our peril.

B. Quality Theological Education Involves a Mentor

The role of the teacher is not simply to speak the words or point to the resources that instruct, but also to share the educational journey with the student. We take seriously the role of personal relationship in forming and shaping persons in Christlikeness. This means that we are as concerned for the *being* of our student as we are for the *doing* of our student in ministry. We also take seriously the "one another" passages of Scripture, as well as Wesley's instruction to "watch over one another in love" in the *General Rules* of 1743.

C. Quality Theological Education Involves a Relational Method

We do not deny the importance of educational resources in books, videos, electronic databases, etc., but all of these on their own are fundamentally inadequate to produce transformation understood from a theological standpoint. The modern conception of the person as an autonomous individual thinker was never a biblical model and is

certainly under increasing suspicion in a postmodern environment. I believe that Trinitarian theology informs us that we are essentially "beings-in-community"; thus, relationship lies at the core of what it means to be human—both relationship with God and with my neighbor. If this is true, then human potential from a Christian perspective can never be reached by the isolated "self" being addressed by books and images, whether delivered conventionally or by cyberspace. Being human involves a "face-to-face" relationship, where physicality is an essential dimension. The biblical witness emphasizes the physicality of the Incarnation, for Jesus Christ did not come to us as an idea, a book, or an image (electronic or otherwise), but as a "flesh and blood" human being. An encounter with Jesus of Nazareth involved not merely hearing or seeing him, but also touching and smelling him! Theologically, can an electronic or cyberspace community ever replace a physical one? The fact that we have had to invent "emoticons" to express emotions in electronic communication simply underscores the limitations of such communities. It is very important that we do not confuse *means* and *ends* in the education process; computers, videos, Internet, e-mail, telephone/videoconferencing, and even books are all *means* and not *ends* in themselves. Thus they can supplement and enrich the face-to-face physical encounter, but they cannot replace it.

D. Quality Theological Education Involves the Means of Grace

Personal and community transformation will not occur by purely spiritual or intellectual means. The final goal of transformation and the reality of human sinfulness requires the conscious adoption of the Wesleyan means of grace. Wesley saw these as essential to the whole process and believed the neglect of them was always detrimental. Holiness is a life in relationship that needs personal response, nurturing and care. It does not occur by the action of God on His own, nor is it simply a spontaneous occurrence in the life of the Christian. Christian formation can only truly occur within a specific

liturgical, communal and devotional context. In these settings, the means of grace are outward signs, words or actions ordained of God to be the ordinary channels through which He might convey to us grace for Christian living at every stage of life. They enable us to know both the presence of God (who empowers the means) and the nature of God (His character that provides the pattern for our lives). In this way we are encouraged and helped on our journey towards Christlikeness within the community of faith, which both forms and shapes us through such means as: Christian discipline and mutual accountability, prayer and fasting, watching, self-denial, taking up one's cross, love feasts, covenant services, the Eucharist, searching the Scriptures, tradition, prayers, and hymns. Students must not be told about these as academic curiosities, but must be immersed in them, so that they in turn can replicate the means in the communities of faith they will serve.

E. Quality Theological Education Involves Maturation

Quality theological education requires time, for we learn best when ideas have an opportunity to incubate and come to maturity in the person's life. Holistic education needs the student to be exposed to a wide variety of situations and relationships over the whole of life. There needs to be an unending cycle of information, action and reflection as the minister continues to serve the church. Life-long learning is, therefore, not an option but a vital necessity, with appropriate expectations for the stages of the journey and the degree of faith present.

F. Quality Theological Education Involves a Practical Dimension

The Wesleyan tradition has always believed that life is to be lived in the here and now, and that ministers are to be involved in actual service to the Lord in the place, time and situation of God's appointment. Theoretical knowledge is never sufficient, for students must

always be enabled to apply what is being learned in the classroom to the actual ministry situation they face. Competencies are to be demonstrated in real-life settings, not simply in classroom ones. This is why it is essential that we have an intentional program of induction into the realities of ministry through some form of supervised ministry experience as a requirement prior to ordination. This must then become a life-long process, for every "Paul" has his "Timothy," who is in turn a "Paul" to another following on behind.

Conclusion

I believe that God raised up the Church of the Nazarene (as He raised up Methodism earlier) to serve the world in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ by bearing witness to holiness of heart and life, with all that this implies for every dimension of human existence. While we are gladly a part of the Church Universal, we also have our particular gifts and graces to exercise within this Church. If we fail to do so, then the Lord will raise up another to take our place. Therefore, in spite of all the trends away from denominational loyalty towards congregational independence and a sort of generic evangelical Christianity, we dare not abdicate our particular responsibilities. That means that we must actively foster our Wesleyan theological tradition and ethos, ensuring that it is passed on to new Nazarenes and to the next generation of Nazarenes. The role of quality theological education from a Wesleyan perspective in this process can hardly be understated!

All of the factors mentioned earlier in the paper must be borne in mind as we design the curriculum, select the teachers, and choose the delivery methods. In it all, we must not dissolve the individual-community tension in life-long learning and ministry. The educational process must involve: the residential colleges, extension centers, the local, district and general church, the local communities, as well as the

individual teachers, pastors, and students in a permanent learning contract for the whole of life. The key is a system of life-long learning guided by a distinctively Wesleyan theological perspective that is educationally dynamic, flexible, and responsive to "the present age," while maintaining an unshakeable commitment to our own church tradition and ethos.

WE BELIEVE IN QUALITY EDUCATION – *SELAH*

Musings on the Subject of Quality Education

Jim and Carol Rotz

I suppose everyone in this conference—in fact, most people in general—would agree with the statement, "We believe in quality education." We might even hear some hearty "Amens." Our students also agree. They want a "good" education. Sometimes they even demand a "better" education. The mission statement for this conference reads, "To develop a worldwide system of quality education to prepare pastors to carry out the mission of the church."[1] That is why we are here. We believe in quality education. But, note the final word in the title. *Selah.*

Selah is an isolated Hebrew word occurring 71 times in the Psalms and three times in Habakkuk. It is generally agreed[2] that *Selah* is a musical or liturgical sign, although its precise meaning is not known. So, why does this obscure word appear in the title for this discussion of quality education? The various possibilities of its meaning provide

[1]"Great Commission Pastors for the 21st Century: A Global Strategy for Theological Education," (Unpublished paper of the Church of the Nazarene, revised 3-4-99).

[2]According to D. J. Wiseman, "Selah" *The New Bible Dictionary* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1962), via Logos Library System.

perspectives for approaching this statement which we so unanimously endorse.

Selah may be a musical direction to the singers and/or orchestra to "lift up", that is to play or sing *forte* or *crescendo*. In this understanding, *Selah* would simply emphasize our belief in and commitment to quality education by asking us to say it with uplifted voices. This reminds me of a team support chant from my high school pep rally days. We would repeat the statement, We like our team, emphasizing each element. In the case of quality education, we would raise our voices, as follows: WE believe in quality education. We BELIEVE in quality education. We believe in QUALITY education. We believe in quality EDUCATION. And, finally, WE BELIEVE IN QUALITY EDUCATION. Well, you get the point. It becomes a slogan, a rallying point, an affirmation of our commitment to quality education. This understanding of *Selah*, then, is appropriate to our meetings here in Bangkok—we believe in quality education.

Selah may have been used to indicate a liturgical mark. It may mean to lift up the voice or hands in prayer, or to bow—directing the worshiper to prostrate himself. In reference to quality education, then, it would indicate the need for divine help in accomplishing the task. We believe in quality education—God help us. The task is too big. We do not have enough qualified personnel. We do not have enough up-to-date equipment. We do not have money for textbooks and library books. We do not have adequate facilities. We do not have well-prepared, motivated students. We could go on. So, this meaning of *Selah* is appropriate. We believe in quality education, but the task is enormous. We need God's help and guidance.

A third possibility for the meaning of *Selah* is an exclamation, "for ever." This would make it a cry of worship like "Amen" and "Hallelujah." So be it! Praise God! Quality education is both a reality (Praise God!) and a goal (so be it). Sometimes we feel good about the way we have been able to prepare and develop a course. Praise God.

But sometimes the tyranny of the urgent means we just stay one chapter (or page) ahead of the students as we prepare for class each day. "Quality" becomes a distant goal. Sometimes the needs are so varied that we are not able to specialize as we would like, and quality seems quite illusive. Amen. Quality education is something we do, as we do our very best in spite of all the difficulties. Recent testimonies and comments by our students at Melanesia Nazarene Bible College have emphasized their thankfulness for the quality education they are receiving. Hallelujah! Praise the Lord. But they are also looking forward. They are criticizing some areas where we need to improve. Amen. We must keep working toward better quality education. Our faculty concurs. Two of our faculty who are not here today asked us to stress the need for a vision coupled with action that refuses to accept defeat. Amen. Hallelujah. *Selah.* Forever.

My favorite (if not the most technically correct) definition of *Selah* is "chew on that a while." Many years ago, during my undergraduate years, a college president gave that interpretation. He suggested that when we come across *Selah* as we read the Psalms, we should pause and consider what we have read. And as a cow chews her cud, we should take time to think about its truth and how it applies to us, how it might be implemented in our lives. We believe in quality education. Let's think about that. What do we mean by that statement? How do we achieve quality education?

The following thoughts stem from over 18 years in the classroom in theological education in developing countries. By no means do we intend to suggest that we have arrived or that these ideas are the final, definitive answers to the immense task we face every day. These are observations and recommendations gained from fruitful interaction with students and fellow faculty members and administrators, all seeking excellence in education.

I. Commitment

A pre-requisite for excellence in education is a firm commitment to both the concept and its implementation.

A. We have an historical precedent in the Church of the Nazarene for such a commitment.

The various groups that joined to form the denomination supported at least eleven different Bible colleges. These were intended to prepare pastors and missionaries. Within the context of the United States it was decided to progress to liberal arts colleges in accordance with the educational development of the country. The desire was to be able to prepare ministers to be able to speak to all levels of society, from the least to the most sophisticated.

This idea was not confined to the United States. Early on the Bible college faculty and church leaders of the Church of the Nazarene in the Cape Verde Islands determined to provide the best possible education for their students. Necessary sacrifices were made to provide this level of education. As a result, today, the most respected, influential and largest evangelical church in Cape Verde is the Church of the Nazarene.

The unique demands of Cape Verde required unique solutions. Every situation, every school is unique. Due to the unique needs and resources of each field, contextualization is a must. While we have a core curriculum to unite and standardize our theological education, we have great latitude in delivery methods and teaching techniques to present the curriculum as well as significant freedom in supplementary courses to help make the Gospel message understandable within each unique context. We have a mandate from our constituency to deliver this eternal message of hope in such a way that it will penetrate to the core of each and every culture which it encounters.

B. Creation of Life-long Learners

I asked 16 first-year students at Melanesia Nazarene Bible College what they thought about quality education. Almost unanimously they

emphasized the quality and commitment of both teachers and students. They understand that quality education is more about who we are than what we do. In terms of quality teachers, our model is the Master Teacher.

He never taught a lesson in a classroom; He had no tools to work with, such as blackboards, maps or charts; He used no subject outlines, kept no records, gave no grades, and his only text was ancient and well-worn.

His students were the poor, the lame, the deaf, the blind, the outcast—and His method was the same with all who came to hear and learn. He opened eyes with faith; He opened ears with simple truth; and He opened hearts with love—a love born of forgiveness.

A gentle man, a humble man, He asked and won no honors, no gold awards of tribute to his expertise or wisdom. And yet this quiet teacher from the hills of Galilee has fed the needs, fulfilled the hopes, and changed the lives of many millions; for what He taught brought heaven to earth and revealed God's heart to mankind.[3]

We must model to our students the spirit of our model, Jesus. That is first and foremost what quality education is all about. But, it is not enough to "know" or even to "be", we must demonstrate our knowledge and character in action. That is why the Church's educational objectives, stated in terms of knowing, being, and doing are so important.

One of the "doing" outcomes we desire for our students is that they pursue life-long learning. As the *Sourcebook* states, ". . . the educational approach should stimulate the desire for ongoing

[3]"The Teacher," as presented at Faculty Retreat, Northwest Nazarene University, 1992.

education and provide the tools for personal development."[4] Quality educators seek to instil a lifestyle of learning and development.

One aspect of that educational approach is a refusal to settle for "banking" education. The banking image is that of depositing information into the students and withdrawing it for examinations. Certainly, some basic rote learning is necessary, but we must go beyond such a banking mentality. In spite of his theological shortcomings, Paulo Freire[5] provides insights for the development of lifelong learners. He maintains that students need to be set free from the teacher who limits the activity and power of students. He advocates a way of teaching that will enable persons to become more aware of and responsible for themselves and their world. This is achieved through "praxis," a process of reflection followed by action and further reflection.

The goal is to transform students from depositories of a prescribed body of information to active agents. And students who are active and creative, who have the capacity to examine critically and interact with their world, continue to do so. Learning through praxis becomes a lifestyle that transforms them and their world.

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[4]Chapter 5 of the *Sourcebook on Developmental Standards for Ordination* delineates the philosophy, purpose, responsibility and program development for lifelong learning.

[5]Friere contrasts banking education and "conscientization" in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, trans. Myra Bergman Ramos (New York: Seabury, 1970), 58-74. Unfortunately, his theology fails to deal with sin and so distorts the application of his theory. For a fuller critique of his position see Robert W. Pazmiño, *Foundational Issues in Christian Education: An Introduction in Evangelical Perspective* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1988), 68-72, 162-63.

II. Investment

A. Financial: Education is an investment in the future.

Education is an expensive proposition. No matter what delivery system is used, there are considerable sums of money involved. This is of particular concern for those of us in developing countries because the move within the Church of the Nazarene is to self-sustaining programs. The day of subsidies is drawing to a close, and rightfully so. It is time for each school and its constituency to take ownership in all areas as soon as possible.

The implications of this move are far reaching. Are the current institutions and delivery methods sustainable in their present form or should they change to meet the needs and available resources of the communities they serve? Who will make these difficult decisions? Once the decisions have been made, who will implement them and pay for them?

Since the prospects of outside support for our educational institutions is waning, the questions we must immediately ask are: Will we take up the challenge? Will we make the necessary changes and financial sacrifices to provide excellence in education?

B. All investments must be wisely made.

We must never lose sight of the fact that our commitment to excellence in education is an investment in the future of our church. Investments must always be wisely made to reap the greatest dividends. Today we are challenged by the need for pastors to fill vacant pulpits. Church planting has progressed faster than our ability to produce trained pastors by traditional means. The temptation is to lose sight of our long range goals of excellence in education in order to fill quickly the pulpits. This need not occur if we continue to value and support our institutions while significantly strengthening our non-

institutional delivery methods. As long as our educational institutions are committed to excellence in ***ALL*** theological education and are vitally involved in developing and implementing ***ALL*** delivery methods, quality education will be maintained.

This excellence demands plain, old—

II. Hard Work (Implementation)

A. It means not cutting corners to accommodate short term goals of a student.

We must be compassionate towards our students. Not only are we their teachers, often we are their role models and mentors. Our lives are (or should be) closely intertwined for the time we are together. Often they adopt our attitudes which will influence their ministry for the rest of their lives. Our influence upon them is an awesome thing and needs to be considered. But this topic is beyond the scope of this paper.

Despite the closeness we develop with our students, we must never lose sight of our commitment to excellence in education. Sometimes there are requests made by students for special considerations and exceptions to the established rules and requirements. There is the temptation to waive rules or requirements out of compassion. However, an underlying premise is that the requirements and/or rules were established to insure a quality education. If we refuse to acknowledge the rules and requirements, we are, in effect, lowering our academic standards; and our calls for excellence in education ring hollow. Referring requests for exceptions or exemptions to an academic committee relieves the individual teacher of the burden of making such a decision when she or he is emotionally involved. It also allows a group to consider the request and rule upon its merits. Exceptions should be just that—exceptions. They should be few and far between as long as our programmes are well thought-out and driven by a quest for excellence .

B. Syllabus

A syllabus is a contract between the teacher and the student. As a contract it is binding on both student and teacher. It spells out what is expected of both learners and teacher. It forces the teacher to set goals and develop means of achieving them. It clarifies the tasks at hand.

C. Calendar of Events - Daily Schedule

The goals that have been set in the syllabus can be progressively achieved through the publishing of a daily schedule, provided with the syllabus. The overall goals can be divided into daily goals. Topics of discussion/lecture can be set out so that everyone involved can prepare adequately for the event.

D. Teaching Plans–Expansion of Calendar of Events

The teacher can use the Calendar of Events to produce detailed teaching plans for each day of class. Here the teacher can plan how best to approach the topic at hand and the materials needed for the class period. The whole purpose of this exercise is to plan ahead to insure meaningful, varied educational activity.

E. Specialize (as far as possible)

To enrich the learning experience for student and teacher it is best for the teacher to be able to teach out of a depth of knowledge. This depth is obtained by additional study by the teacher either informally or formally. If we want our students to become life-long-learners, we must set the pattern.

A teacher should supplement a course every time it is taught. Preparation need not be simply reviewing what has been presented previously. It should include careful evaluation of a class which was taught previously. It should also plan on implementing new teaching methods and introducing new material or at least refreshing that which has been done previously.

F. Using Non-Teaching Time to Upgrade Skills/Update Information

When not teaching, one is not on holiday. Perhaps some of the incorrect perceptions of teachers having the "good life" because they have so many holidays or teach only a few hours per day are justified. Often non-teaching time could be spent more productively by the educator. This time is ideal for taking courses or reading new material in one's area, i.e. improving oneself as an educator.

Educators, like mere mortals, need holiday time to regroup themselves. However, these times should be scheduled and used for this purpose. Otherwise, educators are (or should be) "on the job" even though there might not be a classroom full of students in front of them.

There is a real danger for theological educators to feel (or be made to feel) that the "real" ministry is "out there." Consequently, the educator takes on other ministerial roles (such as pastoring a church) in their "spare" time. The result of this is overload which causes the minister/educator to perform both ministries less effectively.

G. Network with Other Teachers/Schools

Re-inventing the wheel in this day and age is tantamount to educational sin. It is sheer audacity to think that we are the "yea" and "amen," the only ones holding the keys to theological education. (Some have defined the essence of sin as elevation of self to the place of God.) Developing reciprocal relationships with nearby theological education institutions can be mutually beneficial. It is also good stewardship of resources.

We believe in quality education.

Selah.

NEWS BRIEFS

Heritage Day in November 2000 marked the 17th anniversary of Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary. The day was highlighted by the presentation of the first *Bridge Builder Award* to Dr. Floyd T. Cunningham. The remarks of the President in presenting the award were as follows:

> For some years now, I have wanted to establish an elite award that would be given occasionally in the history of APNTS in honor of long years of service and significant contributions to the mission of the seminary.
>
> I have searched in vain for the perfect tangible gift to bestow on such individuals. I have sought for the proper title of the award, the correct time to initiate it, and the person who should be so honored. I believe that the time has come and that the identity of the person is clear.
>
> By action of the Board of Trustees of Asia-Pacific Theological Seminary, I am pleased to announce the inauguration of *The Bridge Builder Award.*
>
> In my report to the Board last year, I included the following remarks:
>
> Dr. Floyd Cunningham has served the Seminary since it began in November 1983. Having just completed his doctoral studies, he accepted the change of direction in his future plans in order to join the original faculty. He has taught within his discipline and outside it—here and in other countries. For more than a decade he has served as Academic Dean, providing continuity

and stability to our academic and administrative team. He is the repository of our history, of precedent, and of the rationale behind carefully developed policy. He has been our primary liaison with the agencies of the Philippine Government, with accrediting agencies, and has played a significant role in our search for needed faculty. Dr. Cunningham takes on the tedious task of arranging class and teaching schedules so that the needs of students and of faculty are woven into a manageable whole. He is being relied on increasingly as a resource person by the General Church. He has been my strong right arm throughout my years here at APNTS.

It is with deep appreciation that we announce that the Board has warmly has honored my recommendation that the first award be granted to—Dr. Floyd Timothy Cunningham.

Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary Presents the First *Bridge Builder Award* to

Dr. Floyd T. Cunningham

Graduate of Eastern Nazarene College, Nazarene Theological Seminary, and Johns Hopkins University;
Founding member of the APNTS faculty, Professor, Pastor, Administrator, Scholar, and Church Historian, Chaplain, Dean of Students, and for 12 years, Academic Dean.

Builder of Bridges

Between The Seminary's Past and its Future
Between the Fledgling Institution and the Mature Seminary
Between Applicants and Alumni
Between Who students have been and Who they can become
Between Classroom and Congregation

Bridging the Gap

Between APNTS and many cultures
Between the seminary and accrediting agencies and

government departments
Between our campus and sister institutions
Between Nazarenes and fraternal denominations

Dr. Cunningham has devoted his entire professional life to Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary making invaluable contributions to the lives of generations of students and leaving an indelible mark upon the identity of the institution. His shadow is long. His service has been exemplary. His faithfulness has been enduring. His commitment has been firm. His students, his colleagues, and his Lord all say, Thank you! Well done!

Given at Taytay, Rizal, Philippines
this 28th day of November, 2000
by the authority of the Board of Trustees

John M. Nielson
President

* * * * *

During the last week of January 2001, a committee worked on recommendations for re-structuring the APNTS programs in missions. Members of the committee were:

- Dr. Floyd Cunningham, Academic Dean (and expert in History of Nazarene Missions)
- Dr. Robert Donahue, APNTS faculty (D.Miss. concentrating on Worldview and Urban Issues)
- Dr. Christi-An Bennett, APNTS faculty (Ph.D. focusing in History of Missions)

- Dr. Paul Fukue, APNTS faculty (Th.D., with interests in the Sociology of Religion)
- Rev. Mark Hatcher, APNTS adjunct faculty (candidate for Ph.D. in Intercultural Studies)

Also participating in the sessions were Mrs. Rovina Hatcher and John M. Nielson. Other APNTS faculty members who would contribute to the missions program are Mrs. Beverly Gruver (ESL and Linguistics) and Dr. Stanley Clark (Linguistics).

Within the next 2 years the seminary would hope to have the following programs in place:

- Graduate Certificate (1 semester)
- Graduate Diploma (2 semesters)
- M.Div. – Concentration in Missions (up to 36 hours of missions courses), already in place
- M.A. Religion – Concentration in Missions (up to 39 hours of missions)
- M.A. Inter-Cultural Studies (40 hours of missions)
- PLUS Missions courses in both M.A.R.E. and M.A. Christian Communication degrees

Highlights of the program would include:

- Exceptionally strong Faculty
- All professors are missionaries.
- All students are international students.
- Every class is a cross-cultural experience.
- Every course is taught from a missions perspective.

- Internships and Residencies (up to 12 hours required) in a region that covers all the major religions of the world
- Multi-cultural Asia-Pacific environment in the Philippine setting
- Distinctively Wesleyan-Holiness
- Fellow students are seen as peers and not as objects for study.

As the programs are developed, the seminary will pursue partnerships with other Nazarene institutions and will develop on-site experiences and courses supervised by faculty who serve on various fields of our Region.

* * * * *

Rev. Mark Hatcher also preached for a special series of chapel services for Missions Week during his visit to APNTS. His sermons were built around the theme, "A Sense of Mission," and focused on the role of each person of the Trinity.

Sent by God

The One Sent to Aid Us

The God Who Sends

* * * * *

APNTS is pleased to announce that Dr. Histoshi (Paul) Fukue and his wife Mitsuko will be joining the faculty for the start of the school year 2001-2002. Dr. Fukue is a graduate of Northwest Nazarene University, Nazarene Theological Seminary, and Boston University where he earned a Th.D. in Philosophy, Theology, and Ethics. For 25 years, he has ministered as a Nazarene pastor in Japan, serving in Kochi, Oyamadai, and the College Church of Japan Christian Junior College (JCJC). He has also served as the President of JCJC. He will teach courses in Theology, Sociology & Religion,

and Ethics. Mitsuko, his wife, holds a Masters Degree in Education from Boston University, has pursued doctoral work, and has extensive teaching experience.

The Fukues have a married son, who is studying at Boston University, and a daughter, who will continue her university studies in Japan. Dr. Fukue has served several years as an adjunct professor at APNTS. The seminary is pleased that they will finally be able to join the seminary family on a full-time basis.

* * * * *

The faculty committee on Distance Education and Information Techonologies has been continuing its work toward recommending new programs for the seminary along with seeking grants to jump start those programs. Under the chairmanship of Dr. David Ackerman, the committee is examining the development of an on-campus network, re-design of the Seminary website (APNTS.com.ph), inaugurating on-line courses and workshops, and continuing education and life-long relationships with alumni/ae. Mrs. Rovina Hatcher, who supervises faculty instruction for Information Technologies at Asbury College, served as a consultant to the committee in late January. APNTS continues to seek ways of enhancing what the Church of the Nazarene offers to its constituents world-wide without re-inventing or competing with what is already being done by sister institutions.

* * * * *

Dr. Jerry Lambert, Education Commissioner for the Church of the Nazarene, was the speaker for the 16th Commencement of Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary. He also participated in the meetings of the Board of Trustees. Dr. Lambert served as a pastor and District Superintendent before becoming president of Nazarene Bible College in Colorado. He has served in his current assignment for the past 8 years.

* * * * *

Construction of a new Faculty house has been initiated since the last issue of the Mediator. The project has had significant funding from the Los Angeles District (USA), which also sent a 16 member work and witness team under the leadership of Rev. Gordon Gibson, who served as the first Director of Campus Development at APNTS.

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Plans continue for the development of the campus. Final decisions are being made on the location and construction timetable for the Center for Education and Evangelism. The building will house faculty offices, classrooms, and a multi-purpose auditorium. It will also serve as the new home of the Fairbanks Media Center that coordinates the media interests of the Asia-Pacific Region as well as supporting the Communication courses at the Seminary.

CALL FOR PAPERS

One of the purposes of *The Mediator* is to provide a forum for dialogue about theological issues related to ministry in Asian and Pacific contexts. In keeping with this purpose, the editorial committee of the journal is seeking quality papers on the following topics. Also welcome are reviews of publications, including books and music.

Ministering in Secular and Pluralistic Societies

(Volume 3, Number 2 [April 2002])

Areas of consideration might include the challenges churches face within these types of societies. The topics could be addressed from a number of directions including biblical, theological, sociological, historical, missiological, or psychological perspectives.

Interpreting Holiness for Asian-Pacific Contexts

(Volume 4, Number 1 [October 2002])

Proposed articles should focus on the theme of holiness. A number of areas might be considered, including biblical theology, systematic theology, contextual interpretations of holiness, model holiness sermons, or historical studies, to name a few.

Guidelines for Submission

Please submit all proposed articles to the editor in both paper and electronic forms. Articles formatted in most modern word processing programs are acceptable, but preferred is Word Perfect. The proposed article should be in standard international English. Citations should contain complete bibliographic information, or a bibliography should be provided at the end of the article. Footnotes are preferred over endnotes. Kate Turabian, *A Manual for Writers*, 6th edition, is the preferred standard. Papers may be of any length, although authors may be asked to condense longer papers. A list of non-standard abbreviations should be provided.

BRIDGING CULTURES FOR CHRIST

For there is one God and one mediator between

God and humanity–

the man Christ Jesus (1 Timothy 2:5).

Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary is a graduate level school of the Church of the Nazarene. It is located on the outskirts of Manila, Republic of the Philippines.

This graduate school exists to prepare men and women for ministry in the Asia-Pacific region and throughout the world by developing personal and professional attitudes and skills so as to enable analytical reflection upon Christian faith and life, and competencies in the practice of ministry. Since its first graduating class in 1986, APNTS has trained men and women for a wide range of vocations. Today, over 175 graduates serve as pastors, teachers, Bible college presidents, missionaries, and various other church and para-church workers.

APNTS seeks to live out the holistic approach to the Gospel–a distinctive Wesleyan contribution to Christianity.

Degrees and Programs:

APNTS offers a number of degrees and programs including:

- ✓ **Master of Divinity** (93 units) with possible concentrations in Biblical Studies, Religious Education, Missions, and Christian Communication..
- ✓ **Master of Arts in Religious Education** (52 units) with possible concentrations in Curriculum or Church Ministries.
- ✓ **Master of Arts in Christian Communication** (52 units) with emphasis in radio, video and print media.

English is the language of instruction in the classrooms. Thus, students must pass the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or the APNTS English Proficiency Exam to register.

Faculty

The well-qualified teaching staff upholds a high level of education. Adjunct and visiting professors from both within and outside the Asia-Pacific region help expand students' worldviews.

Accreditation

APNTS is accredited by the Philippines Association of Bible & Theological Schools (PABATS), Asia Theological Association (ATA), and the Association for Theological Education in Southeast Asia (ATESEA), and is recognized by the Philippines Commission for Higher Education (CHED).

For further information or for an application, please write to the address below and indicate

Program(s) of interest:
❒ Master of Divinity
❒ Master of Arts in Christian Communication
❒ Master of Arts in Religious Education

Materials we can provide you:
❒ Student Catalogue
❒ Application Form
❒ Other (please specify)

Please send all correspondence to

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