"Between Two Worlds:
One Dead, the Other Powerless to be Born?"
Pentecostal Theological Education vs. Training for Christian Service

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For at least the last millennium of Christian history, if ever there were an example of the confusion of cultural values overwhelming truly Christian values it is in the area of training for ministry. Over a broad front, Western intellectual values inimical to normative Christian experience and their resulting teaching modalities have metastasized throughout the body of Christ, effectively killing many of its members. That is, whole denominations have virtually perished, spiritually and numerically, as a direct result of certain traditions within theological education—done in the wrong spirit, toward wrong goals, using wrong methods.

While it is fashionable these days for us new Pentecostal PhDs to smile at the older generation for their fear of "theological cemeteries," this year's SPS meeting affords us the opportunity to examine the concerns of our fathers[1] with at least the same urgency that we examine *other* crucial concerns that have occupied our time, such as, say, the five reasons for the Apostle Paul to have written the letter of Galatians to South Galatia and not North Galatia.

The English poet, Matthew Arnold, who sensed that he was "wandering between two worlds, one dead, the other powerless to be born," could well serve as a kind of spiritual archetype for today's Pentecostal seminaries or Bible colleges. The quotation appears in "Stanzas from the Grande Chartreuse," a reflection of Arnold's Romantic-era *zeitgeist*: a wistful longing for an ancient faith, both strong and reassuring, but which at the same time, he viewed as a naïve relic of simpler past, now sadly inaccessible to the enlightened seeker.

Similarly, we find ourselves trapped in a dilemma of our own making—of our own spiritual commitment. While on the one hand we clearly see the vitality of our fathers' faith, and that of the Third World, we at the same time find ourselves seduced by a sophisticated though secular worldview of education, that is, by almost any measure, moribund.

This situation seems profoundly ironic. Of all recent religious movements, Pentecostalism seems most sensitive to the paradigm of spiritual decline over generations: "a man, a message, a mission, a movement, a monument (or mausoleum)." Yet at the same time we can watch with mesmerized astonishment, the sense of *celebration* as our educational institutions move through the similar stages**:** from bible institutes, to colleges, to seminaries, to universities, even as parallel denominational institutions heighten and harden.[2]

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[1] As described in, *e.g.*, Wm. Menzies, *Anointed to Serve: The Story of the Assemblies of God* (Springfield, Mo.: Gospel Publishing House, 1971), 141.

[2] See C. Peter Wagner, *Churchquake: How the New Apostolic Reformation Is Shaking up the Church as We Know It* (Ventura, Calif.: Regal Press, 1999), 132-36. See also, "Statistics on the Assemblies of God, USA, 1997." Published by the Assemblies of God Headquarters, Springfield, Missouri. Is it coincidence that in the Assemblies of

Just as a squid, when threatened, releases volumes of ink, so let me squirt out some caveats on the nature of this study. First, even though it sounds like it, this paper is not a wholesale attack on Pentecostal/charismatic institutions, particularly seminaries. It is banal to say that we live and work at the end of a long evolution (or, perhaps better, *de*volution) of Christian institutions. When we think of examining the nature of theological education today, we are (or at least, I am) committed to working within traditions and institutions that depart in even in significant ways from the forms found in the New Testament. Hence, we expect to accommodate ourselves to the existing order, just as, say, St Paul did with the synagogue system and the religious *Lebensformen* of his day. We must add, however, that institutions are created and preserved by an agenda—either explicit or hidden. In any case, our true motives will ultimately emerge in tangible expressions of tradition and institution.

Second, we would not deny the power and utility of serious biblical and theological scholarship, at least in some venue. The point at issue here is not a question of anti-intellectualism or denial of academic rigor as it contributes to edification of the Church. Certainly, many of us owe much to the labors of the biblical theology movement spawned two generations ago by Neo-orthodoxy! This movement was the source of a radically charismatic understanding of the Spirit, of the Kingdom of God, the meaning of NT miracles, discipleship and the solution of so many of our theological problems with the discovery of the NT tension of the "already" and "not yet," just to name a few issues. Indeed, our whole theological vocabulary from one end to the other has been enriched by works like Kittel's *Theological Dictionary.* A few of us "out-of-the-closet" Pentecostals, besieged in cessationist seminaries in the 1960s found great comfort and support in such biblical theologies as Alan Richardson (my favorite), Schlatter and Jeremias. Even Bultmann's *NT Theology* and Gunkel's *Die Wirkungen des Heligen Geistes*—as long as we stayed in the "descriptive" material—showed us Pentecostals that we *could* believe our own eyes (against our Evangelical instructors') when we read the New Testament![3]

A generation later, we can rejoice in the explosion of more moderate and Pentecostal-friendly literature from Evangelicals, even from people in this group, who collectively today more nearly dominate North American biblical and theological scholarship. Certainly these works reflect the Godly excitement of spiritual discovery, following the divine mandate to explore and subdue God's good creation. The question this observation raises, however, is how scholarship fits into the mission of the seminary.

Third, even though the intervening years of Church history have produced great insights into Christian thought and practice, we would prescind from generating a historical survey of these issues to examine applicable biblical teaching as a starting point for further discussion. It is naïve to assume that our biblical hermeneutic is unaffected by our tradition, yet we would

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God, at least, the growth rate of the 1970s was 65%, the 1980s, 29% and the projected rate for the "Decade of Harvest," the 1990s, is less than 5%?

[3] Perhaps the strongest case I have discovered for the intellectual mission of the seminary is by George Marsden, "The Intellectual Task of a Theological Seminary," *Review and Expositor* 92:3 (Summer, 1995), 351-57. Of course,this present paper is not arguing against intellectual rigor, but intellectualism–the institutionalized centrality of academics vs. the training of effective Christian workers.

submit that the biblical material has not yet had an entirely fair hearing on generating policy for seminaries.[4]

Fourth, we need a word on definitions. For this paper, the term, "theological education" represents the traditional seminary approach to developing clergy, with an emphasis upon the acquisition of information rather than the acquisition of effective spiritual and ministry giftings. "Christian discipleship" is more the reverse.

This paper attempts to move beyond the simple observations about the efficacy of Pentecostal ministerial training, which, at least statistically in terms of outcomes these days, probably is not all that bad.[5] Despite the fairly positive figures, however, there is a continuing unease that traditional seminary education somehow fails to deliver on its promise of producing effective Christian workers[6]−that the seminary experience contributes little to the effectiveness its graduates. A premise of this paper is that *to the extent that* Pentecostal/charismatic seminaries participate in the characteristics of traditional theological education (TTE), in the areas outlined below, is the extent to which this criticism applies. This paper is not an attempt to impugn the motives or Christian commitment of overworked professors in Pentecostal/charismatic seminaries and Bible colleges. I hope it may serve as a warning to us as to the power of our widely-accepted cultural expressions, particularly, academic structures, to vitiate the effectiveness of our Christian ministry.

This project seeks to examine three issues that the New Testament views as foundational to the development of a productive minister/disciple as against their expression in traditional theological education (TTE) which prove to be inimical to effective Christian ministry training. These are: 1) epistemology, 2) goals, and, 3) teaching modalities. Each of these elements will be examined in a dialectic: first from the starting point of the biblical norms, then from elements

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[4] See the survey of the problem in Robert Banks, *Reenvisioning Theological Education: Exploring a Missional Alternative to Current Models* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 73-126. Banks comes closest to a biblical model for training Christian workers that I have seen. My problem with his work is his failure to explore fully enough the charismatic dimension of Christian mission. See also, David H. Kelsey, "Rethinking Theological Education," ATLA 48th Annual Conference, June, 1994. *American Theological Libraries Association Proceedings,* 48 (1994), 123-34.

[5] The Church of God Theological Seminary, Cleveland, Tennessee, reports, informally, that only 4% of its graduates, one year after receiving their degrees were *not* in full time ministry. AGTS in Springfield, reports an astonishing 92.4% in full time ministry at one year. In a larger survey of all 1,948 alumni contacted, 35%, or 682 returned questionnaires. Of those, 84% of respondents were holding credentials. Regent University School of Divinity reports 55% of graduates in full-time ministry one year after graduation.

[6] *E.g.*, Eta Linneman, "Why the Pastor Sounds Like an Agnostic: The Theological Academy and the Destruction of Faith [excerpt from *Historical Criticism of the Bible: Methodology or Ideology? 1990*]. *Touchstone: A Journal of Ecumenical Orthodoxy* 7 (Winter 1994), 14-19. Seminary effectiveness is a recurring source of angst among the *cognoscenti* of ATS in their house journal, *Theological Education.* S. Loren Bowman, *et al.*, "Some Contributions to Planning the Future of Theological Education: What Is Needed in and from Theological Schools?" XI/1 (Autumn 1974),   and articles under the issue titles, *e.g.*, *The Purpose of a Theological School Twelve Years Later.* XIV:2 (Spring 1978); *Dialogue between Church and Seminary* XV:2 (Spring 1979); *Evaluation in Theological Education* XXII:1 (Autumn 1985); *Theological Education as the Formation of Character* XXIV: Supplement 1, 1988.

in theological education that contravene those norms, and finally a statement of how the biblical alternative might be practically and appropriately experienced in discipleship.

Our first area of investigation is central to understanding the internal contradictions characterizing any traditional seminary.

I. Epistemology

A. Biblical Grounding

Epistemology lies at the very core of what it is to be Christian. The central story of scripture is the issue of first, how we know something is true, and then second, what does one does about it. Placed as prominently as possible in the key narratives of the first and Second Adam is the same temptation: to ignore the direct and immediate voice of God and to act independently according to some other principle.

We know the story of Eve's choice: to heed God or, on the other hand, to be "like God" by her own knowledge isolated from God. But the temptation of the Second Adam is more variously understood. My understanding is that in typical Semitic style, the three temptations are variations on a single theme: the temptation to mis-apply or pre-apply God's "promises" without the immediate assurance of faith (revealed knowledge) to confirm the principle *in this case.* The temptations are an exercise in the OT "wisdom" tradition in which the wise person *discerns* the appropriate application of a principle. In both narratives the issue is "a hearing of faith" or "works of the law." Is Christian knowledge at its core revelatory or is it the independent human acquisition and processing of information?

The beginning of Paul's theological tractate, Romans, lays out the same alternatives before mankind: will "the just man . . . live by his *faith*" (hearing God with appropriate response) or will he "suppress the truth in his unrighteousness"? "For although they knew God they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, [so without this orientation and commitment] they became futile in their thinking and their senseless minds/hearts were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools," and it is all down hill from there.

The first three chapters of 1 Corinthians treat the two ways of knowing in some detail. Paul sets the tone of this section around a theme of divisions "in mind and thought," precipitating around leaders of Christian "schools" (Paul, Apollos, Cephas, Christ). Paul is fearful that the initiatory Christian experience, baptism, would result in a misdirected bonding with a leader/teacher in the Christian community. This bonding of students around a teacher was the standard cultural practice of the time, a culture that prized intellectual competition in philosophy and rhetoric.

This culture included the Jews of Jesus' time, whose intellectuals he accused**:** of self promotion (Mt 23:5-7), of fascination with titles and rank while competing against Godly, revelatory knowledge (vss. 8-9), of the destruction of kingdom faith in their students (vss. 13-14), while maintaining an aggressive student recruitment program (v. 15).

It was only natural then, for Paul to tie in this state of affairs (academic pride and faction-alism) with the major theme of our section: the nature of the two "wisdoms" that were vying for control of the Church. He appeals to his mission from Christ to preach the gospel, and then he makes an amazing contrast: "not with words of *human* wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emp-tied of its power" (1:17). This theme is repeated in 2:1-5. Let us paraphrase this passage for emphasis.

> I did not come to you with eloquence or superior wisdom [the pagan intellectual ideal] as I proclaimed to you the *testimony* [not a contrived message, but an account of an experi-ence] about God. For I resolved *to know* [here in the Hebrew concept of knowing, *i.e.*, experiencing] nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified [a shameful fate no one would want to brag about or even publicize!]. I came to you in weakness and fear, and with much trembling [not with the proud confidence of the edu-cated, sophisticated rhetorician]. My message and my preaching were not with *wise and persuasive words* [*the* way of convincing in that culture] but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, *so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power.*

The clear implication of this passage from what follows is a clash of powers: on the one hand the crucified Jesus, who in the mind of Greeks was an absurd joke—a young failure from the sticks of a backward country, who could not even manage his own survival, but yet has the temerity to insist on guiding everyone else! What could this disgusting, ignorant criminal possi-bly tell *us*—the culture the whole world emulates? On the other hand, the "wise man," the "scholar," the "philosopher of this age," ultimately, the "rulers of this age." All of these possess the "wisdom of the world."

How does St Paul characterize this "wisdom"?   It is competitive and divisive; it is pride-ful and boastful; it involves "boasting about men" (teachers); it sees itself as persuasive and powerful; but also, it characterizes "this age," "this world," which is "passing away," "coming to nothing," or "futile," because the wisdom of this world will be shamed by the "foolish of this world." Elsewhere, Paul complains about debates over "myths and genealogies which promote speculations rather than the divine training that is in faith" (1 Tim 1:4), that in hearing and obey-ing God. Indeed the very essence of the Kingdom of God is that it "does not consist in talk, but in power" (1 Cor 4:20). Above all this wisdom utterly fails to understand God—even to the point of trying to kill Him, simply because it is the kind of wisdom Eve and Adam chose, and Jesus rejected. God's wisdom is, in its essence, *revealed* as a function of an *intimacy* with God.

Finally, we lack space to treat adequately the concrete manifestation of these two worlds colliding in the experience of St Paul in 2 Corinthians 10-13. This will be done in comments be-low. Let us now see how this kind of "wisdom" and "knowledge" appears in our system of TTE.

B. Traditional Theological Education

There are some of characteristics of TTE that show its anti-Christian epistemology as laid out above. One proof of this is the use of language that characterizes the structure, if not the very character of our academies. We evaluate and rank both students and teachers in clear, in-

vidious hierarchies.[7] We assign rank and value to students, using such terms as, "grades," "degrees," "good or bad student," "excellent," "outstanding," "mediocre," or "poor."[8] Soon they "advance" or "progress" in their institute of "higher" learning or "graduate school" to "graduate" with a "degree," we hope with a "graduate degree" rather than a mere "undergraduate degree," or, heaven forefend, a diploma from a "*high* school"!

At this point, TTE assigns further distinctions to graduates**:**[9] "*cum laude*" (with praise), "*magna cum laude*" (with great praise), or, at the peak of glory, "*summa cum laude*" (with *total* praise)!

We would assume here, that because a theological seminary or Bible school is in the business of training effective Christian workers that it would identify and honor those with say, effectiveness in evangelism or church ministry, prayer, faith, morality, demonstrations of spiritual power, or even religious commitment. Actually, *none* of these appear on the diploma, on the transcript, or are factored into the *laude*.   Instead, the defining ranking is based wholly on what the graduate has *intellectually grasped and verbalized* during his theological education. The system of assigning importance and status completely bypasses a sense of committed intimacy of a believing relationship with God. Nothing could more clearly communicate the value system of TTE!

What is particularly chilling, is that someone who is Satan incarnate, who "knows" theology and ministry better than any of us, could receive *total praise* from our schools!

Lest you think this is an absurd abstraction, let me share with you a true story. A certain Pentecostal/charismatic seminary was in the advanced stages of hiring a fairly "distinguished" Pentecostal professor for its faculty. A female staff member went house-hunting with this professor. At one house, as they interviewed the owner, the question came up, "why are you selling?" Tears welled up in the owner's eyes as he mumbled something about a divorce. The staff member, in this opportune moment began gently to approach the interested man about his need

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[7] Interestingly, when Paul says that "we do not venture to class or compare ourselves" (2 Cor 10:12), he uses the verbs *egkrinai* and *synkrinai*—the latter a common term for a training exercise in Greek rhetoric. George Kennedy, *The Art of Persuasion in Greece* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Pr., 1963), 270, cited from Mark E. Roberts, "Weakness and Power: The Contribution of 2 Corinthians 10-13 to a Pentecostal/Charismatic Spirituality," 8. *Drinking from Our Own Wells: Defining a Pentecostal Charismatic Spirituality.* Collected Papers from the 22nd Annual Meeting of the Society for Pentecostal Studies, Springfield, Mo., 1992.

[8] The dilemma of "grading" students as a way both of assessing and motivating has plagued educators for generations. The motivational component, many educators argue, can lose its moral opprobrium if the idea of competition is removed and replaced with "contract grading"—the successful achievement of learning goals, rather than a "curve" grade based on comparisons with others. On this issue, Parker J. Palmer laments, "How can the places where we learn to know become places where we also learn to love? How can we educate today so that 'the day after' will be a time of compassion rather than combat?" *To Know as We Are Known: A Spirituality of Education* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1983), 9-10. See the summary in J. M. Eddy and Wm. H. Zimmerli, "Contract Grading - Traditional Grading: A Comparison," 1974, accessible from ERIC (ED124623). See also, David B. Austin, "Grading Systems," *The Encyclopedia of Education* (New York: MacMillan, 1971) 4:182-84.

[9] At commencement ceremonies do we see archetypes of Jesus' words about the academics of his day about long robes and tassles (Mt 23:5-12; Mk 11:38; Lk 20:46)?

for Jesus. The professor brusquely snapped, "This is not the time and place for this!" and when she persisted in the approach to this unsaved man, the professor repeatedly tried to stop her. This vignette reflected a number of similar behaviors of this "distinguished" professor.

The question we ought to confront is, by what criteria did this professor attain "distinguished" or "prominent" status in our community? In other words, what system of "knowledge" was in force here? (Or, for that matter, was the term, "professor," appearing here in another sense?)

Faculty, also then, receive status, power and the credibility to "convince" from the system of institutionalized "detached" knowledge.[10] Here again, the ranking is clear and institutionalized: Instructor, Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, Dean, *etc.* Again, is this system of status based on divine or human criteria? Is it a harmless, value-neutral convention borrowed from our culture in much the same way church organizational structure in the NT was borrowed from the synagogue? Or does it reflect the essence of the Hellenistic *hybris*[11] Paul describes in 2 Cor 10:12b? "When they measure themselves by one another, and compare themselves with one another, they are without understanding."

It is interesting that in his conflict with the "super-apostles," in 2 Corinthians, St. Paul appears to adopt a parody of the Hellenistic *encomium* (dare we say "résumé") when he lays out a grotesque comedy of humiliations he suffered from the academic, political and religious establishment. Lurking beneath these humiliations—the very opposite of the honors, "letters of recommendation," and status of his opponents, possibly some of the original apostles of Christ!—may well have been an appeal to the doctrine of the eschatological woes suffered by true saints, and above all, in a prototypical way, to the "crucified" Christ himself—that humiliating embarrassment, not academic status, characterize the true Christian.

The "knowledge" of the pagans and even of the "super-apostles" appeared to be "verbal"—talk without power (1 Cor 4:20)—in contrast to a "true" apostle, whose actions of divine power characterized not an inner, exalted circle, but ideally all true Christians whose "knowledge" was the "experience" which replicated both the power and humiliating suffering of Jesus Christ (2 Cor 12:12; Phil 3:9-10).

To sum up this section, theological education, then, has largely adopted the traditional academic model for training clergy. Its way of knowing is pagan, not biblical. This way of

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[10] Though post-modernism seems to oppose this movement, the traditional academic fascination with detachment, distance and objectivity may actually have a kind of psycho-pathological etiology, much like the epistemology of gnosticism which sought to escape from the physical into a pure, spiritual vantage point from which to view the world. It was a doctrine that simultaneously led to asceticism and license. If the levels of child sexual abuse were as high as some believe in Greece and the Hellenistic world, then the experience of "splitting off" from the body during sexual trauma, and the resulting oscillation between promiscuity and frigidity may have provided a widespread experiential grounding for gnosticism, and ultimately, the Enlightenment notion of "objectivity" in knowledge. This, of course, stands in stark contrast to the biblical "knowing" that involves relationship, direct involvement and experience.

[11] Roberts, "Weakness and Power," 16-18.

knowing promotes a detached, uncommitted, "objective" relationship to its subject matter. It has institutionalized competition, pride and dependence on the praise of men—these days we call it "accreditation."[12] Typically, it holds out as an ideal to emulate an institution of "higher learn-ing" that has devastated the faith of millions. This educational model is seductive precisely be-cause, at least in the expression of "scientific method," it has been so spectacularly successful in understanding and manipulating the physical world. It has put men on the moon, a car in every garage, a chicken in every pot and polyester on our backs. It empowers us to communicate, to travel, to be entertained, to be saved and healed. This kind of knowledge is accelerating—doubling every 30 months. If we misunderstand the notion that "all knowledge is God's" we might even see a fulfillment of Dan 12:4 "in the last days . . . knowledge will be increased."

But the contrast that plays out so prominently in the New Testament is not around the "content" of knowledge, but rather around its source, object and use to which it is put.[13] Accord-ingly, one's epistemology leads inevitably to the direction of one's activities.

II. Goals of Training for Ministry

A. Biblical Grounding

The traditional theological education model for seminaries forces a double-minded view of goals *vis-à-vis* normative, *i.e.*, New Testament Christianity. As discussed above, Christian workers today face different church structures and roles that have evolved into forms far differ-ent from those of the NT. Nonetheless, few of us would disagree that the mission of Jesus and that which he passed on to his disciples involves a strong component of charismatic activity.

We know this from Jesus' programmatic statements that not only was Jesus' mission of the Kingdom centrally charismatic (summarized in Lk 4:18-21,43; Acts 2:22; 10:38) but the fact that he specifically *repeats* the emphases of his own mission in the commissions to his disciples (Mt. 10; Lk 9 and 10[14] and Mt. 28:19-20, cf. 24:14, 'until the end of the age').

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[12] To be fair, however, accrediting agencies, at least theoretically, attempt, as much as possible, to allow their educational institutions to define the content of teaching, goals and outcomes within the accepted conventions of certain degree programs. Seminaries, under the new ATS accreditation standards, are to be evaluated as to the "extent they are doing what they claim to be doing and the way in which the school can do that better." Sara Myers, "The New ATS Accreditation Standards," *ATLA Proceedings*, 51:1 (Winter, 1997), 267. In practice, however, the range of options is limited. The cultural and theological agenda of the accreditors inevitably shapes their require-ments. For example, a theological stance on women in ministry can affect a seminary's accreditation for academic competence. "Westminster Accreditation," *Christian Century*, 108:19 (Jun 12 and 19, 1991), 615. The accrediting agency in this case was not, however, ATS.

[13] This last point seems to be that also of 2 Cor 10:5, "take every thought captive to obey Christ." This is not a question of suppressing sinful daydreams. Rather, the context is dealing with competing theological episte-mologies. A captive was not incarcerated, but *used* as a *slave*, hence, the "obey," above. Our "knowledge" must not only be pressed into "service" for Christ, but be shaped by His continuing revelation to us. The contrast is between "arguments" and "proud obstacle[s]" vs. the "knowledge of God."

[14]See Wm. Kurz, *Following Jesus: A Disciple's Guide to Luke-Acts* (Ann Arbor, MI: Servant Books, 1984), 'Chapter Four: Sharing Jesus' Power for Service,' 57-67. Kurz implies in the introduction, 5, that these early com-missions in Luke 9 and 10 were intended by Luke to apply beyond the early disciples mentioned there to Luke's

This same charismatic emphasis grounds the whole Book of Acts where the Church's commission (1:5-8) is to present the kingdom in the power of signs and wonders and the preaching of the word. In fact, 27.2 % of the text of Acts are pericopes of signs, wonders and other charismatic activity. The repeated summary statements of Paul's mission (Acts 15:12; Rom. 15:18-20; 1 Cor 2:4; 2 Cor 12:12; 1 Th 1:5), show the continuation of this normative pattern of presenting and living out the gospel of the exalted Christ in 'word and deed.'[15] Here the implications of believers' inaugurated, but not yet fully realized, 'vice-regency' with the exalted, gift-bestowing Christ could profitably be explored.[16] After the presentation of the Kingdom, the on-going church continues in the power of the Spirit, edifying itself via the charismata until the end of this age.

A reading of the NT unfettered by traditional Protestant theology will show that Jesus spends a great deal of time both modeling and teaching about faith and prayer as derivative goals for the mission described above. Analysis of the *pistis* family of words ('faith/believe') in the NT, shows that, where the context is explicit as to the 'intended result' of faith, 93 of 230, or, over 40% of the passages, refer to healings and other acts of power.[17] Moreover, in the Gospel of Mark, for example, major miracle stories, which occupy a large amount of the text, point the reader explicitly to an unusual, tradition-breaking, aggressive faith in the quest for wholeness (2:1-12; 5:1-20, 21-43; 6:30-56; 7:21-37; 8:14-29; 10:46-52). This highly charismatic NT emphasis on the intended result of faith is scarcely mentioned in traditional systematics texts, where faith is almost exclusively tied to some aspect of the *ordo salutis*.

The goals, then for NT discipleship training seem to focus on developing the skills needed to replicate the mission of Jesus. If we are to take the commissions of Jesus seriously, these

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readers generally. So also, Williams, *Signs, Wonders and the Kingdom of God*, 125; C. Kraft, *Christianity with Power* (Ann Arbor, MI: Servant, 1989), 136.

[15]The miraculous nature of the term 'deed' in the above expression is confirmed in contemporary rabbinic materials according to G. Vermes, *Jesus the Jew: A Historian's Reading of the Gospels* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1973), 78-82. Echoes of these summaries of how Paul 'preached' the gospel appear also in other writers, *e.g.*, in Acts 26:17-18 and Heb. 2:4, though in this latter case, as in Gal. 3:5 and 1 Cor. 1:5-8, the 'confirmation' of the gospel was God working via a distribution of spiritual gifts in members of the various congregations. F. F. Bruce, 'The Spirit in the Letter to the Galatians,' *Essays on Apostolic Themes* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1985), 37-38.

[16]D. G. McCartney, 'Ecce Homo: The Coming of the Kingdom and the Restoration of Human Viceregency,' *WesJTh* 56/1 (1994), 1-21. The exaltation/Spirit theme deserves much greater study from a charismatic point of view. Indeed, a whole section of this paper could have profitably been devoted to an analysis of the so-called 'Spirit Christology,' in which *Jesus-as-prototype* derives his power and ministry, not from his status as God, as traditional theology would have it, but from the anointing of the Spirit--coming *fully* on him, but in the same sense as, and on a continuum with his followers, who receive the Spirit as a 'guarantee,' as 'firstfruits,' or as a 'taste of the powers of the age to come.' Jesus' own empowering by the Spirit extends in time into his exaltation, and into the experience of those replicating his life--his disciples.

[17] 'In the Synoptic tradition [faith] is used almost exclusively in relation to miracles.' R. T. France, 'Faith,' *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*, 223. This association is by no means limited to the gospels. W. Bodine, 'Power Ministry in the Epistles: A Reply to the Evangelical Cessationist Position,' *The Kingdom and the Power*, 197-206. G. Fee, *God's Empowering Presence*, 323-24, 608-10 and *passim* on the 'charismatic' function of faith in the epistles.

skills would include prayer, faith (for healings, exorcisms and freedom from sin), and aggressive evangelism and mission.

B. Traditional Theological Education

It would follow from the above, that if the emphases of the NT are applied evenly, we would need to rethink the goals and curricula of our traditional theological educational institutions. But even if we concede that Pentecostal institutions are aware of developing a strong charismatic expression in their graduates, the TTE culture works at what appears to be cross-purposes. Indications of this conflict appear typically in two standard documents of a seminary: the catalog and the faculty handbook.

Usually the catalog speaks in glowing terms about the work of the Holy Spirit in both the school activities and in the graduate's ministry, while sections of the faculty handbook often seem headed in another direction. As one non-tenured seminary professor once told me, "Around here, it's publish or p**a**rish," as though pastoral ministry represented failure and loss of status.

In the pressure for self-promotion and the fame game in seminaries, the practical ministry department, including missions, tends to be at the low end of the totem pole, even though their subject area is central, in most cases, to the published *raison d'etre* for the seminary's existence! In faculty meetings, it may well be that the production of a scholarly monograph from a ranking publisher trumps a missions prof taking 40 tons of grain and the Gospel into North Korea, or a ministry prof holding huge revival meetings in Moscow or New Delhi.   John Woodyard notes this phenomenon succinctly.[18]

> Currently, major rewards for the seminary professor are research-based, academically and intellectually-based affirmations from published books and articles. Unless different spiritual, emotional, economic, and social rewards for the professor can be created, little or no change can be expected in seminary operations, relationships with the churches, or instruction for the students.

From the very beginning in North America, shaped apparently by English stratified culture and the Enlightenment, the central goal of seminaries has been the crafting of "learned gentlemen"[19] whose academic credentials would assure status and power within the community.[20]

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[18] John M. Woodyard, "A 21st Century Seminary Faculty Model," in The M .J. Murdock Charitable Trust Review of Graduate Theological Education in the Pacific Northwest, 7.

[19] "Ministers were to be not only theologians and preachers; they were to be 'learned gentlemen.' . . . Although seminary leaders issued frequent rhetorical appeals for more ministers, they showed scant interest in the average minister or in pastoral practice. . . . The scholarly aspects of theology fascinated the founders of theological schools. . . . The purpose of the seminary's residence requirement was to train students to be 'gentlemen theologians'." Glenn T. Miller, *Piety and Intellect: The Aims and Purposes of Ante-Bellum Theological Education* (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1990), 26-27.

[20] "Protestantism promoted a well-educated clergy, which quickly became the backbone of the international revolutionary movement. . . . In villages throughout Protestant lands for centuries to come, the clergyman would be the best educated citizen and education would be a key to his authority." Marsden, *The Soul of the American University: From Protestant Establishment to Established Nonbelief* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1994), 37-

Edward Farley, a former professor of theology at Vanderbilt University Divinity School shows that this same Hellenistic, anti-Christian drive for academic prestige instead of appropriate ministry training continued in modern seminaries.

> Alumni and their affiliated denominations . . . tend to criticize the schools for being "too academic," straying too far from the canons of denominational belief, or being insufficiently practical. But despite these recurring complaints, theological schools have more and more tended to make academic quality the *central element in their reputations* [italics mine]. Accordingly, faculty members are required to have earned the Ph.D. degree, and to be promising scholars who contribute to their fields and meet high standards for tenure and promotion. This commitment to having a first-rate academic faculty draws schools into the ethos of American higher education.[21]

And, we might add, *away from* biblical goals as well as from effective traditional ministry. In all seriousness, Jesus himself, could not qualify to teach in a traditional theological seminary, though conceivably he might be invited in occasionally as an adjunct resource person. Farley continues, that because of specialization and the need to protect its turf, "professors' primary loyalty is likely to be to their fields of study [and their prominence in it! JR] rather than to the school's general aims." Again: the conflict of goals between catalog and faculty handbook.

The conflict of goals does not end here. A survey of more than 800 lay people, pastors and seminary professors showed an astonishing divergence in ranking the qualities of an ideal pastor.[22]

Ranking	Lay People	Pastors	Professors
First	Spirituality	Relational Skills	Theological Knowledge
Second	Relational Skills	Management Skills	Character
Third	Character	Communication Skills	Leadership Skills

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38. Marsden also noted the primal clash of epistemological worlds, or power systems, in the simultaneous establishment of Harvard and the Anne Hutchinson case. For it to have been a "case" at all indicates the apparent support she received at least at the grass roots level. "1636 was the year not only of the legislation establishing Harvard College but also of the turmoil over the Anne Hutchinson case. These two famous events were related since they dealt with two sides of the question of authority. . . . Anne Hutchinson . . . addressed theological issues (accusing most of the clergy of preaching works rather than grace) and thus defied the principle that formal university education . . . was the normal prerequisite for exercising theological authority. . . . Most alarming to the authorities, Hutchinson was what we would today call a charismatic Christian who appealed to the direct voice of the Holy Spirit. . . . Had Hutchinson's appeal to a direct voice from God been allowed to stand, the whole Puritan system of hierarchical authority would have collapsed. Anyone, male or female, however unqualified they otherwise might be, would be able to challenge the biblical and theological principles on which the society was being built" (p. 41).

[21] E. Farley, "Why Seminaries Don't Change: A Reflection on Faculty Specialization," *The Christian Century*, 114 (Feb. 5-12, 1997), 133-143.

[22] Timothy C. Morgan and Thomas S. Giles, "Re-Engineering the Seminary: Crisis of Credibility Forces Change," *Christianity Today* 38 (Oct. 24, 1994), 75.

Fourth	Communication Skills	Spirituality	Communication Skills
Fifth	Theological Knowledge	Theological Knowledge	Counseling Skills

Note that the most striking difference between the laity and the seminary professors was "spirituality." Where it was ranked first on the list of desirable pastoral traits by the people in the pew, the seminary professors had no room for it on their list! Conversely, where the professors ranked "theological knowledge" first, the laity and pastors ranked it last.[23] This gap would unlikely occur in Pentecostal seminaries. But the point here is to demonstrate the power of the secular or pagan epistemology to set goals for TTE.

This tradition of intellectualized ministerial training is literally forced upon seminaries by accrediting bodies.[24] Very early in the history of the ATS it was determined that the standard Bachelor of Divinity (now MDiv) degree for pastors should represent, not a standard for ministry effectiveness, but rather a "standard of scholarship."[25]

As a consequence, it is no wonder that the Murdock[26] report on seminary effectiveness can conclude:

> Pastors are highly educated, but generally feel poorly prepared for the job they hold (p. 7)
> In the pastors' forums those who were seminary graduates reported that they found 70% to 80% of their seminary education did not apply to the duties they were expected to perform in the churches they served as ministers (p. 24).
> With 50% of seminary graduates leaving professional ministry, seminaries are not doing a good job of training . . . . Seminaries need more "practitioners" as teachers. . . . Professors need hands-on ministry experience (p. 19).

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[23] A similar result appeared in an ATS study contrasting seminary graduates' "sense of curricular importance" (what should be stressed in the curriculum) and their "sense of curricular effectiveness" (what the seminary actually produced). Ranked first out of 14 categories in "importance" was "Devotional habits" while the seminary "effectiveness" in this area was ranked 9th, just ahead of "Ability to administrate." Ellis L. Larsen, "What Does Seminary Education Produce?" *Theological Education* XXXI, Supplement (1995), 51.

[24] "Authority for the seminary rests in the control of accreditation associations. Evaluation is built around the shrouds of academic freedom and tenure as defined by their peers in the accreditation process." *The M. J. Murdock Charitable Trust Review of Graduate Theological Education in the Pacific Northwest* (Vancouver, Wash.: M. J. Murdock Charitable Trust, 1994), 90.

[25] David B. Cable, "The Development of the Accrediting Function of the American Association of Theological Schools, 1918-1938" (PhD dissertation, University of Pittsburgh, 1970), 45. "Additional critiques of American theological education appeared during the first quarter of the twentieth century. Of these, the most detailed and influential was a study by Robert L. Kelly, published in 1924 as *Theological Education in America*. . . . Dr. Kelly intimated his hope that through standardization all institutions for the education and training of ministers would someday emulate the relatively few theological schools which were generally recognized for their *academic excellence*" [italics mine], 11.

[26] *The M. J. Murdock Charitable Trust Review*.

If the goals of effective training for ministry conflict with the goals for the curricula and careers of most seminary professors, then necessarily another disturbing disconnect occurs: the ineffective *delivery* of training to seminary students.

III. Teaching Modalities

The clash between the two worlds expresses itself most clearly in the curriculum and its form of presentation. The format is characterized by the presentation of information rather than training; the information is depersonalized—as easily learned from a video as from a live teacher; the information deals with issues rarely if ever encountered in real ministry, but rather more reflects tradition or the academic interests of the instructor; the knowledge tends to intimidate rather than edify; it can be intellectually exciting, but spiritually empty; the knowledge is powerless when facing serious spiritual need; it evokes a vaguely guilty, uncomfortable feeling in the presence of God.

A. Biblical Grounding

The Biblical model of teaching modalities for Christian workers is characterized by: 1) a significant NT emphasis on the process, 2) implementing a highly-charismatic expression of ministry *skills* or *giftings*, 3) *within settings of actual ministry*, 4) primarily by means of mentoring relationships. Let us briefly review each in turn.

1) In contrast to its neglected mention within traditional theology, discipleship and its processes receive a great deal of attention in the NT.[27] Louw-Nida lists some 42 words or word groups that appear in the semantic field, "Guide, Discipline, Follow," whereas 26 different expressions appear for "teach" or "instruct," which involve a sizeable number of references to such activities as repeating, following, obeying, or instructing.[28] At crucial points the term, *mimesis* (imitation), or its family occurs 11 times.

We might suggest in view of this NT emphasis, that traditional theology ought to heed what scripture is saying about how to teach, instead of unconsciously applying culturally-approved modalities borrowed from other disciplines.

It is important not simply *that* instruction is such a major theme in the NT, but also *what it is* that is being taught require appropriate teaching modalities to be effective.

2) The previous section on goals showed that the simplest examination of what it is that the NT expects of its readers in terms of ministry activity is to obey the commissioning ac-

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[27] "The 'Imitation of Christ' in Christian Tradition: Its Missing Charismatic Emphasis," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 16 (Spring 2000), 60-77.

[28] Louw, Johannes P. and Nida, Eugene A., *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains*, (New York: United Bible Societies, 1988, 1989), sections 27, 33, 36, and 41:44-41:49.

counts,[29] that is, to replicate the activities of Jesus and his disciples. Traditional theological education on this issue, however, is shaped both by Protestant cessationism and Enlightenment rationalism, hence, the commissions of Jesus devolve into the effective presentation of a system of moral precepts (that are "culturally sensitive") or an intellectually respectable apologetic.

Obedience of the commissioning accounts in the NT was based on a teaching modality appropriate to the subject matter. One does not learn to swim, drive, do counseling or perform surgery merely by reading or lectures. Actual physical performance is required. This is especially true for learning the skills and giftings of ministry.

3) Christian ministry training occurs best *within the actual practice of advancing the Kingdom of God*. Robert Banks summarizes the biblical pattern of ministry education with a profound insight. He notes that there were concentric circles of followers around the key figures in the NT, ranging from full-time to intermittent associations.

> The purpose of these groups was not increase in knowledge of their basic traditions, progress in moral or spiritual formation, or the development of skills associated with ministry or leadership. It was *active service or mission in furthering the kingdom* [italics mine] . . . . Within that framework, however, spiritual growth and practical development as well as substantial learning, also took place. Such learning was often in-service and nonformal in character; at other times it was more extensive and systematic. . . . The point of departure for such instruction was often the life-situations of individual members, the group as a whole, or the context in which they were operating.[30]

Here the explicit goal of actual discipleship (obeying the commissions) shaped the teaching modalities. The cart was not before the horse: since the commission was being obeyed, the learning occurred *while ministry occurred*.[31] This would be as true for ministry within the NT home groups as it would be presenting the Kingdom in power in foreign cities. This teaching

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[29] Traditionalists, however, feel that the highly-charismatic earlier commissioning accounts in Mk 6 and Luke 9 and 10, with parallels do not apply to the Church today. Moreover, "when we turn to the Great Commission at the end of Matthew, we find no mention at all of miracles or healing. The commission of the risen Christ to go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that Christ has commanded, makes no mention of miracles (Matt. 28:19-20)." Colin Brown, "The Other Half of the Gospel?" *Christianity Today* 33 (21 April, 1989), 27. Against this see Jon Ruthven, *On the Cessation of the Charismata* (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Univ. Pr., 1993), 195 and Gary S. Greig and Kevin N. Springer (eds.), *The Kingdom and the Power* (Ventura, Calif.: Regal Books, 1993), 399-404.

[30] Robert Banks, *Reenvisioning Theological Education: Exploring a Missional Alternative to Current Models* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 123. For an encouraging development in our own circles, see Jay Paul Taylor, "A Spiritual Transformation Program for Resident Students at the Assemblies of God Theological Seminary," D. Min. dissertation, AGTS, Springfield, Missouri, 2001. This work seeks a "quantifiable" approach to spiritual development in the seminary program.

[31] "To separate those who are to be trained for ministry from normal church life and activity and from the conditions in which their ministry is to be carried on is a serious mistake. One preparing for the ministry of evangelism and church planting needs the church and the evangelistic field just as the medical student needs the Hospital and the clinic." Alexander R. Hay, *The New Testament Order for Church and Missionary* (Audobon, N.J.: New Testament Missionary Union, 1970), 488.

modality stands at the most extreme polarity possible from the tendency toward isolation from, and irrelevance to real ministry that we find in TTE.

4) Finally, with this context in mind, NT ministry training must be done with experienced and effective practitioners via a process of imitation. Paul can insist that believers "imitate me as I imitate Christ" (1 Cor 11:1). The chain of imitation was to go on for generations.[32] The "imitation" involved the duplicating the principles and activities of the mentor, specifically including the dimension of charismatic ministry and evangelism. In the NT, disciples do not have the option of picking and choosing their academic religious "majors" or areas of specialization. God distributes spiritual gifts "as *He* wills." One is called and directed by the Spirit into a ministry characterized by both power and suffering in tension.

Let us examine the contrasting approach of traditional theological education.

B. Traditional Theological Education

In sharp contrast to the four irreducible elements of NT ministry training, above, TTE typically displays an opposing agenda.

1) In contrast to the NT emphasis on the discipleship process, beyond the acquisition of specific course information, TTE betrays relatively little interest in a student's performance in the field as an effective Christian worker, let alone his or her moral, spiritual or charismatic ministry. Unless a faculty member specializes in spiritual formation, the scholarly publication of the professors within TTE rarely focuses on the discipleship issues of the seminarian.

2) In contrast to the emphasis placed on prayer, faith and charismatic expression in the Gospels and Acts (which, after all, came later than most epistles and served as a corrective to restore emphasis upon the ministry patterns of Jesus and his disciples), TTE leaves that to extra-

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[32] "Discipleship, however, moves to a third, fourth and even a fifth generation in the NT. Paul can require of his readers, for example, "Imitate me even as [καθως] to the same degree and extent that] I imitate Christ" (1 Cor 11:1). Four other times he exhorts churches to imitate him (1 Cor 4:16; Phil 3:17; 2 Th 3:7,9, *cf.* Gal 4:12, Phil 4:9; Jas 3.1; 1 Tm 4.16; 2 Tm 3.:4). In 1 Cor 4:15-17 Paul says that he became the Corinthians' "'father' through the Gospel." This obviously means something more than progenitor, or "father" of a new religion, but rather retains the more technical meaning of "rabbi/teacher." Proof of this is the remainder of the verse: "I exhort you to become imitators of me. For this reason I have sent to you Timothy, who is my *son* [student] whom I love [an echo of Jesus' baptism?] . . . who will *remind* you *of my ways.* The term "ways" is a Semitism that refers to the whole characteristic pattern of life.[32] Here, then, we implicitly have three generations of imitators described: Jesus, Paul, Timothy/the Corinthians. Similarly, 1 Th 1:5-6 displays the pattern of imitation, not only to the third generation, but also to the fourth! Not only could the believers observe the type of people Paul and his companions were as they presented the Gospel, but the Thessalonians "became imitators of us and of the Lord . . . so as (w[ste—"for this reason") to become a pattern to all those in Macedonia and in Achaia." In other words the explicit reason the Thessalonians became imitators of Paul, was that they, themselves, become exemplars for others to imitate in exactly the same way.

"A further pattern evolves in 2 Tm 2:1-2 where Paul addresses Timothy as "my son" and encourages him to perpetuate the process of replication to the *fifth* generation! "And the things which you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses, entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others also." It is important to note that while the "teaching" here is verbal, it is directed toward spiritual empowerment and action, as is suggested from the previous verse." Ruthven, "Imitation of Christ," 70-71.

curricular activities. At the beginning of my own seminary experience, the Dean, a well-respected Evangelical leader, explicitly told us that we were not to expect the seminary to aid us in our spiritual growth, but only in our intellectual development. To be fair, there has been an increased interest in spiritual formation in seminaries, but the models there tend toward classical exercises in piety and ethics rather than the spiritualities of evangelism and power encounters as emphasized in the NT.

3) In contrast to the NT pattern of learning-while-doing in actual situations of ministry, TTE seems based on a monastic model of seclusion. This teaching modality may well communicate: that ministry is learned best away from real ministry situations; that ministry learning is, formally, at least, not an ongoing experience; that theory and practice are best separated; and that ministry training is primarily an academic exercise.

This approach violates a fundamental truism of education: that the teaching modality must be appropriate to the subject matter: that if ministry involves a variety of higher order cognitive, spiritual and physical skills, then appropriate provision must be made for this type of learning to occur. Oddly, however, this/academic monastic arrangement *is in fact appropriate* for TTE, which requires the substitution of an intellectual grasp of information in place of the effective activities of ministry. The epistemology and goals of TTE have quite clearly determined its own venue and setting! It serves as an effective quarantine of Christian ministry from the surrounding world—at least apart from brief periods of field education.

4) Again in contrast to the NT principle, TTE's agenda of academic pre-eminence conflicts with the notion of mentoring students—particularly in the right direction. Most seminary students are at an age where they are mentally hard-wired for a mentoring experience, rather like Konrad Lorenz's baby ducks. In a seminary who are the objects of mentoring? Sadly, it is PhDs[33] with their secular epistemology, goals and teaching modalities. Kenneth Meyer, while President of Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, lamented,

> The curriculum has called for professionals of the academy, rather than professionals of the church. The truth is, students will model their professors. In our [seminary] some 75% of faculty have never pastored a church longer than an intern[ship] during graduate studies. Is it [any] wonder that graduates come out "heady" and lacking ministry skills?[34]

Yet this "outstanding" seminary is recommended as an excellent place to seek training for ministry. On what grounds? "Outstanding faculty" who are so because they have published a sizeable volume of material. You have just seen the President's concern about the "product," even though he noted that no changes were made in twenty years to address this concern! Traditional theological education collides with Christian discipleship training, and wins again. The hidden agenda trumps the stated purpose of the seminary.

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[33] A doctoral level degree is still required by ATS standards (standard number 6.1.1) for all seminary faculty of accredited seminaries.

[34] Kenneth Meyer in *The M. J. Murdock Charitable Trust Review of Graduate Theological Education in the Pacific Northwest*, 63.

Yet the mentoring process in the NT is in a setting very different from that of a typical seminary professor. Quite simply, if the modeling/mentoring process occurs at all, it is on someone in a different formal role than that of a pastor, evangelist or missionary: often it is the epistemology and value-system of the academy rather than of Christ Jesus that is being absorbed by the student.[35]

Even if mentoring was done toward the right goals, if not in the right setting, the conventional seminary professor would have great difficulty in the necessary follow up to an appropriate mentoring relationship over the years. The schedule does not permit it. We must note, however, that in many settings within the seminaries, many professors provide wonderful spiritual nurture to students both within and outside the classroom. There is also no denying that the actual process of teaching of academic subjects can deliver a spiritual and practical impact. Most of the readers of this article can attest to that. The point of this project, however, is that this Godly process is shaped, subverted, and even suppressed by the double message inherent in the academic structures and emphases.

If the conventional TTE model is inadequate, what alternatives could we offer?

Alternate models of Ministry Training

The face of training for ministry is changing. I am told that there are now 513 church-based Bible institutes or ministry training centers in the American Assemblies of God alone. The Internet and other technologies are making it increasingly possible to study for ministry at home. Accordingly, ATS has increased the percentage of distance education credits that may apply to a seminary degree. The trend toward on-the-job training in general is gaining momentum. Presently, despite the enormous expenditure and facilities in American formal education, *most* education today in this country occurs in business in the workplace. How should Pentecostal seminary education respond to these changes and to the biblical mandates?

First, we might encourage denominational leaders and pastors to return to the tradition of training pastors by apprenticeship.[36] Give status and "accreditation" to Godly, successful pastors who consistently and effectively mentor others into ministry. "Quality control" could be main-

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[35] The "heady" knowledge that Kenneth Meyer complains about is analogous to the problem of "intellectualization" in psychotherapy, in which the patient discovers (often subconsciously) that it is less painful to construct an elaborate "geography" of the emotional problem, its sources, expressions, *etc.*, than the discomfort of confronting emotional and moral change. Theology can serve the same function for the seminarian.

[36] "According to the ATS (the Association of Theological Schools, which accredits most seminaries in North America), evangelicals in the 1990s lay claim to 63 divinity schools and theological seminaries in North America, enrolling more than 30,000 students. . . . Ironically, at the very moment evangelical theological education appears to have come of age, some influential parachurch and megachurch leaders are questioning the whole idea of formal theological education. The observation is made that if men who never spent a day in seminary can build successful ministries like Prison Fellowship, Focus on the Family, and Willow Creek Community Church, why have seminaries at all? In fact, a seminary degree will actually disqualify a candidate from a staff position at some megachurches." Robert W. Patterson, "Why Evangelicals Have the Biggest Seminaries, And Why They Are in Crisis," *Christianity Today*, 42 (Jan. 12, 1998), 50. I owe a good deal of the research for this project to Gary Greig, a former colleague at Regent.

tained by the denominational leadership by requiring practical exams of ministry skills, recommendation of the mentor, as well as evidence of successful ministry before ordination.

Second, train only those who are already involved in some local ministry. This has the salutory effect of intensifying the learning experience of the student on the one hand, and on the other, in a Darwinian sort of way, of weeding out the courses that have little or no value to the development and promotion of ministry.

Third, decentralize the operation of the seminary so that whatever it is that the seminary professors contribute to ministry could be packaged into short, intensive blocks of instruction at a variety of meeting centers closer to the pastors being served. This move tends to place control and accountability at the level of the consumer who is likely more in touch with the needs of ministry than the provider, as is the case presently. On the other hand, serious scholars who have a heart for ministry will find it gratifying like the scribes in the Kingdom, to "bring out treasures old and new," that is, to recast the many useful insights of biblical and theological scholarship into edifying food for the soul.

Alternatively, the use of the Internet to deliver courses is enjoying considerable interest, though the present methods seem to be labor intensive. Automated teaching of courses is already being developed, potentially offering a great deal of "informational" teaching at low cost to the local consumer.

It might also be a good idea to derive financial support from the larger local divisions of the denomination for the service to them, on the premise of the "golden rule": the ones with the gold make the rules. This would have the effect of making the seminaries more accountable to "the hand that feeds them" and to the mission of the church.

Fourth, eliminate the system of grades and degrees in the ministry, choosing rather to honor and "know those who labor diligently among you." This focuses a single-minded honor and respect where it belongs—on those who minister effectively in the power of the Spirit. It would be extremely difficult to take this last point seriously, simply because the value structure of secular "knowledge" so thoroughly dominates our culture—and our own spirits. We must recognize, however, that the value systems of Godly and worldly knowledge are inimical to each other: it does us no good to keep the leaven in our midst.

Fifth, if we employ a site-based training program focused strictly on effectiveness in ministry, then what is to be done with all those out of work seminary professors who would prefer to focus on the theoretical and academic? Christian scholarship is a noble vocation. The life of the mind as well as Christian interaction with the issues of the day are indeed, part of the gifting of the Church. But it remains to be proven that, generally, the issues that absorb the time and interest of academics also meaningfully treat the concerns of the people in the pew or the Christian worker. If one's love, interest and allocation of time lies with academic pursuits, rather than, demonstrably, the application of those pursuits to effective ministry training, then can one with integrity resolve this inherent conflict of interest we find in the seminary or Bible college? Alternatively, if the tension is unbearable, or one's focus fails to conform honestly with the stated goals

of the ministry training institution, then perhaps a university serves as a better venue for our talents and interests. "Each one must be fully convinced in his own mind."

Finally, whether or not seminaries change their spots, we must recognize that change in the outside world, if not the Kingdom of God, may be passing us by. For the purist, there is the ministry training model of the G-12 movement in Bogota, Columbia, or the cell group system of Paul David Yongi-cho in Seoul, Korea. Many unsung Bible colleges around the world require a church plant by a student before a diploma is awarded. Reinhard Bonke, who routinely preaches to a million people at a time, is known to take on apprentices. In each of these cases, there is a single focus: training for Christian ministry. Perhaps it is time for us to examine our hearts, have that single eye and serve only one Master.

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